

**MOSES UNVEILED
IN THE FACE OF
JESUS CHRIST**

THE REVEREND

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

**AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, GRAY'S INN
COMPLETED**

TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR MDCCCVI. (1806)

Volume XV
Of the 20 Volume set
1811

Republished By Bierton Particular Baptists
11 Hayling Close
Fareham
Hampshire
PO143AE

Republished 2021
www.BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

All publications available for our Office 11 Hayling Close, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 3AE or Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk and Amazon outlets world wide. And may be read for free at : <https://issuu.com/davidclarke81>

Contents

MOSES UNVEILED IN THE FACE OF CHRIST	5
Chapter 1.	54
Chapter 2.	60
Chapter 3.	70
Chapter 4.	75
Chapter 5.	79
Chapter 6.	85
Chapter 7	93
Chapter 8.	106
Chapter 9	111
Chapter 10.	116
Chapter 11.	133
Chapter 12.	136
Chapter 13.	144
Chapter 17.	183
Chapter 18.	200
Chapter 19.	203
Chapter 20.	211
FURTHER PUBLICATIONS	224
A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY 1	224
A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY II, III,IV.	225
A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY, V, VI,VII.	229
A BODY OF PRACTICAL DIVINITY , BOOK I, II.	231
A BODY OF PRACTICAL DIVINITY , III, IV, V.	233
THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH, PART 1, II, II and IV.	234
WILLIAM GADSBY SERMONS:	244
MEMORIALS OF A COVENANT GOD	245
THE CERTAIN EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST, ASSERTED	246
BIERTON PARTICULAR BAPTISTS INTERNATIONAL	247
CHRIST ALONE EXALTED	248
THE PAROUSIA 2ND EDITION	249
A TREATIES ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY:	251
A SELECTION OF GADSBY'S HYMNS 1814 PAPERBACK	253
CONVERTED ON LSD TRIP: 3RD EDITION	254
DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION	256
THE DEATH OF DEATH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST	258

THE WEST AND THE QURAN	260
THE EVERLASTING COVENANT	263
BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS	264
THE BIERTON CRISIS	266
MARY, MARY QUITE CONTRARY	268
TROJAN WARRIORS	269
THE PAROUSIA 2ND EDITION	271
THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE	273
THE CITY OF GOD	275

A SERMON BY WILLIAM HUNTINGTON PREACHED AT
MONKWELL STREET MEETING, AUGUST 12, 1794

“For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.”? LUKE, xxi. 15.

MOSES UNVEILED IN THE FACE OF CHRIST

“And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.” - 2 Cor. iii. 13.

Verse the first, “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?” This is a throw at the false apostles, who, when they had by their evil insinuation ingratiated themselves into the affections of the simple and unwary, obtained letters of commendation from them, to recommend themselves to other churches, that they might do more mischief; for they had nothing else to recommend them but their pride and their speech, which Paul paid no regard to. “I do not want to know the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power.” But of this they were destitute. They had not the power of God manifested in them, they had no power with God in prayer, nor did they ever communicate, by their instrumentality, the power of God’s grace and Spirit to others. They were false apostles, and ministers of Satan; and Paul is commended by the Lord himself for proving them so to be. “Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”

These disciples of Moses, “who preached Christ out of envy,” when they could not obtain letters of commendation from one church to another, would even dare to counterfeit letters in Paul’s name; which induced him to sign every epistle of his in future with his own hand writing, as a token that they were not spurious. “The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle, &c. so I write.” Yea, the apostle cautions his followers against this damnable quackery. “See that ye be not troubled, neither by word, nor by spirit, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand;” for we have written no such things unto you.

“But do we need these letters of commendation?” No; those whom God sends, God will recommend, and make them manifest in the consciences

of all his people. It is not he who commends himself that is approved, but whom the Lord commends. Besides, if a minister be a good workman, one that needs not to be ashamed, his own work will recommend him; and the seals of his ministry will be forward enough to proclaim him to others; for “a gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it, and whithersoever it turneth it prospereth;” “yea, “a man’s gift shall make room for him, and bring him before great men:” and, therefore, we need no letters of commendation from you, nor letters of commendation to you.

“Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men.” We are the pens that the Spirit of God uses to write his laws of faith, truth, love, and liberty on your minds; and we have heard a reason of your hope, and of your experience that worketh hope; and it agrees with ours, and with the written word; and therefore we know, dearly beloved, “your election of God; for our word came not unto you in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance:” and God has made you manifest in our hearts; you have a share in our affections; and thus, as our epistle, you are written in our hearts: and, as your conversion to God is manifested in our hearts, so all men may read you, in your external reformation, your turning from idols to the living God, your separation from the world, your light and knowledge, shining in the midst of a crooked generation, your honest life and humble walk, your singularity and chaste conversation, the persecution you endure for Christ and conscience sake, which are manifest to all, and may be read by all men. So that the very heathen may say, “God hath done great things for you.”

“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us.” What the Saviour himself taught in his ministry, he hath by his Spirit written upon your hearts; and, as the scriptures are a sealed book, so hath he sealed you, upon your believing, with the holy spirit of promise; and you shall, by and bye, as the Lord’s secret treasure, be carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom, as so many love letters and living epistles; and there be opened, and openly read and acknowledged, before all the celestial inhabitants.

“Ministered by us.” You are the workmanship of us labourers, the seals of our mission and commission, the trophies of our victory, as good soldiers of Christ, and the crop and fruit of us ploughmen and vine-dressers; yea, the sheaves of the harvest in which we labour; which those that go forth weeping and bearing precious seed shall (at their return to

God) bring with them, as their joy and crown of rejoicing in that day. We shall present you to Christ at the beginning of the thousand years' reign upon the new earth, and Christ will present you to his Father in ultimate glory at the close of that period, when he delivers up, in full tale, all the subjects of his kingdom to the Father.

“Written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart” The word of truth in the scriptures is written with ink, but the impressions on your hearts is with humbling grace; the Bible was written by holy men with a pen, but your writing is by God himself, with the finger of his Spirit, and not in tables of stone, as the moral law was, but on the soft and fleshly tables of the heart; the stony heart being removed by a feeling sense of the pardoning love of God and a believing view of Christ; which lead men to contrition, meekness, humiliation, godly sorrow, and evangelical repentance; and make the impenitent, hard, and obdurate heart soft, and susceptible of every divine impression.

“And such trust have we through Christ to Godward.” We trust that what we have here asserted of your happy state, and of our success among you, is true. And this discernment of men and things we obtain by Christ, from whom all our wisdom, knowledge, and discernment comes. And it is “to Godward.” The acknowledgment of our success, and of our blessed state, is to the honour of God; for I will not boast of any thing that God has not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient either by word or deed.

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.” We are not sufficient to communicate the Spirit, truth, or grace, of God to men; nor sufficient to discern, read, think, or judge, aright of a work of grace upon the hearts of men.

“But our sufficiency is of God.” Our light, knowledge, grace, that we have, are of God's free gift; and so is all the success that has attended our labours. And, as for our discernment into your hearts, and knowledge of the goodness of your state, they are of God also; which he gives us light to see; and knowledge to judge of, and a persuasion in our own hearts that our judgment of you is true. Moreover, he told me “to speak boldly at Corinth, for he had much people in that city.” And it was by us that ye were called. God may use others, even men of one talent, graceless men, to cast a little light upon his word, and on your minds, and to furnish his spiritual

exchangers with some sound expressions for prayer and conversation; but he never uses nor honours these in converting souls to himself; for, “if ye have ten thousand instructors, ye have not many fathers; I have begotten you,” through the gospel; therefore our sufficiency is of God;

“Who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit.” The New Testament is the covenant of grace, which was made between the Father and the Son. But, when Christ had performed the conditions of it, and it became sealed and ratified by his blood, and of force by the death of the testator, it then became a testament, valid and of force; and no man may disannul, add thereunto, or make it void. It is of force to every heir of promise, who may come and receive the legacies that are therein appointed by the Father, and bequeathed by the Son, to him.

“An able minister of the New Testament” is one that has received the spirit of promise, one that has felt and enjoyed the truths, blessings, and promises, of the gospel in his own heart, and so “tells to others what God has done for his soul.” He has the Spirit, and is a minister of the Spirit; he is a partaker of grace, and a good steward of it; he is pardoned; and preaches, forgiveness; he is justified, and preaches righteousness; he believes, and therefore speaks; he is quickened, and holds forth the word of life; he is free, and preaches liberty to others; he made his own calling and election sure, and therefore shuns not to declare the whole counsel of God. Christ is revealed in him; and he bears him and preaches him amongst the Gentiles. He has felt the savour of his name as an ointment poured forth, and therefore is instrumental in making manifest the savour of his name in every place; he has salt in himself, and his words are seasoned with salt, to season others; he is illuminated, and lets his light shine before men; he is a candle on the stick, and gives, light to all that are in the house. Such an one, in the hands of Christ, is an able minister of the New Testament.

“Not of the letter,” which gives no life, no hope, no help; it brings nothing good to the sinner, but calls for every thing at his hands; it calls for love, for righteousness, for perfect and perpetual obedience; but gives no grace, mercy, nor salvation. A minister of the letter is a man dead to God, a miscarrying womb, and a dry breast to others; he is an instrument without life, giving uncertain sound; and a well without water, that refreshes none; he may furnish the head, but not manure the heart; he may nurse pride, but never nourish the soul; he may lead to presumption, but never can

communicate faith, being but a minister of the letter.

“For the letter killeth.” It threatens death temporal to every transgressor. The blasphemer was stoned without the camp; the worshippers of Baal-peor were killed on the spot, he that gathered sticks on the sabbath-day was killed at the command of God; the rebellious child, that dishonoured his parents, was to be stoned. It ministers spiritual death, cursing every transgressor who is under it, and already dead by it; and it ministers eternal death to both body and soul. It condemns the soul to eternal wrath, and the body to endless flames.

“But the Spirit giveth life.” It quickens the dead soul, gives it life and feeling, and motion towards God. It removes the sting of death by the application of the atonement, and removes the sentence of death by bringing in the righteousness of Christ. It works faith in the heart, and presents the Lord and giver of life to it, and so enables the soul to live by the faith of the Son of God.

“But, if the ministration of death written and engraven in stones was glorious” - The law was given with much glorious majesty. God came down upon mount Sinai; his chariots were twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; thunder, lightnings, smoke, and darkness, the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of Words. God wrote the law with his own finger, and gave it to the angels; and Moses received it by the disposition of them. The mediator had a ray of glory on his face when he delivered it, to give a sanction to it, and to put an honour upon the office of Moses: but, notwithstanding all this majestic glory, it is the ministration of death; and the glory itself was terrible to Israel.

“So that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away” - This last word glory is not in the original, but is supplied by the translators. This glory the children of Israel could not look to. The voice and terrible majesty of God brought them all in guilty before him, so that they could not endure the light; and the vail of ignorance was upon their hearts, that they could not see the meaning of it, and therefore darkness suited them best; And this is the case with every bond-child, to this day; he gropes at the old mount; amidst blackness and darkness; but bring him to Zion, the perfection of beauty, out of which God shines, and he shuns the rays and hates the light; nor will he come to it, lest his deeds should be reprov'd;

and this is his condemnation; and, as it is now, so it will be in the last day; he will call to the rocks and mountains to hide him from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; and, as he cannot endure the light, he shall be driven to outer darkness, to the generation of his fathers, and shall never see light. If all this glory attend the ministration of death,

“How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?” The law reveals the holiness and justice of God, and his wrath and indignation at all sin: but the gospel reveals and promises the Holy Ghost to every soul that believes; who is the God of glory, and makes the saints? bodies his own temple; who reveals the Father’s eternal love, grace, mercy, and goodwill of purpose and of promise; who shines with a glorious light, works a glorious work of grace, is an earnest of future glory, and a pledge of it, and will at last put the soul in full possession of it.

“For, if the ministration of condemnation be glory”? if a dispensation, that brings in the whole world guilty before God; which makes the offence of Adam abound, and all sin become exceeding sinful; that curses, condemns, and assigns men over to future judgment, there to have the sentence passed and eternally executed? be glory,

“Much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.” For the gospel reveals the righteousness of God fully satisfied by the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ; and the perfect obedience of the Son of God is clearly revealed in the gospel, and imputed by God himself to the justification of all that believe; who likewise promises grace and strength to help in every time of need, that we may be thoroughly furnished for every good work. As much as the incorruptible seed, the word of God, exceeds the letter; as eternal life exceeds eternal death; as much as a blessing exceeds a curse; and as righteousness exceeds condemnation; so much the everlasting gospel exceeds the moral law, engraven on tables of stone.

“For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.” The law was but a moon-light at best; which rules over the night, and over the children of the night and of darkness, who have the old vail upon their heart, and are of the works of the law, under it, and under the curse of it. But, like the moon, there is no heat to warm the heart in it, nor does it cause any genuine fruitfulness

in the barren soil that is under it. Bitter clusters of error, wild grapes of sin, and dead works, are all the fruits that can be found in bond-children; and you may as well expect grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles, as to look for any other from barren hearts, unrenewed by grace. But the gospel reveals God in all his glory and majesty; and Christ, the sun of righteousness, with all his reviving glorious light and heat, who turns the desert into a fruitful field, and the barren heart into a springing well: it brings life and immortality to light, and shews the way of life and the path of peace. As soon as the beams of light dart into the sinner's heart, and the glory of God rises upon him, this is the sun that shall never go down, but make the path of the just shine more and more, even to perfect day: and the child of light, however eclipsed, however obscure, hid, or unknown in this world, will at last shine forth as the sun in the glory of his Father's kingdom for ever and ever, When he comes to enjoy the inheritance with the saints in light. This is the glory that excelleth; the law had no glory in this respect, for it neither shews, discovers, nor gives, any of these things.

“For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” Paul here repeals his assertion, that the law is done away. The old covenant gives way to the new; the will of precept gives way to the will of purpose and of promise, which brings glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men. The new covenant is not according to the old; it is not a killing command and a cursing sentence; but is attended with the Spirit of God, who writes his laws of faith, truth, and liberty, in the sinner's mind; takes the, stony heart away, and gives a heart of flesh; pardons iniquity, and remembers sins no more; cleanses the sinner from all his filthiness and from all his idols, and brings him to loathe himself under the soul-melting flames of everlasting love. And this ministry shall ever remain, though the other is waxed old and vanished away because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it; for it made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh unto God; for Christ is not a priest after the law of a carnal commandment which ministers nothing but wrath and death to carnal men. For, though the law be spiritual, because it ministers spiritual and eternal death to the spirits and souls of men, yet its whole ministration is to carnal men; for it is not made for the righteous, but for the lawless and disobedient. But Christ is a priest after the power of an endless life, who lives in his office for ever, and has, by his one offering, perfected for ever all them that are sanctified in the purpose of God, and that he should give eternal life to all the chosen race.

“Seeing then that we have such hope”, that Christ is formed in our hearts the hope of glory; that we are brought to the God of hope; are happy partakers of the Spirit, and intrusted with the ministry of the Spirit of life and of righteousness, in which we hope?

“We use great plainness of speech.” We do not muzzle the truth, nor cover the force or blunt the edge of it; we do not corrupt the word, nor frustrate the grace of God, by walking in craftiness and handling the word of God deceitfully; we are not afraid that the truth of God and his sovereign grace will lead people into licentiousness; nor do we shun to declare the whole counsel of God, for fear of losing our good name and reputation. They call me an heretic, and my doctrine heresy; but, after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers. They charge me with saying, “Let us sin that grace may abound;” whose damnation is just. They call my preaching foolishness; but it pleases God to save all that believe in it: and call my gospel a lie; but it is plain that the truth of God abounds through my lie unto his glory; for his word runs, his grace is communicated, and God is glorified, in every soul that receives it. While these my traducers do no good, communicate no power, nor win one soul to Christ, they deceive themselves, and others too; and are nothing but false apostles, deceitful workers, and ministers of Satan; who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with divers sins, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Female followers suit them best; the weaker vessel is the soonest deceived. They are always in love, and cannot allure but only through the lust of the flesh and much wantonness. But we dare not compare ourselves with these. We are not of the number of preachers which men heap to themselves, who scratch itching ears and turn them from the truth to fables; nor a set of vain janglers, who desire to be teachers of the law, knowing neither what they say nor whereof they affirm: but we are ministers of God, not of men, nor by men, nor did we learn our gospel of men, nor were we taught it but by the revelation of Christ. God revealed his Son in us, that we should bear him and preach him among the Gentiles; and we are determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; for he is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. Knowing, therefore, of whom we learned these things, and in whom see have believed; and seeing the success that attends our labours, and how you are all partakers of our grace; and seeing how you shine as lights in the world, who have received the truth by us; we have made full proof of the ministry, and by a

manifestation of it have appealed to your consciences in the sight of God, and have seen the power and blessed effects of it upon you; and, therefore, without mincing the matter, and without fearing an ill name from man, we use great plainness of speech.

“And not as Moses, who put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.”

In handling these words, I will,

Treat of the office of Moses.

Of the glory of his face.

Of the vail upon it.

Of the end which Israel could not see.

(and lastly). Of the abolition of the law

First, Moses was one of the children of Israel, of the stock of Abraham and tribe of Levi; a brother to the rest of the tribes; flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone; and, as such, was a type of that plant of renown, that Israelite indeed in whose mouth was no guile, who was the brother born for adversity; made flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone.

Secondly, He was raised up, appointed, commissioned, and sent, by God himself, to deliver the children of Israel from Pharaoh, that river dragon, and from their cruel task-masters. He delivered their necks from the yoke of bondage, their souls from the iron furnace, and their fingers from the pots. In all which he was a figure of the better Deliverer, who delivers us from that old dragon the devil, from the tyranny of oppressors and of reigning sins, the galling yoke of our transgressions, the yoke of legal bondage, from the furnace of divine wrath, and our fingers from the potsherds of the earth. He executed judgment upon Egypt, shewed the goodness and severity of God at the Red Sea, led them through the wilderness, and never left them until he brought them in sight of the promised land. In all which he was a type of Christ, but came short of him in every thing. Christ came for judgment into this world, that they who see not might see, and those that see might be made blind. He executed

vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their rejection of him and cruelty to his church. He shews his goodness to all that obey him, and his severity to all that hate him; leads his people through the wilderness of this world, and brings them into the promised land, which is very far off. Moses had a miraculous rod, with which he smote the waters and turned them into blood, by which he divided the sea, and under which Israel prevailed and Amalek was defeated: a faint emblem this of the Saviour's sceptre, with which he smites the earth and slays the wicked; by the sway of which righteous sceptre he doth in righteousness judge and make war; and by the same rod of his strength, sent out of Zion, He rules in the midst of Jerusalem; and under which we are enabled to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Moreover,

Moses was invested with the high office of mediator, He found grace in the sight of the Lord; was indulged with access to him, and communion with him; he was God's mouth to the people, and the people's mouth to God; and was allowed to stand in the gap when the anger of the Almighty waxed hot against the rebels. In all which he represented the better Mediator of the better covenant; who found grace in the eyes of the Lord for all his members; who engaged his heart to draw near to God, and appears in his presence for us; by whom in these last days the Father hath spoken to us, and who in his intercession speaks to God for us; who, as our daysman, has laid his hand upon both, broken down the middle wall of partition, made peace by the blood of his cross, and stands in the gap for ever, to receive gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell amongst them. Furthermore,

“Moses was a prophet. He foretold a Messiah to come, and that all the saints should be in his hand; that they should all sit down at his feet, and be taught of him; and the vengeance that should fall on the rejectors of him. He pointed out the word of faith and imputed righteousness by him, which is witnessed both by the law and the prophets; shewed the vanity of all human righteousness, and foretold the calamities of those that should lightly esteem this Rock of salvation. In all which Christ is a prophet like unto him who has foretold the salvation of the Gentiles and the restoration of the Jews; the righteousness, life, peace, rest, and happiness, that all should enjoy who receive him; and the destruction of the Jewish nation for rejecting him; the desolation of all that are incensed against him, and the dreadful damnation of all that hear and despise his everlasting gospel. Again,

Moses was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the tribes were gathered together. And in this he was a figure of the King of righteousness and King of peace, who is set upon the holy hill of Zion; and of whose increase, government, and kingdom, there should be no end. This leads me to my second general head, which is to treat of

“The glory of Moses’ face.” The Lord, having appeared on the mount in thick darkness, and spoken to them in the secret place of thunder, and ordered bounds to be set all round the mount, that none might break through to gaze, left the following ways open. One was by having a name on the breast-plate of the high-priest, who was to approach through the veil to the mercy-seat; and the other was by Moses as the Mediator of the new covenant, the apostle and high-priest of our profession, and the only throne of grace, propitiation, and mercy-seat. There was a glory between the cherubim; Urim and Thummim in the breast-plate of judgment; and the glory of God on the face of Moses. But now he that dwelt between the cherubim has stirred up his strength and come among us; light and perfection are found in the Holy One; and the glory of God is only to be seen in the face of Jesus. Here we are to look that we may be enlightened, for every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of light by and through Jesus Christ. If our language be, “Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us;” the answer is, “Have I been so long with you, and hast thou not seen me, Philip?” To Jesus we must look for the express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory; and here we shall see him at once, for so it is written; “God, who caused the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This is the light of the Lord’s countenance, which lay hid in Israel’s blessing, “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; and the Lord give thee peace.” The lifting up the light of the Lord’s countenance brings favour and life; and the light and love that are reflected by it shew us the consecrated way through the veil, and sweetly attract the soul to God, until the heart is so inflamed, and our nearness so great, that “he that loveth dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him:” and here we look as through a mirror, till “we are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” And this was shewed to the three witnesses on mount Tabor, when Moses the mediator, and Elijah the prophet, appeared in glory, both to resign their offices to the only prophet of his church, and to the only mediator of the better testament. At which

time the Lord Jesus appeared in his proper lustre, and through the veil of his flesh let his natural rays of infinite divinity, glory, and majesty shine forth; at which time Moses and Elijah resigned their offices; and in the glorious vision withdrew, and appeared no more; to let the witnesses see that the borrowed rays on Moses' face are no where to be seen but in the face of the Son of God, who is the fountain of glory; light, life, and love.

Again. The light of glory on the face of Moses was to shew the original of the law, to give a sanction to it, and to put an honour on the office of Moses; that the law was given by the God of glory, and was to be received as such, being attended with the glory, of God on the face of the mediator of it, who brought it to them. But, then all this was to lead the people to another Mediator, to a brighter glory, and another dispensation, which was to be written on the fleshly tables of sinners' hearts and to be attended with the glory of God by the coming of the Holy Ghost: the original of which is from God, the fountain of all grace; and which brings life and immortality to light in the sinner's soul, that the ever-blessed Mediator may be glorified; for God will have the Son honoured even as himself is honoured by all that believe, and will display "the riches of his grace in glory by Jesus Christ" for this very end and purpose, that all who are saved and glorified may ascribe their salvation equally to God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

And, lastly, This glory on the face of Moses, in the ultimate end of its signification, was to show, not only the glorious vision of faith in this militant state, but the glorious views of the Saviour in the world to come; when we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known; awake in his likeness, and be for ever satisfied therewith. This is the mystery of Moses' rays. I come now,

Thirdly, to the veil upon his face. This veil sheweth, that the law then given was a veil, or covering, over the covenant of grace, which God made with Abraham; and that this covenant lay hid under it; that Moses himself, and his law on tables of stone, were swaddling bands over the law of faith, which ever was and ever will be written on the fleshly tables of the heart of God's elect when called by grace: and this veil was a covering over the better Mediator, "who stood behind this wall, and shewed himself through this lattice;" and that the better covenant was hid under the law, and only here and there peeped out in an unconditional promise, here a little and there a little, in such passages as these; "The Lord will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, that thou mayest love the Lord with all thine

heart, that thou mayest live." "He shall raise you up a prophet like unto me; him shall ye hear." "He is thy life, and the length of thy days." "He is the rock, and his work is perfect." "Say not, who shall ascend into heaven, or descend." "That (says Paul) is the word of faith that we preach." "The word is nigh thee," &c. "Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." "Pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; and will not clear the guilty" - that is, not without satisfaction by a surety. All these, with all the shadows of the ceremonial law, were so many branches of the everlasting gospel, which shone through the vail of that dark dispensation, and which Israel could not see; but took the law as their rule of righteousness, by which they thought to obtain eternal life, when it only promised life in the land of Canaan. They sought righteousness by the works of it, and never attained to it; but stumbled at the Rock of ages. They called themselves Moses' disciples, who accuses them to the Father for rejecting the prophet he foretold should come; threatening them with destruction if they refused to obey his voice: hence, being dead, he yet speaketh in his testimony against them; but they clove to their accuser, and cursed and killed the only Advocate, who shewed himself to their fathers behind the skirt of Moses, and whose glorious gospel lay couched under his killing letter. This was the delusion of poor Paul: "he thought the law was ordained to life; but, when the commandment came, he found it to be unto death." And thus "their table" of the law "became a snare unto them, and that which should have been for their welfare" (properly viewed) "became a trap;" the way that seemed right unto them became, in the end, the way of death; "for the way of God is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath." The wise and learned scribe, and the self-righteous pharisee, who thought themselves, and no others, at the portals of heaven, were displaced by the publicans and harlots; and they themselves were left to add sin to sin, by not entering heaven themselves, and by hindering others who were going; and thus became the deceivers of the sons of men, the murderers of the Son of God, and the awful heirs of the greater damnation.

And the church of God at the present day swarms with such as these; who have no holiness but a sheep's skin, an outward shew in the flesh, a voluntary humility, natural meekness, and the art of moving the passions of poor sinners, in order to counterfeit the operations of the Holy Ghost. And thus they who sit under them are deceived by the art of oratory, by having their feelings affected, their blood moved, and their natural and corrupt affections stirred up - -by an audible voice, a hollow speech, whining art,

and crocodile tears; when such are conscious to themselves that they are destitute of grace, and in a state of enmity to God; that they aim at nothing but a livelihood, and that the work of the pulpit is the hardest labour they grapple through. Being destitute of the well of living water, the whole of their matter is pressed from their library, committed to a treacherous memory, and brought forth as empty husks from the external surface of the letter, without any light into the matter, or life in the means, unctuous experience of it, or faith in it: it is the work of a blind watchman, who speaks a vision out of his own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord; having seen nothing, and known nothing, but what he knows naturally.

Secondly, This veil was to shew the Israelites that Christ, the light of God's Israel, and the co-eternal beam with God the Father, was then shining in the face of Moses, to lead their minds to the sinner's only and everlasting friend; and that after that glory and that divine ray they should seek, however it might be veiled or wrapped up - whether by the law then given, or the cloud that went before the camp, or by the napkin that was before Moses' face, or by the veil which parted the holy place from the sanctum sanctorum, or by the lid of the ark; all these being types of the humanity of Christ. "The way into the holy of holies is now consecrated through the veil of his flesh," and within that veil "dwells all the fullness of the godhead bodily;" and through which veil, on mount Tabor, in the sight of Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John, the light shone, to the astonishment of every witness: which vision was to be published to the world after his resurrection from the dead; and for the which testimony I have obtained the name of "a liar, a deceiver, an Antinomian, a dangerous man, a disturber of the churches, a sower of discord, and a smiter of my fellow-servants." But my work is with my God; nor do I call one preacher in five hundred my fellow-servant in the kingdom and patience of Christ, unless acquainted with the power of Christ, in which his kingdom stands; with that righteousness, peace, and joy, of which it consists; and of the patience of Christ, which is a grace of his, exercised towards him, in his cause, and in the defence of his truth. All other patience, however tried or exercised, is nothing but a being buffeted for their faults, and reproved for running unsest of God; for vitiating the minds of the people against the truth, for misleading the blind, and for corrupting the covenant of life and peace, which was with Levi. However, all who are real labourers in the Lord's vineyard - all that preach Christ crucified in sincerity and truth - such preachers, and only such, have my best wishes and hearty prayers. But I have no call to sound my own trumpet; God will bring this forth at the

great day, when every heart will be open, every desire known, and every real petition in faith fully answered.

Secondly, This veil was to lead Israel to the incarnation of Christ, or to the long-predicted and promised seed, in human nature (as hath been already hinted). Moses, with this veil on his face, was to point them to the glorious mediator Christ Jesus; and to the fullness of grace and truth that was to shine forth in him; as they have recorded, who saw his glory and spake of him. And this was shown with a witness, when they pierced his side on the cross; at which instant the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, as a proof that the shadow was then vanished, and that the real substance was then come; that he who dwelt between the cherubim was gone out through the veil; that he had quitted his holy habitation, broke up housekeeping, and left his house desolate, Christ now becoming the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, called by the prophet Ezekiel a sanctuary. "And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Into which all the elect are to be gathered, in the unity of the faith, as to their Covenant Head and God of all grace and providence, who is to shelter all fowl of every wing.

But, thirdly, This veil was to convince Israel of their native guilt, enmity, and blindness of mind. Of their guilt - They could not see the light. Of enmity - "They could not endure that which was spoken." Of blindness - "They could not see to the end of that which is abolished." Hence to this day, when the Old Testament is read without the light of Christ, the veil of the law is all that is seen; and there is another veil upon their hearts, which is called "a covering cast over all nations." The god of this world still blinds the minds of them which believe not, lest the glorious light of the gospel should shine unto them. and they should be saved. And which "covering" can only be destroyed by the anointing, that is, by the eye-salve, or unction of the Holy Ghost, who teacheth us all things, and is no lie; and by turning the heart to the Lord Jesus: when this is done, "the veil shall be taken away;" that is, when the heart of the sinner shall be turned to the Lord; then he shall see Moses borrowed rays in Christ Jesus; the servant's glory in the Son's face; yea, the glory of God in the face of Jesus, and the law fulfilled and established in the everlasting gospel.

Fourthly, This veil was to shew them that the way into heaven by a better Mediator was then hid, and not made manifest: for the Holy Ghost,

by Moses and by this veil, by the tabernacle and the vail of that, this signified - that the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest, while that worldly sanctuary, and the ministry of it, were then standing. But now the law is magnified, the better Mediator hath appeared, the better covenant is revealed, the way of life cast up, the door of hope opened; and free, full, and eternal salvation by grace proclaimed to every self-lost, self-condemned, and self-despairing sinner, whether Jew or Gentile.

Fifthly, This vail was to shew the superior privileges of the children of Israel to all the rest of the world. They had a vail to look through, but the Gentiles had none; the law encompassed them as a partition wall (“For you only,” says God, “have I known of all the families of the earth”), while the poor Gentiles were in utter darkness, left to their own ways, given up to a reprobate mind, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, without God, and having no hope in the world:” Which partition wall, vail of separation, and obscure covering, was to be removed when Christ came and the Holy Ghost was poured forth; then the holy waters of the sanctuary, which came under the threshold, from the fountain of the Fathers love, went forth, overflowing all the banks of separation, and ran into the sea of the Gentile world; causing all to die that touched them, and raising up trees of righteousness on each side of the banks, both of Jews and Gentiles; causing some, instrumentally, to be for meat, and others for medicine. This vail is now done away, and of twain Christ hath made one new man; there is one fold and one shepherd, “though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.”

Sixthly, This vail pointed to the remains of darkness that should remain in the best of men; that none would know but in part, and prophesy in part; that they would see only through a glass darkly, and that mortality and her shrouds would be a heavy vail upon the hearts of the brightest saints and servants of the Lord, who would at times grope like the blind at noon day: but that the time would come when this sackcloth, in which we now prophesy, would be put off; when mortality would be swallowed up of life; when he who only hath immortality would appear, and burst the vail of corruption, and of the grave also, and raise the sleeping dust of the saints to a state of immortality, glory, power, and eternal felicity! Thus much for the vail of Moses; which leads me to the fourth general head, which is to shew the end that Israel could not look to:

“They could not look steadfastly to the end of that which is abolished.”

The end of which is the Lord Jesus Christ, personated by Moses; who was to be born of the children of Israel, made of a woman, made under the law: and who, as the sinners surety, was to discharge their infinite debts, “and restore that honour to the law which he took not away.” And this is published by the Lord himself, in the proclamation of his ever-blessed and ever-adorable name, “The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, pardoning iniquity, transgressions, and sin, and who will not clear the guilty,” or at all acquit the wicked, “nor hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.” All which was to shew the need of. a surety, and. the certainty of one; that God never could clear the guilty without satisfaction, nor hold any guiltless without an atonement; nor shew mercy to any, much less to thousands, without a perfect obedience to the law which was then given. And this surety Moses then personated, his high office he then bore, of him he prophesied, and of his righteousness he witnessed; who was to be sent into the world, and should be a prophet like unto Moses, be circumcised, and so become a debtor, in the debtors law, place, to keep the whole law, and thereby fulfil all righteousness; who, by holiness, by love, and in life, never deviated from one tittle of it; but could appeal to God his Father for the perfection of his obedience: “Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;” I have obeyed thy law perfectly; have magnified it, and made it honourable; and now I come to thee, holy Father, by the sacrifice of myself, in which I will endure the curse, appease thy wrath, satisfy justice, make an atonement for sins; and so, as a surety, be numbered with the transgressors, make my grave with the wicked and with the rich in my death, and arise to an immortal life, as the first fruits of all that sleep: by which I shall dethrone Satan, destroy death, be the plague of the grave, and bring life and immortality to light in the souls of my purchased inheritance.

It is needful to make a difference between the law of God, which was given by Moses, and the law of truth, which came by Jesus Christ, Mal. ii. 6. The Father says, “he shall magnify the law,” which is the moral law; and then he was to publish his own law, which is the law of faith. “The isles shall wait for his law,” which was to be sealed among his disciples. He kept his Fathers commandments, and abode in his love; and we are to keep Christ’s commandments, and abide in his love. Christ was a servant, whom the Father upheld; and, as such, obeyed the legal precepts; and the life-giving commandment is “made known to us for obedience to the faith,” Rom. i. 5.

The moral law is a chastening rod in the hand of God the Father, which he uses upon all the elect children that he has given to Christ, who are all of them transgressors of his law, being by nature under it, and children of wrath even as others; and guilty before him: hence it is, "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not make void from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to lie," Psalm lxxxix. 30, 31, 32. All the elect have broken this law - therefore God sends the commandment home, and reveals his wrath in the soul till the sinner becomes dead, and left without either hope or help, the Father then leads the soul to Christ, in whom he has chosen him, where loving kindness is to be had, and where faithfulness is not to fail.

"Thus God chastens the sinner upon his bed with pains, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain; so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat; his flesh is consumed, that it cannot be seen; and his bones, that were not seen, stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life unto the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith. Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." Job, xxxiii. This is God the Fathers teaching. An "interpreter" is one that has passed under it, understands it, and can explain it to others; and these are like Solomon's "faithful men." "One among a thousand;" he is to shew the uprightness of God, in correcting the sinner for his folly, and then to point him to Christ, the ransom which God has provided, where he can be gracious unto him, and deliver him from going down into the pit.

When Moses passed under this discipline, he expected nothing but destruction; till Christ was exhibited to his faith, and God called him to the fellowship of him. "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men," Ps. xc. 3.

Those who never knew any thing of this severity of God, never rightly knew any thing of his goodness. God gave Israel the law first, and then ordered a mercy-seat to be made. He disciplined them with blackness and darkness, storm and tempest, and spoke to them in the secret place of thunder; and after that pointed them to Christ by a sacrifice, and to the voice of mercy from off the mercy-seat; and he does the same now: "Like as

I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant," Ezek. xx. 36,37. God's pleading against the sinner in the law, is to teach him the need of an advocate; passing under the rod, is feeling the terrors of the law; and going into the bond of the covenant, is the enjoyment of Gods eternal love in Christ Jesus, which neither life nor death shall ever separate us from.

David, under this severe discipline, sunk into "the horrible pit" and into "the miry clay;" and would have sunk into the bottomless pit to all eternity, if God had not led him to Christ, which he calls "the rock higher than I," where God put a new song in his mouth, fixed his heart, and established his goings.

The generality of converts in our days escape all this teaching, of the Father; they get married to the second husband before the first is dead; they tell us they were drawn by love," they dwell on high, their place of defence is the munitions of rocks, they see the King in his beauty, and the land which is very far off;" Isa. xxxiii. 16, 17. But God says, "thine heart shall meditate terror;" Isaiah, xxxiii. 18. Such converts begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh: they are not Gods blessed ones. For, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, till the pit be digged up for the wicked," Psalm xciv. 12, 13. And why is the man blessed that is thus chastened with terrors, and taught to know the terrible majesty of God and his own sin and condemnation out of the law? Because, to such a weary and heavy laden sinner, God gives his soul rest by faith in Christ Jesus, till the pit be digged up for the wicked. Here he quits his yoke and his burden, and in Christ finds rest, an easier yoke, and a lighter burden. Under his teaching David had fainted, unless faith had been wrought in his heart: "I had fainted unless I had believed."

This chastening of the Father is called our judgment: "When we are chastened we are judged of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the world." We are judged by the law, and condemned to death; then led to Christ, to believe in him for righteousness; and so "pass from death to life, and never more come into condemnation." And thus our judgment by the law drives us from it, and from the wrath to come, revealed in it, to embrace the refuge set before us, which is Christ; where we find life for the dead, and righteousness for the ungodly; and thus, as David says,

“Judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it,” Psalm xciv. 15.

But it may be asked, Why does God appear so terrible in his law? Because every sinner has broken it, and is cursed by it; and because God does not appear in Christ in this dispensation, but out of Christ as incarnate, and, as Paul says, “a consuming fire:” and he that drives the saint to this law, drives him into the fire, where Christ profits him nothing. The law, in the hand of God, is our schoolmaster until Christ is revealed; but, when faith in him comes, we are no longer under the schoolmaster. And to this agrees the Saviour: “Every one that hath learned of the Father cometh unto me, and him that cometh I will in nowise cast out.” And his counsel to such is, “Abide in me” - for the reasons above mentioned.

Let us now see what poor sinners learn by this teaching. Job learned the need of a surety. He knew God would not, could not, hold him innocent, because he possessed the iniquities of his youth. He said God had sealed up his transgressions in a bag; and that God was so just and wise, that in judgment he could not answer him one word in a thousand; and therefore begs him to put him in a surety, and to lead him to his seal, where he might “be delivered for ever from his judge.”

David, under this teaching, “turned his feet to God’s testimonies; he made haste, and delayed not, to keep the commandments;” but found that no flesh could be justified this way, and, therefore prayed God not to enter into judgment with him, in the great day, on the footing of the law; and entreated Christ to be surety for his servant for good. Here David learned the extent of the killing commandment; and, when he found Christ, he found the end that the law aimed at. “I have seen an end of all, perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad.” And, being pardoned and justified by faith in the surety, and in his righteousness, and so delivered from legal bondage, and upheld by a free spirit, he pronounces the blessedness of such a man. “Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is covered: and blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit is no guile.” Thus the psalmist learnt to sing both of mercy and of judgment; and Paul learnt the terrors of the Lord in the law, and his eternal love in Christ. Hence it appears that the moral law is found in the hand of God the Father; but the scripture never says it is in the hand of Christ, as too many assert; for I have already proved that it is no part of Christ’s sceptre, which comes, not

from Sinai, but out of Zion. But ministers, and their converts, in our days, have found out quite another way, and an easier method of salvation; for this is, in their esteem, the rant of an Antinomian: however, I know it is God's way, and the good old way.

Thus Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; the end that the law looked to for a perfect obedience; the end which the Father looked unto to have it magnified; the end that justice looked to for satisfaction; and the end that every self-condemned sinner must look to for righteousness, if ever he be saved. Christ has obeyed the law perfectly, and "by the obedience of" that "one shall many be made righteous." he has appeased the wrath of God, and opened a way for his love to be "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us;" he gives us his Holy Spirit to make us holy, and teaches us by his grace to love one another: by which four things "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" And thus "the law was our schoolmaster until Christ" came to us: "but, after he is come, we are no longer under a school master, but are redeemed from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Yea, we are divorced from the law as a barren husband, that can produce no fruit or fruitfulness in us, that we should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead (which Moses is not), that we should bring forth fruit unto God: and therefore are not adulteresses in the sight of God, though we quit the law of Moses, and be married to another; seeing that the first husband made us barren, and the second makes us fruitful; who marries the widow, raises up the name of the dead upon the inheritance, and does so worthily in Ephratah, and is so famous in Bethlehem; who has raised up an everlasting name, which shall not be cut off; who is such a father of the fatherless, and such a husband to the widow, in his holy habitation, as to make them forget the shame of their barrenness in the days off their youth, and remember the reproach of their widow bond no more: for He is our Maker who is our husband; "the Lord of hosts is his name, the God of the whole earth shall he be called." This is he who is eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; who plucks the spoil out of the jaws of the oppressor, and makes the widows heart to sing for joy. And, as he is the fulfilling end of the moral law, to which justice looked for satisfaction, to which the law looked for honour; so he is the end to which we must look for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and for grace to perform every righteous act, if ever we would follow after righteousness, or be found in one that will stand us in any stead in the great

day; for we are all taught and led to look for “the hope of righteousness” which is by faith. And thus this righteousness appears to be the perfect obedience of Christ to the law; which God accepts, which is imputed by God himself to all that believe; and therefore it is God that justifies. This obedience of Christ is brought to us, and applied by the Spirit of our God, and therefore we are said to be “justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” It is received and put on by faith; therefore we are said to be “justified by faith” and the soul that has got it makes an honest confession of his lost estate, and of the free, justifying grace of God to him; on which account he is said to be “justified in his sayings, and clear when he is judged.” And this righteousness justifies him before God: “for, if Abraham were justified, by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God:” and this righteousness, or justification before God, is attended with a sincerity of heart, a humble walk, a tender conscience, and an honest life; in which sense (and before men), “by works a man is justified, and not by faith only;” as Abraham was by offering up his son, which was done after the justification of his person; as Rahab was by receiving the spies in peace, and sending them out another way; and as every righteous man is, by letting his light of knowledge shine before men, and by letting others see his good works, his works of faith, his labours of love, and his patience of hope, in the Lord Jesus Christ. And I think treating the subject in this manner is doing the work of an evangelist, and making full proof of the ministry: it is fighting the good fight of faith, giving a certain sound by the gospel trumpet, and running the Christian race with certainty: without yea and nay, without “Lo here” and “Lo there,” without, vain jangling, without beating the air, without pro and con, without a mixture of Hebrew and Ashdod, without daubing with untempered mortar, without building again that which I destroyed, without beginning in the flesh and ending in the Spirit, and without ifs and buts and “I trust,” &c. - which leave all at an uncertainty; when the effect of righteousness in our days is to be peace and assurance for ever, and quietness and confidence is to be our strength.

I come now, in the last place, to treat of the abolition of the law; which will probably procure and secure me all the malice and envy that devils can infuse or men ferment, and perhaps as many vilifying letters, and pence for postage, as I have hairs upon my head: but my good name is gone without any open scandal, and those that have watched for my halting are not as yet come to their banquet; they have coined a phrase of their own, have made me an offender for not acknowledging that word, and have lain in wait for me when reproving in the gate. They that have combined against me,

in defence of the law, have called themselves an “evangelical association;” others, in the possession of two wives, have publicly reproached me as an Antinomian for seven years together, and contended for the law “as their only rule; forgetting the seventh commandment, which forbids adultery, and the criterion of a bishop, which is to be “the husband of one wife;” others, who have traduced me worse than a devil, have blamed me for a bad spirit; others, in language too bad for Billingsgate, call upon me for charity; these can see a mote through a beam of timber; and some who have shut me out of their pulpits, have contended for a rule that tells them “to do as they would be done by;” and thus I have ten thousand instructors, but not one earthly father.

Some tell us that all the angels in heaven are under the moral law, forgetting that Gods voice in the law is “to the sons of men,” not to angels; and that the law of angels is not the will of precept, which is the will of the master to the earthly servant; “for angels (as well as gospel ministers) are evangelical, and not bond servants; are elected and confirmed in their standing in Christ Jesus; have the same rule as God’s sons have; and, according to Christ’s words, it is the good will of the Father, and not the will of the slaves master, which is the rule of angels - Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” Hence it appears to be the good will of the Father’s purpose, who elected them in Christ Jesus, which is the law of the elect angels, called the will of God done in heaven by angels, who are confirmed in Christ; of whom Moses never was the head, nor the lawgiver, but Christ, who is the head of all principalities and powers; and “into whose glorious gospel the angels desire to look, and “to whom, even now - unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places - is known, by the church,” (not by the law) “the manifold wisdom of God.”

I know “Moses hath in every city them that preach him;” who cry up the servant in order to exhalt themselves, that they may have some room for boasting. But God tell us that Moses, his servant, is dead, and that the haughty shall be humbled, and the Lord of Hosts only shall be exalted in gospel days. And it is well known that “a minister, of the letter” can do nothing, nor cut any figure, but in the letter of the law; “for, as a thorn goeth up in the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools;” for he is so galled in his conscience while he is about it, that he appears only as a brier and a thorn, who is nigh unto cursing in the eyes of every experienced soul that hears him and, like Abraham’s ram in the thicket, he

can never get out of the entanglement either with truth or honour, because he is nothing but an impostor; and both God and conscience rebuke him for taking the covenant in his mouth.

Some tell us that “if the law is done away to the believer, the believer can never die, death being the sentence of the law.” in one sense this is true, for “he that believes shall never die.” But I think they have forgotten that “Christ to this end died, rose again, and revived: that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living;” and that no saint liveth to himself, or dieth to himself; but, whether he live or die, he is the Lord’s. Death, as the sentence of the law, is a penal evil; but death in Christ is a new covenant gift. “All things are yours, whether life or death.” To the sinner it is a cursed end, to the believer a blessed one; “the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed;” but, “blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” Death, armed with guilt and the curse of the law, is “the king of terrors;” but, disarmed of its sting, “a shadow.” Death to the sinner is “the beginning of judgment,” but to the believer “the end of his faith.” Job longed for it, Jacob waited for it, and Simeon prayed for it; and no wonder, for “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” Besides, Christ is the grand example, pattern, and forerunner, and the first fruits of them that slept; and it is needful that his followers should follow their Head, and be conformable unto his death. He was the first to whom the path of life was shewn; for, though the widows son, by Elijah; another by Elisha; Lazarus, and many more, by Christ, were raised from the dead; yet it was only to a mortal life; they died again; and, though Enoch and Elijah went to heaven without tasting death, yet they never went from the tomb: Christ was the first that ever trod the way to an immortal life from the grave. “Thou hast made known to me the way of life,” &c. Furthermore, believers are to be “planted together in the likeness of Christ’s death, and in the likeness of his resurrection. If one died for all, then were all dead when he died, and with my dead body shall they arise.” Instead of believers never dying, it is plain they die twice, and some have died daily. Their first death is by the application of the law’s sentence, when the law comes with power, when sin revived, and the sinner dies; and their first resurrection is under the operation of the Spirit of God: and there is a dying again. But we should make a distinction between dying in faith, and dying in sin; between dying in the flesh, and in the Lord; between the flesh resting in hope, and perishing in its own corruption: and between falling asleep in Jesus, and going down to the grave with a lie in the right hand.

Others tell us, that “the law is the legal covenant, of grace:” which is as full of sense, and as pregnant with meaning, as to talk of black snow, or white charcoal; for it amounts to this; that Gods free grace is the just wages of the sinners dead works; which wages, or reward, if it be of grace, is no more of works; but, if of works, then it is no more of grace: one must give way to make room for the other; either works must be no more works, or grace must be no more grace. But we know that “God gave it to Abraham, and his seed, by promise.”

Others, who are more learned, tell us that what is said in this chapter to be done away and abolished, is the glory of Moses face: but this glory was done away long before Christ came. We do not read of his face shining, but only at the giving of the law or while God abode upon the mount; for we can hardly think that Moses walked for eight and thirty years with a napkin on his face: and, could this be proved, we know that the rays of his face must be done away at death. The face of Moses had been buried in the country of Moab many hundred years before Christ came in the flesh: nor can we suppose that the Redeemers errand into this world was only to wipe off the rays from the face of Moses. This is not the end spoken of in my text, to which the children of Israel could not steadfastly look. Christ is not called “the end of Moses face,” but “the end of the law;” the magnifying, the honour giving, the perfectly obeying, the punctually fulfilling, the doing away, and the abolishing “end of the moral law for righteousness to every one that believeth;” and to none else; for such, and only such, “are justified freely from all things:” and if they are not justified from the galling yoke of the moral precept, which is, “Do, and live” (which precept never was altered by Christ, nor shall be); if they are still under the law as their rule of life, they are under the curse; for a precept without a sentence is no law; therefore, if this is the cast, they are not “justified from all things,” nor from the worst thing, nor from any thing; for there is no separating the precept of the law from the sentence: Christ never did this, and I know he never will. He came not to divide the law, nor to alter the law; there is not a hint of this in all the Bible. He fulfilled every precept of it in behalf of his own elect; which obedience God accepted, and to every believer he imputes it: but to the reprobate the law is still, in the hand of God the Father, what it ever was; a covenant of works. God reckons the reward of such to be of debt. It is a dreadful rod in the hand of God, even to his own children, when he lays it on; and this Paul found when his sin revived and he died: and he would have died for ever if Christ had not appeared; “but it pleased God to reveal his Son in him.” And if it is a dreadful rod

in the Fathers hand to the elect, what must it be in the hand of an angry God to the sinner? Why it is a fiery law still; and that they shall find who set themselves against him and his anointed. "Let us break their bands asunder, and east their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, he shall have them in derision; then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure: yet have I set my King upon my holy hill." Thus you see that God takes all those into his hand who reject his anointed, and in all the wrath of the law still speaks to them, and vexes them in his sore displeasure; yea, all that make a match with Christ, before their first husband be dead, God takes into his hands; every plant that he hath not planted he plucks up; and every branch in Christ that bears not fruit - all barren branches, apostates, and hypocrites - he takes away from Christ, who is the sinners only refuge and hiding place; and such fall under all the storms of his wrath; and in the law, not in Christ, God appears to them, and in that law he is a consuming fire; and a terrible thing it is to be taken from the living vine and only refuge, and then to fall into the hands of the living God. Such wretches see not a God in Christ, but a consuming fire and a slighted Saviour. Hence the awful cry, "Hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." They, who talk of the believers being under the moral law in the hand of Christ, talk nonsense; the moral law is in the hand of an angry God to every sinner. Hence the Fathers counsel to his children, "Turn to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope;" and Christ's advice is, "Abide in me," for those that turn from me to their crooked ways, my Father will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; and those that depart from "the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the dead;" and, if you go over to the law, either for righteousness or perfection, I shall profit you nothing; therefore "abide in me, for he that abides in me, and I in him, brings forth much fruit," and "my Father purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Those that are making their boast of the law, and bringing the believer under it as his rule, little think what they are doing; they have no experience of these things, or has God revealed these to them, nor have they the Spirit to lead them, and therefore know not what they say nor whereof they affirm. And I know several, who have been for years labouring at the law; not fully, but against the gospel; who by their countenances shew what hands they are fallen into; they feel something of it, but do not understand it, and therefore call it temptation, the workings of unbelief, and the trial of faith; but the truth is, it is the bondage of the law, the wrath of God, and the fearfulness of hypocrites; for, "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Paul, in his explanation

of this mystery in this chapter, doth not palm the glory upon Moses, but upon the law. The glory, which appeared upon the face of Moses, was to give a sanction to the law; and it was a miracle of the lawgiver to confirm the law to Israel, that it was of God, divine, and authentic. Paul takes the glory from the face of Moses, and puts it upon the tables of stone; "but if the ministration of death written and engraven upon stones was glorious." v. 7; "for if the ministration of condemnation be glory," v. 9. The law, which in the seventh verse is said to be glorious, is in the ninth verse emphatically said to be "glory; but that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect," because it made nothing perfect, and "because of the glory that excelleth," which is the bringing in of a better hope; "for, if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." Hence it is plain that the glorious ministration of death engraven on stones - the glory called the ministration of condemnation - is excelled, done away, and abolished by the gospel. And, although in the last clause of the seventh verse it is written "which glory was to be done away," that word glory, is not in the original text, nor has it any business there; for Paul is not opposing the glory of the gospel to the glory on Moses face, for these glories in the mystery are one in Christ; but to the moral law he opposeth the gospel, and tells us that the one is done away and abolished, that the other, which excels, may remain. And certainly it is shaken, waxed old, decayed, and vanished away; that the kingdom which we have received may stand by itself, and which shall never, be shaken. "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and many are pressing into it"

Not long since, at a friend's house, I got hold of the Bishops Bible; wherein it is twice declared, in the chapter out of which my text is taken, that the law is abolished. In the same house I saw a learned commentator on the Bible, who dropped many pretty things on this chapter, but skipped entirely over the words done away and abolished; to escape, as I suppose, the name of an Antinomian. But many are my godfathers and godmothers who have given me this name; and therefore as I have no good name to lose, I shall, with Paul, use great boldness and plainness of speech, and endeavour to shew mine opinion.

Some time ago, I borrowed the comments of the learned Dr. Gill. I found he was strenuous for the law as the saint's rule; and in the following extract he makes some very learned and nice distinctions: "What is ceremonial, or purely relative to the Jews, whilst in their civil polity in the

land of Canaan, is done away; but, as to what is purely moral, is, as to the matter of it, still obliging. Distinguish between the law as a covenant of works, and as a rule of walk and conversation; as a covenant of works it is done away, as a rule of walk and conversation it still continues. Distinguish between persons and persons. To them that are redeemed from it, it is done away; to them that are under it, it remains. And, lastly, distinguish between a right and wrong use of it," &c.&c.

God knows I have no learning but what he has taught me; and I must confess that I do not understand all these distinctions, nor do I find them supported by scripture proof: nevertheless, I shall not presume to contradict so great, so able, and so learned a man. I shall do as the apostle Peter bids me; that is, "minister as of the ability that God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." Nor do I believe that the moral law is any part of the rod of Christ's strength which came out of Zion, and by which he rules his saints in the midst of Jerusalem: if it is, David had no call to pray so earnestly for the coming of it, seeing it had been already in the world some hundreds of years.

Some say that "the law is in the hand of Christ," and that "we are under the law to Christ;" for the support of which this text is generally brought in, "being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ," 1 Cor. ix. 21. But where the text stands that tells us the law is in the hand of Christ, I know not; for I believe the moral law is a rod in the hand of God the Father, as will appear in this piece, and no part of the sceptre of the Mediator by which he rules his saints. Dr. Gill, in his comment upon the above text, supports the notion of the law as a rule; "their being not without law to God, or the law of God, the moral law: for, though he was delivered from the curse and condemnation of the law, and as a covenant of works, and the ministry of it by Moses, yet not from the matter of it, and obedience to it as a rule of walk and conversation." and upon the same text the Doctor says, "but as one that was under the law to Christ, or under the law of Christ; that is, the law of love."

It is true the believer is "not without, law to God," nor can he be, because God promises to make a new covenant with him, not according to the old; in which covenant forgiveness of sins is promised, a new heart, and a new spirit also; and this new covenant is to be written in the heart and put in the mind. Now what is this new covenant that promises all these things? The scripture says it is the covenant of grace, and of promise. And

what is promised? Forgiveness of sins. How does pardon come? By faith; he that believes receives the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ. And how comes this new heart? By the regenerating operation of the Spirit. And does God minister the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? By the hearing of faith. And what laws are these that are to be written in their hearts, and put in their minds? What Isaiah speaks of when he says, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them." What is this law and this testimony? Not the moral law; for we are sure that those who are under that have the vail still on their heart, and never will have any light in them till their heart is turned to Christ. The above testimony is the gospel of Christ, and the above law is the law of faith, which the prophet calls the word, which word is the word of life. All which the prophet himself explains. He tells us that Christ shall be for a sanctuary to them that fear him, but "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel;" and that many among them "shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." But, though this would be the case with some, yet not with all; for, saith the prophet, "bind up the testimony, seal the law, among my disciples." Now what is this testimony? It is truth, which "came by Jesus Christ," which Christ testified, and is his testimony; which truth is to make us free. But what is this bond that binds the testimony? Paul says it is receiving "the truth in the love of it," which love casts out fear and makes us free indeed. And what is the above law sealed among the disciples? Paul says the law of faith; "the day you believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." These are the laws that God promises to write in his people's hearts, and to put in their minds. One law God calls "the law of truth," which he himself explains to be the covenant of life and peace: and the other law, which is sealed, is called "the law of faith;" by which the just shall live, and which excludes all boasting. And of such God says, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Now what does Paul call a man with whom this new covenant is made, who has received his pardon, who is blessed with a new heart and a new spirit, and in whose heart and mind these laws are written? He calls them the manifest "epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart." And which ministration of the gospel, written on the fleshly tables of the heart by the Spirit, Paul opposes to the moral law throughout this whole chapter from whence my test is taken.

Now, as the Spirit works these laws on the believer's heart, it will be necessary to inquire where this Spirit and his laws are. Paul says they are all in Christ. God's word and his Spirit are never to depart from Christ and his seed; and therefore in Christ we must look for them, "for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death." Here is the law of faith and of truth, called the Spirit's law; which by Isaiah is called Christ's laws. "The isles shall wait for his law;" but by Ezekiel they are called God's laws - "I will write my laws in their heart." All which are plain enough. They are God's laws, being his good will of purpose and promise in a covenant of grace in Christ Jesus to us. It is Christ's law, because "grace and truth came by him;" and is called "the law of the Spirit," because he writes them on the fleshly tables of our hearts. Now what did this "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." do for Paul? Why he says it made him "free from the law of sin and death." What is the law of sin? The law in our members. And what is the law of death? The moral law on tables of stone. And Paul was made free from both; free from the guilt, from the reigning and destroying power of the law of sin, and from the commanding and damning power of the moral law. And this is being made free indeed; not free to sin, but in the above sense free from it. All this is done in us by the Spirit - "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. Stand first, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage." Which moral law genders to bondage, and worketh wrath.

Now can we say that a man, in whom God has written these laws, and in whom he has done all these things, is an Antinomian? Surely he is "not without law to God, but under this law to Christ;" or, as Doctor Gill says, "under the law of Christ, which is the law of love." And so it is, for we are to "bear each others burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;" for it was love constrained Christ to bear the burden of us all. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Under this law of love; call it grace, faith, truth, and liberty, or whatever you please - these are all in Christ; and the believer in Christ is under these, and under no other; nor did God ever by his Spirit write any other laws than these on the minds and hearts of his saints, who stand fast and complete in Christ since the world began; and I am sure he never will; for service in the oldness of the letter, and legal works, are both rejected. "The obedience of faith," and service "in the newness of the Spirit," is what God will have: "and he that in these things serves Christ is accepted of God, and approved of men;" and "as many as walk according to this rule, mercy on them, and peace upon

the Israel of God.”

The new covenant revealed to us, is sometimes in scripture, called laws, in the plural - “I will write my laws,” &c.; and sometimes in the singular number law - “The isles shall wait for his law.” Let this be observed, that “the law of truth,” Mal. ii. 6, which is called “the covenant of life and peace,” verse 6, includes the whole of the everlasting gospel, with all the grace of God held forth and promised therein; which grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; and, because the Spirit applies faith to the sinner’s heart by hearing of it, it is called “the law of faith;” and, because love is promised and applied by it, it is called “the law of love;” and, as love by the Spirit casts out fear and torment, and enlightens the eyes and enlarges the heart, it is called a “looking into the perfect law of liberty;” and, because the Spirit comes to us and quickens us by this ministration, and no other, it is called “the law of the Spirit of life.” This accounts for the plural and singular number of the word law being alternately used in scripture.

Hence I conclude that, as the believer, who is in Christ, is not under the moral law, it is plain that the moral law is a rod in the hand of God, and a schoolmaster, by which the Father teaches and corrects the sinner, that he may know his dreadful state, and then leads him from the law to Christ, where salvation may be had; which is called passing from death to life. So that we may safely conclude the moral law is no part of the rod of Christ’s strength, by which he rules his saints.

Yea, and even Doctor Gill himself, notwithstanding all his distinctions (so close doth Paul press him), when commenting upon my text, is obliged to speak as follows; “Now this vail upon Moses’s face had a mystery in it; it was an emblem of the gospel being veiled under the law, and of the darkness and obscurity of the law in the business of life and salvation; and also of the future blindness of the Jews, when the glory of the gospel should break forth in the times of Christ and his apostles: and which was such, that the children of Israel, the Jews, as in the times of Moses, so in the times of Christ and his apostles, could not steadfastly look to; nor upon the face of Moses, whose face was veiled: not that they might not look, but because they could not bear to look upon him; but they could not look to the end of that which is abolished - that is, to Christ, who is the end of the law, which is abrogated by him: to him they could not look, nor could they see him to be the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness; which, being fulfilled, is done away by him.” And, in his comment on the

17th verse, speaking of liberty, he says, "A liberty from the bondage and servitude of it - a liberty from the laws rigorous exactions, curse, and condemnation.?" Which Peter calls an unbearable yoke; and which yoke differs much from that of a dear Redeemer, whose "yoke is easy" and whose "burden is light." In these quotations the Doctor has said as much as I ever did, only we differ in words. I say, "we are not under the law, nor under the commanding power of it." And the Doctor says, "we are delivered from the service of it; and from its rigorous exactions, curse, and condemnation." Thus far the Doctor speaks plainly. But how the moral law can be "abrogated, done away," and "abolished," In one sense, and the saints be under it as their rule of life in another, I know not; Christ never came to alter the law, nor divide it. And how the whole Mosaical dispensation can be removed, as the Doctor in another place confesses, and yet remain to the believer; and how it can be abrogated by Christ, and we under it in the hand of Christ - are mysterious things to me, and want scripture proof; for it is no part of the Saviour's rod by which he rules his saints, as I have already proved. However, I believe the difference between the Doctor and myself, on this point, consists more in learning and in words than in heart and judgment. I proceed again.

Paul, writing to the Colossians, says, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Now to whom was the apostle writing? To the Colossians, who are here called the uncircumcision: for the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul. Then what was "the hand writing" or debt book, that stood against these uncircumcised ones? If you say it was the ceremonial law; I reply, that was never given to them: but, if you add, that the Judaizing teachers were bringing them under their ceremonies and sacrifices; I answer, that the Jews held it unlawful to offer sacrifices any where but in their own land: in their Babylonish captivity, and in their present dispersion, they were, and still are, "without an ephod, without a sacrifice, and without a teraphim." If it be urged that the Gentiles used sacrifices as well as the Jews and therefore were under the ceremonial law; it may be answered God never gave that law to them, and, as he did not, they cannot be said to be under it; nay, they are said to "sacrifice to devils, and not to God." It remains, therefore, that this book debt, or "hand writing," is "the works of the moral law written upon their hearts, their thoughts and their conscience accusing or excusing one another."

And whoever has felt a wounded spirit, or a guilty conscience, knows by sad experience what a restless creditor, wretched hand writing, and dreadful debt book, that is; and that it may well be said to be against us, and contrary to us: but, blessed be God, Christ took it out of the way, and nailed it to his cross. This same law upon tables of stone was the debt book, or hand writing, against the Jews, and not the ceremonial law; "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God," Jer. vii. 22, 23. The debt that God exacted of them was perfect obedience to the moral law, which is here called his voice; and which law Paul calls "a voice of words." The debt book of the Jews, therefore, is the moral law on tables of stone; and that of the Gentiles is the same, which shews the work of the law written in their hearts; and by this law both Jews and Gentiles, yea, the whole world, are become guilty before God: and the hand writing is against us, because it works death and wrath in us, and curses us; because it is always finding fault with us, but affords no help to us; and therefore the Surety discharged the debt, and blotted out the hand writing, took it out of the way, and nailed it to his cross. And I am sure that no pardoned sinner, or real believer, will ever wish to pull one nail out of it; but rejoice, as I do, to see it where it is. If it be objected that the ceremonial law was the Jews debt book; I answer, the ceremonial law was a refuge for the transgressor of the moral law to fly to, where the sinners transgressions of the moral law were confessed over the head of the victim, and the brute died in the sinner's stead; which was their gospel, and pointed out the Surety, and how the debt book was to be cancelled by him. Furthermore, Paul couples himself with these Gentile debtors, and as one who had been under the same hand writing; "blotting out," says he, "the hand writing against us, and which was contrary to us." It remains, therefore, that this hand writing against both Jews and Gentiles was the moral law, for the other the Gentiles never had. Again,

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby," Ephes. ii. 14, 15, 16. To the Jews were given the glory, the covenants, the service of God, and the promises; which distinguished them from all other people. "You only," saith God, "have I known of all

the families of the earth.” This Paul calls “the middle wall of partition between us,” which was broken down by Christ when he ordered his gospel to be preached to every creature. He “abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments.” Should any object that the law here abolished is the ceremonial law; then I ask, What comfort could that afford to the Ephesians, who were never under it? and I would further ask such an objector (if he knows by experience any thing of the terrors of the Lord), what enmity the ceremonial law worked in him when he was first awakened; or whether it was that law which condemned him; or whether he fell to work upon all the Jewish ceremonies as soon as his conscience troubled him, in order to work out a righteousness? I trow not; I take it for granted that he found matters as I did - that it was the moral law which brought him in guilty before God; yea, every precept of it; and to that he went to work, in order to appease an angry God and pacify his own conscience; he went to keeping the sabbath, to making concession to his offended neighbour, to giving alms, to fasting, to trying to love God and to keep the whole law; in order to counterbalance, or rub off, the long score which by the law was brought in against him - and all in vain. The commandment comes, and sin revives; the law works wrath, and sin takes occasion by it; it threatens with death and damnation, and all manner of concupiscence is stirred up. This is called the enmity. The precepts of this law Christ perfectly obeyed in his life, and our transgressions of it he bore in his own body on the tree. The wrath and curse of it he endured also, “being made a curse for us;” and by his death, he abolished it, and thereby slew the enmity. His obedience is our righteousness, which justifies us from the galling yoke of the precept; his death is our ransom, which justifies us from all the future demands of vindictive justice. Hence we are said to be made righteous by the obedience of one, and to be justified by his blood.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,” 2 Tim. i. 7, 10.

Christ hath “abolished spiritual death” from the insensible sinner’s soul by quickening him; he hath abolished the “sting of death” from the conscience by his own blood; he hath “abolished eternal death” by dying “the just for the unjust;” he hath “abolished the ministration of death” on

tables of stone by slaying the enmity, taking it out of the way, and nailing it to his cross; and hath destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is the devil," by casting him out of every believer's heart, and spoiling his works. But now let us see to whom this law is abolished.

It is not abolished from the hand of justice with respect to the reprobate. "My sword shall be bathed in heaven, and come down on Idumea, and on the people of my curse to judgment."

Secondly, It will not be abolished, in the sentence of it, from the mouth of the Judge of quick and dead: he will bring in every soul that is under it a transgressor by the precepts of it; and will pass the awful sentence of it - "Go, ye cursed."

Thirdly, It is not abolished to any one that works for life and righteousness under it; "to him that worketh the reward is reckoned of debt;" the debt book stands open against him.

Fourthly, It is not abolished to the elect themselves, while they are in the ruins of the fall; such differ nothing from servants, though lords of all, but are under this schoolmaster and governor, Gal. iv. 1, 2, and are "by nature children of wrath, even as others," being under the law, which reveals and works wrath. In Short, every soul is under it that is out of Christ.

I come now to describe the persons with respect to whom this law is abolished; and in doing this I shall contend for no liberty but "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

And he is a pardoned, justified sinner, who is joined to the Lord, and one spirit with him; who stands by faith, and stands fast and complete, in Christ Jesus his covenant head. Paul says it is we that have such hope, we who have received the Spirit of the Lord, and are made free by him, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," not to sin; but liberty from the bondage of the law, the wrath of God, the guilt of sin, and the dread of damnation. To us, says Paul, it is abolished, who have our hearts turned to the Lord, and whose vail is taken away; We, who "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory" - We, who "know whom we have believed" - We, "who have fled from the wrath to come, and for refuge to lay hold of the hope set

before us” - We, who have found “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus making us free from the law of sin and death” - We, who do not “make void the law through faith,” but “establish it,” by asserting that “the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who have received the Holy Ghost, the love of God, and the gift of righteousness; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” - We, who hold the law of truth, faith, love, and liberty, to God, and who are under the law of faith and the covenant of grace to Christ. It is we who see the law done away, the enmity slain, the hand writing nailed to the cross, and abolished; standing fast in Christ, who is the believers “strong hold, fortress,” and “high tower,” his “hiding place,” his “refuge from the storm” of wrath, and “the shadow of a great rock” to the soul weary of the yoke of precept and his own sins.

This is the “cleft of the rock,” the “secret place of the Most High,” and the “munitions of rocks,” where we so lose the vail as to “see the King in his beauty, and the land a very far off.” Hence it is plain that the real believer is in Christ, as the Lord says, “Believe that I am in you, and you in me:” and those that are in him enjoy him, and stand fast in him, see the law abolished and done away, and feel nothing of the commanding, binding, terrifying, nor condemning power of the law; for in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit makes them free, and they are free indeed. The obedience which the law called for, and the satisfaction that justice exacted of us, are now both in the heart of Christ; and thus in the heart of Christ is the law magnified; “Thy law is within my heart.” And in the heart of eternal love the believer feels his happy deliverance and glorious liberty. But, if he stands not fast in his liberty, if he is not aware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, if he suffers legal preachers to bring him into bondage, or if he sins against Christ, he will find that the law will again entangle such a foolish Galatian, and he may pray, as David did, “Restore me to joy, and uphold me with thy free spirit.” This legal bondage communicated by legal preachers, I know by sad experience; but I take care now never to go nigh them, for fear of infection. None but those who are savingly in Christ can either see, feel, or enjoy, this mystery. All others, if they attempt to handle it, only darken counsel, and do mischief by it; for, as they have no inward testimony, experience, or enjoyment of it, no unction can attend what they say. They have not the Spirit’s teaching to direct them, nor a mouth and wisdom given them, and therefore they cannot appeal to the experience of the just, nor properly guard what they say against the contempt of fools, and the craft of malicious critics. I had rather hear such thunder the law than meddle with the deep things of God.

Yea, God tells them not to take his covenant in their mouth, because they are yet in their sins, and truth has no place but in their heads, and they have nothing to depend upon but a teacherous memory; which God often baffles, which Satan often plunders, and which oftentimes refuses to give back one half of what is committed to it.

Furthermore, he who is not in the liberty of the gospel never knew, nor can he know, experimentally, these things of the law, nor the bondage and terrors of it. Christ's commission is "to preach deliverance to captives, to open the prison doors to them that are bound, and to set at liberty them that are bruised." He, who never felt himself a captive, who was never sensibly bound nor bruised, knows nothing of this abolition of the law, nor does he feel the need of it; he knows neither the wrath of the law, nor the love of the gospel; none shall enjoy the latter who never felt the former. Now in all this I have said no more than the scriptures do, which testify that to the believer the law is done away, that Christ is the fulfilling end of it for righteousness to all that believe, and by him it is abolished to every believer.

If it be objected that this leads to licentiousness, I shall answer, in the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good; for a tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. He that abides in me, and I in him, bringeth forth much fruit; and my heavenly Father purgeth such, that they may bring forth more fruit; but he that abideth not in me is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; for without me you can do nothing." Therefore let the believer walk in the Spirit, and he shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh; for sin shall not have dominion over him who is under grace, because he is not under the law. If this be Antinomianism, I have no objection to the name, but hope to die in this nest.

But some may reply, "Do you make void the law through faith?" No; Paul says that preaching faith establishes the law, and that nothing else will or can do it. It establishes the righteousness of the law, which is fulfilled in every believer, though not by him. It establishes the law in the hand of the Father to his own elect, as a rod of correction and a schoolmaster; and, in the hand of justice, to all the wicked; and as a killing commandment to all the reprobate and bond children. Those who preach the law in any other way are but vain janglers, and establish nothing; for they know not "what they say, nor whereof they affirm;" and the ignorance of fools is sin, and

therefore cannot be called the establishment of the law. And bringing the believer from Christ to the law, as his rule of life, where Christ profits him nothing, is called destroying the path of the just, frustrating the grace of God, causing the righteous to err, subverting their souls, and preaching arrant lies, for God has given man no such commission or commandment; wherefore such preaching can never be called establishing the law.

Paul tells us that the law is dead, the enmity slain, and the debt book nailed to the cross, by the death of Christ, "that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. Some, may reply, "If this be the case, that the law is dead, how came it to kill Paul, as it is written, ?when the commandment came sin revived, and I died??" It is a hard matter to answer logicians, who are so wise and nervous; and yet this doctrine might be learned by seeing a murderer take his trial. The law brings him in guilty of death, and yet becomes dead to him; for it gives no life, nor will it let him enjoy even that natural life which he hath; and yet it kills him, for it will never let him go till it brings him to the gallows. So God's law is dead to the sinner; for it gives him no life, and yet kills him by working death in him by itself, which is good; and it will bind him over both to judgment and punishment too, for "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory."

Some, who are more wise and learned, tell us that they shall take the spirit of the law to heaven with them, that is (I suppose) when they go there, who "are of the works of the law, and under the curse of it;" when those who are of the law are heirs, and faith is made void, and the promise of God made of none effect All these things must be done before such souls, with the spirit of the law, can get to heaven. Besides, the bond woman and her children are desolate, without a father and without a husband, saith the Lord of Hosts. She is not my wife, nor am I her husband. And surely none but the queen, the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall enter into the King's palace. Not only the bond woman and her family are excluded, who cleave to the law, but hypocrites in possession, who cleave to Christ, and lay claim to him before they are delivered from the law; even these foolish virgins are shut out of the marriage chamber.

It is to be feared that these men do not understand what the scriptures mean by the spirit of the law. By it they never mean the Holy Ghost. This I know by sad experience, for the Holy Spirit is not promised in the law, nor

does he come from the law, nor by the law. "God ministers not the Spirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith." If the Spirit comes this way, then they are ministers of the Spirit, which Paul calls ministers of the letter; and those that are of the works of the law, and under the curse of it, must be the happiest men; whilst those who are redeemed and delivered from it must be "of all men the most miserable." As "the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient," whatever the law works or ministers, it must be to them that are under the law. Paul says, God ministers not the Spirit by it; for the ministry of the Spirit is opposed to the ministry of the letter on tables of stone. The law gives no life, nor righteousness. "Had there been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have come by the law." But the Spirit that giveth life is opposed to the ministration of death, and the ministration of righteousness opposed to the ministration of condemnation, throughout this whole chapter. Jerusalem, which rejected Christ and his gospel, is said to be "in bondage with her children." But this bondage cannot be the Holy Ghost, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," not bondage; and the mother of the saints, as well as themselves, are said to be free. "We are not children of the bond woman, but of the free." It remains then that the spirit of the law is bondage; it genders to bondage; it is the chain of a bond slave, called the spirit of bondage to fear, servile fear; it is temporal and spiritual death, and therefore called the ministration of death and condemnation. All which is neither more nor less than the wrath of God revealed in it against all unrighteousness of men. "The law worketh wrath." This is the spirit of the law. John calls it fear and torment; but there is nothing of this in the spirit of love; "there is no fear in love, for perfect love casteth out fear." Cain, Esau, Judas, with every desperate sinner that has been given up to a fearful looking for of judgment, have been filled with this spirit of bondage, till the sons of the bond woman have laid at the top of every street, "like a wild bull in a net, full of the fury of the Lord and the rebuke of our God." But this spirit in them is never called an earnest of heaven, but "an evident token of perdition." When the killing commandment came home to David, attended with an awful sense of the wrath of God, he calls the sentence of the law the snares of death, and the wrath of God the pains of hell; and, when bondage, fear, the sorrows of death, the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, got hold of the Saviour, he was so sorely amazed as to sweat blood, and never calls this spirit of bondage to fear the joy that was set before him, but hell itself. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," &c. Paul knew what the ministration of death and wrath was; and blessed Christ, who had delivered him from so great a death, and saved

him from the wrath to come. Paul, and his companions, had felt the spirit of the law, and their deliverance from it. God hath not given us “the spirit of fear; but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.” And Paul stood fast in this liberty wherewith Christ had made him free, and was not entangled with the yoke of bondage a second time, having felt it severely before; for “we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but the Spirit of adoption: whereby we cry, Abba Father.” This is the Comforter that is to abide with the saints for ever; who shall quicken our mortal bodies in the great day, fashion them like the glorious body of Christ, and fill them with all his fullness for ever. “The law is a fiery law;” and, whenever the spirit of bondage to fear, and the wrath of God revealed therein, comes to be poured forth upon carnal professors, they will feel the effects of it as such. “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” They shall find that the wrath of God revealed in the law is “a fire kindled in his anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell.” So that, instead of the spirit of bondage going with these professors to heaven, it shall only serve to bind them hand and foot when they are cast into utter darkness. “The strength of sin is the law;” and they that now mock shall find their bands strong; for fear, death, torment, wrath, and damnation, is the spirit of the law, and all that the law works in men, or ministers to men; and as it “is not made for the righteous, but for the lawless and disobedient,” it will go with the wicked, and work all its contents in their souls in hell to all eternity; and this they know who are in that dreadful place. They know what bondage is, by being bound; what the ministry of death is; by being in the second death; what the ministry of condemnation is, by being damned; and what the law that worketh wrath is, by being in the dreadful furnace of it. Thus the lawless and disobedient, with their violated law and broken covenant, with all its dreadful contents, shall go to hell together. For there is not one thing which the law works in men, or which it ministers to men; neither bondage, death, wrath, condemnation, nor damnation (and it works nothing else); I say, not one of all these things shall ever be found among the saints in heaven. But grace and truth, which make us free, and the church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, shall enter heaven with their law of truth in their hearts “Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.” And thus grace shall be displayed in glory, truth settled in heaven, mercy shall be built up forever, and faithfulness be established for evermore.

And, although some tell us that “they never expect to be delivered from

a law which commands them to love God with all their heart,” yet I know that if they are not redeemed from the law, and in every sense delivered from it, and not under it, but under grace, they never shall love God in this world, nor in the next. If a man love God, it must be because God first loved him: for “the carnal mind is enmity against God,” and never can by nature be subject to the law, which commands love; nor does God love a sinner in the law, for the love of God is in Christ Jesus. He that is not delivered from the law is in bondage to fear, and hath torment; and nothing but the love of God in Christ can ever deliver him from it, or cast it out; and he that hath not this charity is “an instrument without life,” under “the ministry of death,” by which he cannot live; and, as the law worketh wrath, by the law he cannot love.

Ignorant, bold, presumptuous men may wanton, trifle, and sport, with these deep, momentous, and important things, of God, in order to raise a shout from fools, to harden graceless professors, and to embolden daring hypocrites to lampoon the servants of God, and to ridicule and vilify the gospel of a dear Redeemer; which I think is sinning against the Holy Ghost, or doing despite to the Spirit. But, as the Lord liveth, it will be found to be bitterness in the end; and this some feel already; though, being blinded by the old veil, they know not whence their bondage comes, whereas in truth it comes from that law for which they so strenuously contend, and from an angry God, for slighting his dear Son; for he will speak in his wrath to all, and vex them in his sore displeasure, who set themselves against his Anointed; nor shall any enjoy his blessing who put not their trust in his King on Zion’s hill. God’s rejection of the Jews is to this day an awful proof of this truth.

They must be born again that enter God’s kingdom; and a real spiritual birth terminates in the enjoyment of love, which casts out fear and torment; for “he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; but he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” If bond servants, under a spirit of bondage, go in all their fetters to heaven, the Father’s promise of the Spirit is of little value; the Saviour’s death, to procure the Spirit, no blessing; and redemption and salvation from the bondage of the law must be one of the greatest evils.

I have pushed this point a little home, because it seems to go into the very bowels of Arminianism, and of graceless professors, who discover such enmity to the grace of God. However, this I know by blessed

experience, that the perfect obedience which the law required is now in the heart of our Surety the satisfaction that justice required is now in a dear Redeemer the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ all the fullness of the Spirit is in him; all the fullness of grace, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in him the law of the Spirit of life makes us free, and in him the believer is complete. Therefore, O believer, abide in him, and let neither Satan, ministers of Satan, justice, nor Moses, ever catch thee out of the cleft of the Rock, lest, like one of old, thou get entangled again, and pray to be restored to the joys of Christ's salvation, and again to be upheld by his free Spirit; for "the works of faith and labours of love" are a service that is perfect freedom. This thousands confess with their mouth, and this thousands have felt in their heart.

But, without giving any more attention to the croaking of frogs, or spending my arguments on dogs that bark at the moon,

One would be ready to wonder where this almost universally received notion, of the law being the believer's rule of life, could come from, seeing the believer (and no other) is said to be redeemed from the law, delivered from it, and not under it, but under grace; why it should be called his rule, when the scripture says that "the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." If the law is made for the lawless (all of whom are out of Christ, under the law, and under the curse of it), one would have thought that they were the only men to whom the law is a rule of life, seeing Christ always sent the legalist to it with a "What is written in the law; how readest thou?" But always told the believer to abide in him.

I think the first that enforced and practiced this doctrine was Cain. Cain and Abel were brethren. They both came at one time to bring their offerings to God. One was a keeper of sheep, and the other a tiller of the ground; and their offerings were according to their occupations. One brought the first fruits of the ground, and the other the firstling of his flock. And we may warrantably conclude that the one was a lamb; a type of him that was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The other brought a sheaf of the harvest, which the scriptures allow to be a type of Jesus, the first fruits of them that slept. Now these two worshippers prefigured, the publican and the pharisee in the gospel. They had but two foundations to build on, or but two footings to go upon: the one was the law broken by Adam; the other the promised woman's seed, held forth in the first volume of the book, who was to bruise the serpent's head. Abel, who had

been informed by his parents how a divine person had stripped them of their fig-leaved dress, and clothed them with the skins of the sacrifices, and made this promise to them, believed the report of his parents (like Jacob, the figure of him), and therefore took his lamb, in the faith of the same pardon and covering; and thus he ploughed in hope, and, looking to the throne of grace and the cherubim placed in Eden's gate, he, in faith of the promised seed, offered his lamb, looking to him that was promised to bruise the serpents head: and, as the serpent was to bruise Christ's heel by death, he judged that Satan would be destroyed; and, by the obedience of the promised seed, he expected all cleansing and covering, as well as his father. The Spirit, which wrought faith in Abel, taught him where to look; for his work is, and ever was, to testify of Christ. In this faith he approached, and offered his lamb or kid. This was Abel's rule of life and worship; and "to Abel and to his offering God had respect."

Cain, he comes with the sheaf of his first fruits, trusting in the law, which his parents had broken; and expecting a right, on the footing of works, to the tree of life, from which his parents had been banished. This was a daring approach without looking to the cherubim, or to the flaming sword of justice, which God himself had placed there to keep the tree of life, and teach them the way of mercy by the tree, and the need of the surety by the sword. But Cain went on, as Korah did after him, in the wilderness. The cherubim and mercy-seat there were no more than a repetition of what was done in Eden. However, Korah went on as Cain did; and God couples them together, Jude, xi. Cain paid no regard to the mercy-seat, or to the cherubim; but, like a horse in the battle, he broke through all bounds, and ventured upon the bottom of a broken law, which his parents had violated, and expected a "right to the tree of life" on the footing of works, without any view to, or faith in, the promised seed. And what was the consequence? Why "to Cain and to his offering God had not respect;" while the fire fell from heaven, and consumed Abel's burnt-offering, as it did at the decisive offering and humble prayer of Elijah, when Baal's prophets cried in vain for such an answer by fire. This Cain saw, he was wroth, and his countenance fell. This dead work, on the footing of a broken law, God rejects as a deviation from the rule given to Adam and Eve, and practiced by Abel; which he vindicates upon the rules of the everlasting gospel, saying, "Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and, if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." This was the first hint of that important truth; "without faith it is impossible to please God." And thus from the womb

of the morning God revealed the beauties of holiness. About this point Cain and Abel disputed. The one made faith in the promise his rule of life, the other made the broken law his rule; and, the believer being too much in argument for the bond child, he (Cain) defended his rule with the fist of wickedness, and killed the believer (his brother, and the third part of the whole world) at one blow. And the New Testament tells us that it was "by faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, God testifying of his gifts;" and, as for Cain, he is said to be of that wicked one the devil, who slew his brother, because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous.

Those, who were next to Cain in vindication of this doctrine, seem to be those mongrel professors who were called the sons of God, but fell in love with the daughters of Cain. These held in their head the discriminating doctrines of their fathers, but paid no regard to the rule of faith, being destitute of God's power; and extended their charity to those that were cursed of God. And this mixture of law and gospel, and the mixed marriages of professors and reprobates, was productive of that wickedness which was great before the Lord. Against such wicked ones Enoch prophesied; who were determined to kill him, and sought after him for the slaughter; but they could not find him; he was not to be found, for God took him, and had translated him; "for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God;" but "without faith it is impossible to please him."

Against these Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, was sent; who preached imputed righteousness, and a faith that overcomes the world, for upwards of an hundred years. But they rejected his doctrines, and resisted the Spirit which spoke by him, till God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," and soon after drowned them all.

The Israelites in the wilderness could see no rule to go by but the law; and when God asked, "How long will it be ere this people believe in me?" it appeared a strange thing to them; for, as they had no faith themselves, they hated those who had, and envied Moses in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord. The land of promise was expected as a reward of their partial obedience: but, when they came to understand that it was through faith they must subdue kingdoms, they in heart turned back to Egypt; and thus unbelief shut them out of the promised rest of God, "having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed

not.”

In Ezekiel’s days, the false prophets burdened the just with the law as their only rule, and encourage the wicked with the promise of life. They “made the hearts of the righteous sad, whom God had not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, by promising him life.”

In the apostle’s days, the rabbies and rulers opposed the gospel, till they got out of favour with the people, and almost out of office and out of bread. And what must they do then? Why they must turn hypocrites. “A great Company of the priests were obedient to the faith. Thou seest, brother Saul,” (saith James) “how many there are that believe, and they are all zealous of the law of Moses. They made a tool of the Son of God to exalt his servant Moses. These Paul calls “false brethren, unawares brought in to spy out our liberty that we have in Christ, that they might bring us into bondage.” And, having found out that the apostles preached up deliverance from the galling yoke of precept, they set off into the ministry, intending to sap the very foundation of the gospel; and, to cover their villany, “they preached Christ, not out of good will, but out of strife and envy, to add affliction to Paul’s bonds.” The text and the tidings, which these false apostles carried to the saints, was, “except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” They did not handle the law lawfully, nor speak the language of it, saying, “This do, and thou shalt live:” but they tacked the word salvation to it, “except ye keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved;” which the law says nothing about; for, if a man can keep the law, he needs no salvation; and, if he does, the law cannot give it, “for there is salvation in no other name but in Christ”

First, This preaching up circumcision was in order to glory in their flesh; that is, that they might boast of having made proselytes.

Secondly, Circumcision was preached that the offence of the cross might cease, and the world and the church be reconciled together.

“Thirdly, It was to bring the Gentile believers in debtors to the whole law. And,

Fourthly, To set aside the whole suretyship engagements of Christ, and all the benefits of it: for, if I become a debtor to do the whole law, then the Saviour’s debt of perfect obedience to the precept, and the penal sum of

suffering, which he paid to divine justice, profits me nothing; and I am saddled with all my infinite debts. The everlasting righteousness that Christ brought in is set aside, and the whole satisfaction that he made to justice by his sacrifice is set aside also. Add to this, I give up the free promise of life for the law, turn my back upon grace, and go to work; and then God “reckons the reward to me of debt, not of grace.” and under this debt book these false apostles laboured to bring the Gentile believers; for the Gentiles had no other hand-writing against them but this, which is the “moral law;” With these men Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation; but all in vain; therefore they must: go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question.” And, when they were convened, “there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” Here we see the devil had some agents, to spread the leaven at Antioch, and some at the council chamber at Jerusalem, to support the cause there.

But Peter tells them that God had purified their hearts by faith: “and now why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear?”

The sentence of James is, “that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God,” Acts, xv. 2?19.

And now we come to the commission and character of these men. “Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment,” Acts, xv. 24.

Their character is?that they troubled the churches, subverted their souls, preached lies, and went out without either commission or commandment from them.

In the next place, we have the judgment of the Holy Ghost, and of all the apostles and elders, upon this point. “For it seemeth good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things?that ye abstain from meals offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well. Fare ye well,” Acts, xv. 28, 29. How beautiful

upon the mountains were the feet of those that carried these good tidings! This is a confirmation of the Saviour's words, "My yoke is easy, and my burden light." We now come to see how these tidings were received.

"So, when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and, when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle; which, when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation," Acts, xv. 30, 31. These false apostles, under the influence of Satan, had brought them into bondage, and fast closed up all the wombs in the kings palace at Antioch: but God restored unto them the joys of his salvation, and upheld them again with his free Spirit; for the Holy Ghost, who loves liberty and proclaims, it, who was "a spirit of judgment to them that sat in judgment" at Jerusalem, went with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, and applied the tidings to the hearts of all the believers there, and comforted their souls with love, joy, and peace, in believing; and "they rejoiced for the consolation:" and thus the apostles took heed, and were "aware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." For "to these," says Paul, "we gave not place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain."

I once read an old book, when I first came into the ministry, which said "the believer is under the law as a rule of life;" from which I embraced that notion, without ever consulting the scripture, or asking wisdom from God, about it: and this I have asserted in one of my first publications: which I intend to expunge whenever that book shall be reprinted; for it is no part of the gospel which I received, not did it ever come to me from God, but from man.

Then, say some, "if we are not under the law as a rule of life, we may live as we list." I answer, I wish I could: for I would then be filled with the Spirit of God, and be free from all sin; and, if Paul could have lived as he listed, he would have been delivered from his "body of death;" and Jabez would have been kept "from sin, that it might not grieve him." However, God has promised to put his fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him; and that he will work in us to will and to do; direct our steps; uphold us by his right hand; keep us by his mighty power; purge us, that we may bring forth fruit; and that sin shall not have dominion over those that are under grace, only over those that are under the law, who are of the works of it, and under the curse of it, who are in unbelief, and cannot

please God; who, being in sin, and under it, can do nothing but sin.

I have written these things to thee, believer, to furnish, to arm, and equip thee, "that thou mayest have somewhat to answer them who glory in appearance, but not in heart;" for "the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite."

This publication will, I expect, procure me many anonymous epistles, and not a few twopenny and threepenny pamphlets, by those who shoot in secret, and use sharpness; all which will only serve to convince me that my doctrines are the mysteries of the cross, because the offence is not ceased. As to their sharpness, it is neither for edification nor destruction; not for edification, because there is no savour of charity; nor for destruction, because there is no power.

But God says, "Look unto Abraham your father, and to Sarah that bare you, for God called him alone and blessed him." All the laws and rules that Abraham had, were written on the tables of his heart - tables of stone he had none. The first step that he took from his own country was in that faith which overcomes the world; which faith, working by love, took away all desire of returning back again. This is the same faith as ours. He was circumcised at the command of God, which was a seal in is flesh of the righteousness he had in his heart, which was to be wrought out by a seed from his loins. And, when our hearts are circumcised to love God, it is a seal of the Spirit to us that imputed righteousness is ours. He was to walk before God, and be upright; and God was his shield and exceeding great reward. This was walking in the fear of God, in the faith of his protection, and in the expectation of an eternal enjoyment of him as his reward and portion. This rule he was to command to his household after him; and God says they shall keep the way of the Lord. Such was faithful Abraham the friend of God; who, although he had not the two tables of stone with him, yet "obtained a good report through faith." "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws," Genesis, xvi. 5. "In these last days," believer, "God hath spoken to us by his Son;" therefore he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. I have set my King upon my holy hill; blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Obey his voice, and stand fast in him, and thou shalt see and feel, to thy soul's comfort, that the moral law is abolished and done away in Christ Jesus to thee. But, if thou get from Christ, backsliding in heart, or sinning

against him, thou must not wonder if God again and again speak to thee in the secret place of thunder, because thou dost not abide in him who is a hiding-place from that storm. For my part, was I going to the tribunal of God this night, and was to be asked of this matter now delivered, and sure of perishing if I spoke falsely, I would declare that, to the best of my knowledge and judgment, and agreeable to the testimony of my own conscience, I believe what I have now preached is (as far as I have gone) the pure, unadulterated truth of the everlasting gospel. Let us, therefore, hold fast the word of Christ's patience, and we shall be kept from the hour of temptation. And let us not be afraid of the name ANTINOMIAN, which in our days is given by graceless professors to those who are partakers of the Holy Ghost; for a bad name will never hurt a good man.

A real Antinomian, in the sight of God, is one who "holds the truth in unrighteousness;" who has gospel notions in his head, but no grace in his heart. He is one that makes a profession of Christ Jesus, but was never purged by his blood, renewed by his Spirit, nor saved by his power. With him carnal ease passes for gospel peace; a natural assent of the mind for faith; insensibility for liberty; and daring presumption for the grace of assurance. He is alive without the law, the sentence of the "moral law" having never been sent home to him. The "law of faith" was never sealed on him, the "law of truth" was never received by him, nor the "law of liberty" proclaimed to him. He was never arraigned at, nor taken from, the "throne of judgment." He was never justified at the "throne of grace," nor acquitted at the "bar of equity." The tremendous attribute of righteousness was never seen or felt by him. The righteousness of the law was never fulfilled in him; the righteousness of the law was never fulfilled by him; the righteousness of faith was never imputed to him; nor the fruits of righteousness brought forth by him. He is an enemy to the power of God, to the experience of the just, and to every minister of the Spirit; and is in union with none but hypocrites, whose uniting ties are "the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity." He is one that often changes his opinions, but was never changed in heart. He turns to many sects and parties, but never turns to God. In word he is false to Satan, in heart he is false to God; false to Satan by uttering truth, and false to God by a false profession. He is a false reprovee in the world, and in the household of faith a false brother. He is a child of Satan in the congregation of dissemblers, and a bastard in the congregation of the righteous. By mouth he contends for a covenant that cannot save him, and in heart he hates the covenant that can. His head is at Mount Calvary, his heart and soul at Mount Sinai. He is a Pharisee at Horeb, and

a hypocrite in Zion. He is a transgressor of the law of works, and a rebel to the law of faith; a sinner by the ministry of the letter, and an unbeliever by the ministry of the Spirit. As a wicked servant, he is cursed by the eternal law; and, as an infidel, he is damned by the everlasting gospel. And this is a REAL ANTINOMIAN in the sight of God.

LIGHT SHINNING IN DARKNESS

Part 1

William Huntington

(1747-1813)

Chapter 1.

God's unerring watchword to the doubtful saint when halting between "Lo here and Lo there."

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left," Isaiah, xxx. 21.

THE prophet in this chapter describes a people upon whom the Lord waits to be gracious, that is, he observes their conduct, considers their straits and troubles, and suffers their cases to get desperate, with respect to human aid, that he may display the riches of his grace when there is no eye to pity nor hand to help, and that his strength may be perfected in their weakness; by which means he convinces them of their sins and of their insufficiency, and so stops the mouth of boasting, and secures the glory of their salvation to himself, verse 18.

He further intimates that God's gracious deliverance of them shall be obtained in answer to weeping, crying, and praying, ver. 19. And that for a while adversity and oppression shall be their sorrowful meat and drink; yet that it shall terminate in such an unctuous and experimental knowledge of the truth, as shall greatly fortify them against the seduction of blind watchmen and dumb dogs. "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers," verse 20.

A minister of the letter stands in his chains, and in the bondage of his corruption; and he savours of sin and wrath, and nothing else; and the shew of his countenance proclaims it, and testifies against him.

The presumptuous sinner, that runs into the ministry unsent of God, stands in pride, arrogance, and false confidence, and hardens and emboldens the wicked.

The heretic, who holds damnable heresies, is a minister of Satan, and stands in the father of lies, actuated and influenced by him.

The Arminian stands in the flesh, trusts in his own heart, leans to his own understanding, and makes flesh his arm. He is not emptied from vessel to vessel; he is settled on his lees; his scent is not changed; "he savours not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

But the minister of Christ stands fast in the Lord; he stands in the Lord's strength, in his grace and favour, in his righteousness, in his truth, in the peace that he has made, and in the liberty that he has proclaimed. He stands as his ambassador and his mouth to the people, shining in his light, and burning with his love, seeking his honour and glory, and the welfare of all his seed. For such "to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Now for God to be gracious to such souls, to hear their cry, and to answer them, and then to enlighten them to see eye to eye with their own teachers, and that themselves are built upon the same foundation that the apostles and prophets were built on, and that the most profound minister of Christ cannot get into a corner or to be hid from them in the mysteries of the kingdom, is a blessing indeed. But if, at any time, they should be seduced, or led astray, then a word behind them shall set them right again.

"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee."

But then what is this word behind us? The law is called a voice of words; and every believer should endeavour to keep this voice of words behind him, and not suffer himself to be bewitched like the foolish Galatians, in being led back to it again. This voice of words blinds us when it is before us, and kills us when it is within us; and therefore, having fled from the wrath to come, and from the mount that burns with fire, from blackness and darkness, we should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, lest it bring us back to the law again; for he that hath got his face Zion-ward should keep Sinai at his back, and the voice of words always behind him, as a spur to his diligence, and as a caution not to look back, "remembering his

former affliction, and his misery, the wormwood, and the gall.”

However, this is not the word behind us, because it gives not life nor doth it shew the way to it, as this word does, which says, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” For not the law, but the gospel; not Moses, but Christ; not the letter, but the spirit; shew the way of life, and the way to life.

Again, the word of life in the mouth of Christ is a word before us. “When he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep hear his voice and follow them: but a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.” This is a word before, and not behind us.

But further, the word of truth in the mouth of gospel ministers should be a word before us. It is a sad thing when one who is called a leader goes behind. He ought to be before the flock in knowledge, experience, judgment, and gifts; and to say with Paul, “Be ye followers of me, and mark them that walk so;” and again, “Follow me, as I follow Christ.” But to have a pastor over a people who is nothing but a novice, or an old woman, is one of Zion’s worst calamities. “As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them,” Isaiah, iii. 12. From which rulers and oppressors the good Lord deliver us all.

But, notwithstanding all that has been said, the child of God often needs a word behind him; and God says he shall have it, and his ears shall hear it too. For this word is to speak, and to be heard, “when the believer is turning to the right hand or to the left.”

But does not God promise to lead his people in a straight way wherein, they shall not stumble? Yes; and he says, “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee; ponder the path of thy feet, turn not to the right-hand nor to the left,” Prov. iv. 25, 26, 27. But, if God leads his people in a straight path wherein they are to go, and commands them not to decline either to the right or left, from whence come these turnings mentioned in this text? For the word behind is to speak, “when they turn to the right hand, and when they turn to the left.”

The occasion of these turnings is the voice of strangers, or the uncertain sounds given by the trumpet of blind watchmen, called by the Master of assemblies, “Lo here and lo there. But (saith he) go not after them, nor

follow them.” And, though it is true that the sheep will not follow them, for they know not the voice of strangers, yet they have at certain times gained their attention, filled them with wonder and amazement, made them halt between two opinions, gained upon their passions, zealously affected them, got into their good graces, and have been received into their houses; and have been often swayed both to the right and to the left. At these times “they shall hear a word behind them saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.”

Then what is this word that speaks behind us? I would ask thee, Christian, how the word came to thee at first. You will answer, “It came not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, it came with power in the Holy Ghost and much assurance.” If it came with power, then it was the gospel indeed, “which is the power of God to salvation;” and, if it came in the Holy Ghost, the gospel was to see the ministry of the Spirit, “which giveth life;” and, if it came with much assurance, then it was the “word of faith which we preach,” for faith came to thee by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. The Father spoke love to thee, the Son spoke life, mercy, and peace, and the Spirit spoke “Abba, Father” in thee, and bore his witness to thy sonship.

This word had a sweet voice then, and it has the same voice now; and this word of past experience, which quickened thee and raised thee to hope at first, is a word behind thee; and the voice of God in it is this, “Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning; if that which ye heard from the beginning shall abide in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father;” I John, ii. 24. “Remember (saith the Lord) how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast. Hold fast that which thou hast, let no man take thy crown. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation.” Now the voice of this word behind us should be attended to before we turn to the right hand or to the left.

The Galatians got into the right way and ran well; but they were turned out of the way to the left hand, which leads to Horeb; then the Spirit by Paul spoke in the word behind them. “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law? He that ministereth the Spirit and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?” Did ye begin in the Spirit? Then walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. This was the word behind them.

So, likewise, when the deluded Arian cries lo to the right hand,

debasement and dishonouring the Lord of glory, and setting his wisdom and knowledge above him, taking the right hand of him, styling him a creature, and pointing us to an unincarnate God, and to seeking for him, not “as shining in the face of Jesus Christ,” but as smoking in the fury of his jealousy in a broken law; $\frac{1}{2}$ then the word has a voice behind thee. How didst thou receive Christ at first? As a man, as a creature, as an empty name, as a delegated God, or a God by office, or as a covenant character without a divine person to fill and support it? Or didst thou receive him as Thomas did, and say, “My Lord and my God?” or as other saints have done, “Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation?” Isaiah, xxv. 9. The voice of God in the word behind thee is this; “As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” You received him as God over all; as able to save to the uttermost; as a willing, suitable and all-sufficient Saviour; as the proper object of every branch of divine worship; as the object of all your love, faith, hope, and trust. “With him was there any thing mixed? Then what wouldest thou mix with him now?” You knew then whom you had believed, and you were persuaded that he was able to keep that which you had committed to him against that day. But now you have cast away your confidence, which hath so great a recompense of reward, and your affections are alienated from him; your love is waxed cold, and your thoughts of Christ are mean and low, and you stagger at every thing, and are at a point in nothing. “An enemy hath done this. You must return again to your first husband, for it was better with you then than it is now.” This persuasion came not from him that called you. It is the voice of a stranger; it is an uncertain sound; it is an unwarranted lo here and lo there; go not after them, nor follow them. Attend to the voice of Christ in the word behind thee. The Spirit then testified of Jesus to thy heart, and glorified Christ in thee, and his witness was borne to thy sonship by the faith of him. “By receiving Christ you received power to become a son of God; and that anointing is true, and is no lie, therefore abide in him.” They that have seduced thee have not taught thee as that anointing has taught thee, therefore thou needest no such teachers nor teaching, because they have not taught thee the same lessons which that anointing has taught thee, but contrary to it. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things: and, even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him,” I John, ii. 27. “Set thine heart once more to the highway, even to the way which thou wentest. Turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man.”

And from that new thing, from that Immanuel God with us, let no man seduce thee, let no man beguile thee; for the believer is complete in him; and he that abideth in him brings forth much fruit: but there is nothing but deficiency, barrenness, and misery, out of him. Now to the saving counsel and instruction that is given us in this word behind us.

It is this, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." But then, what way is this? I answer, It is a way "that no fowl knoweth," no bird of prey. "A way that the lion's whelps have never trod," not the roaring lion of the bottomless pit, nor any whelp of his, have ever been on it, Job, xxviii. 7, 8. "It is hid from the eyes of all living." The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, or can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. He knows nothing but what he knows naturally, and in these things he corrupts himself. He would fain be wise, though he be born like a wild ass's colt. But this way is above him; it is far above out of his sight and out of his reach. "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath." But this is God's way; and God's ways are not man's ways. As high as heaven is above the earth, so high are God's ways above man's ways, and God's thoughts above man's thoughts.

Christ "is the way, the truth, and the life," He is "God's way upon earth, and his saving health among all nations." Wherever he is revealed, he is revealed as the only way to the Father. He is the way, by the sacrifice that he offered, and by the satisfaction that he made, by the path that he trod as our forerunner, by the door of hope that he opened, by the way of life that he cast up and consecrated through the vail of his flesh, by the doctrine that he taught, by the faith that he hath finished, by the example that he hath set, and by the promise of life and gift of peace that he hath left as invaluable legacies behind him.

"This is the way, walk ye in it."

The saint's path is the way of truth, the way of life, of peace, of wisdom, of understanding, of holiness, and of charity; and Christ is all these. I am the truth, I am the life. He is our peace. I am wisdom, I am understanding. "I am the Lord your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your king," Isaiah, xliiii. 15. "This is the true God, and eternal life," 1 John, v. 20. And to walk by faith in him, and in the faith of interest in the favour of him, is to walk in all these. "This is the way, walk ye in it."

Chapter 2.

The Believer's Garland Recovered from Thieves, and Restored to its Proper Owners.

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves,” James, i. 22.

THIS text, as well as many more, has had the misfortune to fall into the hands of thieves; thieves and robbers, who have stripped it of its meaning, and left it half dead to its owners. I mean such thieves and robbers as are aiming at heaven; not by the door of mercy, opened by the blood and righteousness of Christ; but who are climbing up another way, a way not cast up, a way that is right in their own eyes, but in the judgment of God it is the way of death: this thievery is robbing Christ of his honour, as the only way to the Father; and God of his glory, who, in his pity and compassion to ruined man, contrived this way. But will a man rob God? Yes he will. No wonder then that he says by the law of retaliation, “Behold, I come as a thief.”

This text is applied, by the blind leaders of the blind, to all that make a fair shew in the flesh, to, such as appear in a voluntary humility, and to those who in a blind zeal compass sea and land to make proselytes to themselves, yea, and to all such who appear outwardly righteous before men. But, if these be the heirs of this text, then the papists, especially the nuns among them; yea, and the Jewish scribes and pharisees, and our British advocates for free will, with every other branch of the bond family, may claim it, for these all work; but does God work in them? The poor and simple among the Jews assigned the kingdom of heaven to the scribes and pharisees before all others; but then these poor things judged according to appearance, and not righteous judgment; for Christ assigned the scribes and pharisees to the greatest damnation, and adopted publicans and harlots in the their room and said, “These shall enter into the kingdom of God before them.”

Before we give up this text, let us inquire,

1. What this word is, and how received.

2. What is meant by “doing the word.” And,

3. He that does not the word “is one that deceives himself.”

James, this great apostle, will tell us himself what he means by the word. “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.” This word is the word of life, sent home to the heart by God, and applied by the Holy Spirit. Here is the sovereign and good will of God set forth to his people, which implies that this begetting is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth. The begetting of us is wholly owing to God’s own free will and good pleasure, and so is our new birth also. It is “not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, nor of blood, but of God.” And he begets us from a death in sin, from a death in law, and from a death to all the real service of God; and to a life of faith, a life in the Spirit, and to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. “He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.”

Those that God begets are called “the first fruits of his creatures.” But was all the harvest, all the crops of the holy land, carried into God’s sanctuary? No; only the first fruits. Was all that the fig tree or the pomegranate tree bore offered to God? No; only the fruit that was first ripe. And does God beget all his creatures to life by the word of truth? No; only the first fruits of his creatures. These fruits are gathered from among the rest, which are called creatures, which bear untimely fruits, wild grapes, &c. and are called corrupt trees, with corrupt fruit; and are distinguished from God’s fruit by being called the vintage and harvest of the wicked. But do those legal workers submit to the sovereign and good will of God? No; they blaspheme the counsel of his will. Are they begotten from death? No; they are under the ministration of it, and stick to it, and contend for their own dead works. Do they receive the word of truth, with which we are begotten, in an honest and good heart? No; their doctrines, writings, sermons, and confessions, are not the word of truth, but confusion and falsehood. The first fruits of his creatures here spoken of were first ripe in the council of God, first ripe under the sun of righteousness; they first trusted in Christ, and are the first that shall rise from the dead; “Christ the first fruits” of all, and these “the first fruits of God’s creatures” in him.

But alas! these labourers, who labour for that which is not bread, and who spend money for that which satisfieth not, are sad enemies to these

first fruits, redeemed from among men; they contend for the creatures, and cleave to them; they contend for the world, for universal redemption; they despise the free woman, and love the bond; they hate Zion, and cleave to Sinai; they lampoon the first fruits, and affect the corrupt fruits. And surely such works can never be called “doing the word;” for he that labours aright must first be a partaker of the fruits of the Spirit, and be taken himself out of the world, out of the flesh, and out of legal bondage, and bondage to sin, before he can be called a first fruit of God’s creatures.

Those who deny the fall of man, those who have a will and power of their own, who have a talent and a stock of inherent grace to improve, can never be James’s “doers of the word of truth;” for he that does the word receives both the word and the power to do from God. “Do not err, my beloved brethren; every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” So that he is a debtor to grace for all that is good, for all that is perfect, and for all that he does; and he is said to receive these as gifts from God: and, if all that is good and perfect comes down from above, then it cannot be inherent in man. And sure I am that fleshly perfection is not to be found among all the gifts that come down from the Father of lights.

Moreover, these are called God’s gifts, and therefore not man’s stock. Besides, the receiver of those gifts is led to view God as the immutable Jehovah, “with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning.” But this article is no part of their creed who make God to change in his love, in his mind and will, and in his gifts of life and grace, by asserting that these first fruits may fall from adoption, from grace, and from the gift of eternal life, and perish.

Furthermore, “this door of the word” is one unto whom God hath granted repentance unto life; he is not one that “hates the light,” or rebels against the word of sovereign grace; but one of an humble and a contrite heart, that trembles at God’s word. For James intimates that “this doer receives with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save his soul.” But then the repentance that produces such meekness is not to be found in the elder son, the son by creation, the son that never at any time transgressed the commandment; for, when the “father said to him, Go work to day in my vineyard, he said, I go, sir, but went not.” It is the prodigal, the younger son, who has been manifested to be a son since the creation, and that by adopting grace, who, when his father said to him, Go

work to day in my vineyard, replied, I will not, but afterwards repented and went renouncing his own will, and repenting of the rebellion of it and upon repentance “went and did the will of his father,” denying self and self-will too.

Now this son is said to “receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save his soul.” But why is it called the grafted word? In opposition to all such as receive it in the head, in the theory, in word only, in thorny ground, way side, or stony ground. And, in opposition to all that receive it as the word of man, “it is received in an honest and a good heart,” as the word of God, which is quick, and gives life; sharper than a word, and cuts its way; comes in Power, and makes all high things that exalt themselves fall before it; it comes in much assurance, and raises the soul to God in faith; in the Holy Ghost, regeneration follows upon it; it is received in love, and abides there; and it is “the ingrafted word,” and shall never be separated from the good tree that is made good by it, “so lightly grows the word of God and prevails.”

This is God’s covenant with Christ, and with us in him; “The word that I have put into thy mouth, and the Spirit that is upon thee, shall never depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.”

Hence it is called “the incorruptible seed, the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever.” And who is to take this ingrafted word out of us? None can but the divine husbandman, and he will not, for his faithfulness shall not fail, his covenant shall not be broken, his word shall not return void, his truth shall not pass away unaccomplished; nay, he purgeth every fruitful branch in the vine, that it may bring forth more fruit; he never takes any away but concubines, who are not in wedlock, bastards who have no chastisement, and barren branches which have no union, never being made one spirit with the living vine; but these ingrafted branches, who have the ingrafted word in them, their leaf shall not wither, nor shall they cease from yielding fruit; nay, they shall bring forth fruit in old age; to shew that God is upright.

This “doer of the word” is further described by his light, his constancy, his state of freedom, and the blessing that he works under.

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth

therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

James here intimates that it is not enough for a man to see, but to feel; not only to look into this law, but to get into it, and to continue therein, as all will who get into this law aright; for if they do “err from it, they shall come to understanding again.”

The blessing is on those, and only those, who are in this law, for the curse is on all who are out of it.

But then what is this law? The law of release, the law of faith; but why is it called the law of liberty? Because the obedience of Christ to the precepts of the moral law justifies us and frees us from the yoke, “Do and live.” The death of Christ frees us from the curse of the law; the blood of Christ frees us from the guilt of sin; the love of Christ frees us from wrath, torment, and the fear of it; and the Spirit of Christ frees us from the sordid disposition and base principles of slaves; and the reigning grace of Christ frees us from the reign of sin, and from the apostacy of hypocrites.

This man is not “a forgetful hearer,” he never forgets the hill Mizar; nor can he get from his part and lot in this law; and such an one “is a doer of the word and work too.” But what work? Not the works of the flesh, for these are sin; nor the works of Herod, who did many things, but nothing right; nor dead works, for the blood of Christ purges the conscience from them; nor the works of the law, for such are cursed in their deeds, instead of being blessed; much less the works of darkness, which are errors and heresy; and there are also deceitful workers, who walk in craftiness, and handle the word of God deceitfully, in order to make the heart of the righteous sad, and to strengthen the hands of evil doers; but which of all these sorts of workers “are blessed in their deeds?” I answer, None of them; for they that are of the works of the law are under the curse, and so are they who are of the works of darkness; and “cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully,” Jer. xlviii. 10.

There are various branches of doing in scripture; but the doers themselves are ranged in two classes, and the one is opposed or set in opposition to the other by God himself. “O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer,” Psalm xxxi. 25.

The one here is called a saint, one separated to God's service, to grace here, and to glory hereafter, in the purpose of God; and they are called to be saints, and are sanctified, being washed in Christ's blood, and renewed by the Spirit: these are called the faithful, whom God preserves; and the other is the proud doer, who works to be seen of men, and boasts of his performances, whom God plentifully rewardeth for all his pride, and for all his doings, as he did the Jewish Pharisees; and this we have often seen with our eyes, when their doings have lifted them up in pride till they have fallen into the condemnation of the devil, and have appeared vagabonds in this world, with the evident tokens of perdition upon them.

This doer of the word of truth, who is blessed in his deed, must be a believer; for, as before observed, they that are of the works of the law are under the curse, and there is no blessing, here there is no faith; as many as are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. But then there are many persuasions in the world that are called faith; this is true, "but then these persuasions come not from him that called us." Abraham's faith we know was of God, and it was not the faith of universal redemption, nor of universal grace; for though Lot came out of Haran with him, yet there was not one called out of the land of the Chaldeans but Abraham, as God says, "look unto Abraham your father, and to Sarah that bare you, for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." Therefore Abraham's faith was the faith of God's elect, which is the only faith in this world that is of God, and that has God's blessing annexed to it; and sure I am that the "doer of the word" in my text is a worker in faith, or a faithful worker; for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Besides this man is blessed in his deed, not for it; and as many as are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham, for all Abraham's children are sure to copy after their father. "If ye were the children of Abraham, ye would do the works of Abraham."

But what was Abraham's work? Why the obedience of faith; "he obeyed God and went out," at God's call. But had he light, or a talent, or a stock of grace, or of power, to come to Christ of himself? No, the Lord called him. Had he a stock of wisdom or knowledge to direct his way? No, "he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went." Abraham walked by faith, not by sight. Did he bring any of his free will, or human performances, to God for acceptance? No, he came to receive, not to give; "he came into a country that he should afterwards receive for an inheritance." In his way to Canaan he depended on the wisdom of God to direct him; and when he came

there, he waited on God for further orders: and God appeared, and told him that it was he that called him out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give him the land, and he bids him walk through it, and he did so; and then in faith, and out of gratitude, he builds an altar, and calls upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God, in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. God then promises him a seed, in which he and all the nations of the earth should be blessed; he believes it, and God reckons that seed to him for righteousness.

God bids him to walk before him, and to be upright. "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." In the type of Canaan, he receives heaven in faith and hope; in the seed promised he sees Christ at a distance, and is persuaded of his coming, and embraces him in love; and in Christ God becomes his shield of defence, and through Christ he is his God, his portion, and his exceeding great reward.

Abraham lives by faith till Isaac comes, and in him he sees the nigher approach of his great Redeemer. He is bid to offer him up; he does it in faith that God was able to raise him from the dead. God receives him in a figure, and Abraham receives him back again in reality, and sees the day of Christ in the type. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad."

He is ordered to circumcise his family, a seal in his flesh that the righteousness of Christ was on him, and that the love of God, a better seal, was in him. He charges his household to observe his own conduct, and to depend on God, and not to take Isaac, nor to go themselves into the old country again, or into the world, from whence they came out. He dies in faith, and obtains this good report, that "he obeyed God's voice, kept his charge, his statutes, his commandments, and his laws." God's voice to him was to quit the Chaldeans. His charge was to abide in Canaan, to circumcise his family, to offer up Isaac, and to walk before God. His statutes were eternal life by the faith that he had, "and that to all generations for evermore." God's commandment to him was, "to turn out the bond-woman, and her son," and to call the seed that was to come in Isaac, not in Ishmael; and God's law to him was the law of faith, that excludes boasting, and brings an imputed righteousness to the heart, and the humbled sinner to the foot of the Lamb, as the greatest of all debtors to sovereign grace. These were the works of Abraham, and all his children do the same.

They are called of God, and come out of the world; they walk by faith, and not by sight; they receive in faith and hope the heavenly country, and call upon God in prayer, praise, and thankfulness, for what they have in heart and hope; they abide in the covenant, as he did in Canaan, and have no desire to go back from whence they came; they offer up their all, rather than part with Christ; their hearts are circumcised to love God, which is a seal to them that are justified by faith, which always works by love; they bring up their family in the nurture and admonition of God, and separate themselves from the children of the flesh that persecute the heirs of promise, and suffer not the bond-woman to domineer over the free in the household of faith, nor a bastard to claim the inheritance of grace and glory, but send them into the wilderness of this world, to which they belong: these are the works of Abraham, and this is "the doer of the word."

This doer in James's account is begotten from death by the sovereign good will of God; he receives the ingrafted word of life as able to save his soul; he receives every good and perfect gift from the Father of lights, and views God as an immutable and unchangeable God; he looks into the perfect law of liberty in the light of the Spirit, and gets into it by a sense of love, and abides in it by the power of God; and performs real works, good works, such as the works of faith, labours of love, and the patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ: but without faith none can please God, without charity a man is nothing, and to be without hope, is to be without Christ in the world; and this is the believer who is blessed in his deed, though not for it.

But what has all this to do with them who are in the flesh, in the world, and never called out of it, who are enemies to the imputed righteousness which God reckoned to the father of the faithful, and enemies to the personal, particular, sovereign, and discriminating call of Abraham? Nothing at all. Can those be blessed in their deed who hate the heir of promise, contend for Ishmael, and are themselves the children of Hagar, in bondage to sin, and the father of lies, with the old vail upon their heart, bound with chains, not in liberty, and in a dry land, nor in a walled city, wild men, unhumbled and untamed by grace; archers, shooting in secret at the truth, and the heirs of it? Can such souls be blessed in those evil deeds? No. They talk indeed of a second blessing, and so did Esau; "hast thou but one blessing, O my father?" and he gets one, such an one as it was; but the blessing of eternal life is one, and all others are included in it; and this he never got, though he sought it, and though in his hunting for venison

he ran for it; yet it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, who sheweth mercy, and who had entailed it upon the heirs of promise before they were born, or had done either good or evil, that the purpose of God as concerning election might stand, not on the footing of men's works, but on the sovereign will of him that calleth; who has an undoubted right to have his own name called in whom he pleaseth, and it was his own revealed will that "he" would be called the God of Abraham (not Terah); and the God of Isaac (not Ishmael); and the God of Jacob (not Esau): "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial," or this is the covenant name that I will be called and remembered by (by mine elect), "to all generations."

A real doer of the word, is one that hears the word and receives it, and in love receives it, and holds it fast; he is called to the fellowship of Christ, and abides in him, and brings forth fruit; he loves the truth, and the truth makes him free; the word of life in the hand of the Spirit quickens him, and he walks in the spirit, and serves God in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter; he renounces all self-righteousness, and calls it dung and dross; he renounces all confidence in the flesh, and rejoices in Jesus; he seeks not himself, nor self-applause, but denies self daily, takes up his cross, and follows his Lord; he receives grace daily from him, and gives all glory to him; he has no fellowship with the workers of darkness nor will he herd with the dissemblers, or with the congregation of hypocrites: and he that in these things serveth Christ is accepted of God, and approved of men. The tree is made good by the Spirit, grace, and word of God; it is purified by faith, and is a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified; and a good tree bringeth forth good fruit.

The man therefore who, by legal works, dead works, works of darkness, works of the law, or deceitful works, thinks to get the blessing, "he deceiveth himself;" all his works are done to be seen of men: these praise him indeed, and verily he hath his reward, for that outward shew of godliness that is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. James, this great apostle, himself describes this self deceiver in my text, and opposes the doer of truth to him. He compares the word of God to a glass, wherein a man may see not only his face, but his heart, and all his actions; which sight is terrible to the wretched deformed sinner.

However, the real doer of the word must keep looking till he knows the worst of himself, for God will hold him to it; but free-willer, as soon

as he has but a glimpse of himself in this glass, hates the light, nor will he come to it; into free-will, dead works, and into self-righteousness, he goes until the old vail blinds him again, and the wound is healed by a cry of Peace, peace, where God has never spoken peace. "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." I know that fallen man in the glass of God's word is a leper from head to foot, an enemy to God, a criminal in chains before him, and like the beasts that perish; but some people have so far forgot what manner of men they appeared to be in this glass, that they have boasted of power, contended for their own perfection, relied on their own righteousness, and ordered others to stand by, "for I am holier than thou." But the doer of the word of truth is opposed to this self deceiver in the very next verse. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer (like the other), but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed," James, i. 23, 24, 25.

This part of the spoil our King David hath taken from the Amalekites, and I have no doubt but in his own time he will recover all, and send the whole of it into the land of Judah, among the people that he hath formed for himself to shew forth his praise, and as a present to all his friends, in all places where he and his men are wont to haunt.

This great apostle was a sworn enemy to all self exalters: he ascribes his salvation to the sovereign will of God; he admires the discriminating choice of his Maker; "hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?" He has an honest and good heart, and confesses human depravity, and his own imperfections; "in many things we offend all." And so far is he from sinless perfection, that he declares, "the spirit in man lusteth to envy, and that the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity:" and, instead of having power to keep the whole law, and to bring himself into perfect subjection to that, he defies the world to rule one member of the body; "the tongue is an unruly member, the tongue can no man tame." He is no advocate for the world, nor for the universal redemption of it, but declares that "whosoever is a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." He will not allow the voice of free will, even in the common course of business: "I will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain: ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this, or that." He detests walking in craftiness, and the work of dissemblers; "a double minded man is unstable in all his ways, let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the

Lord.”

Chapter 3.

The Just Man's Lamentation, and the Wicked Man's Triumph.

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” Psalm xi. 3.

“IN the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?” Verse 1st. The psalmist was brought off from all reliance on his own arm, from all trust in his own heart, and from all expectations of either hope or help from the law of God, and from all confidence in his obedience thereto. He knew that the Lord had made with him an everlasting covenant, “well ordered in all things and sure;” this was all his salvation, this was all his desire. And he knew that this covenant was made with the promised Messiah as the covenant head, and with David in him; and that it was to be a covenant ratified and confirmed by a human sacrifice in union with the Word that was God, and that the human nature, which was to be assumed by the WORD, was to be of the fruit of David's body, on which account Christ calls himself “the root and offspring of David.”

To build upon this rock David was led, upon this foundation his heart was fixed, and in this Almighty Saviour David put his trust for protection and defence, for all supplies in a way of providence, for grace, and for glory. He knew that “all things were put under his feet,” that he was heir of all things, that he was anointed with the oil of gladness above all that ever had or will have fellowship with him; that all grace was poured into his lips, and that he was King of Zion, yea King of Glory, the Lord of Hosts mighty in battle; and therefore he asks his advisers why they bid him fly from his enemies “like a bird to the mountain,” when his trust was in the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Saviour. “Where shall I go from his Spirit, or whither shall I flee from his presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there, if I make my bed in hell thou art there also; if I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the earth, there art thou in all these places.” So that there is no cause to flee, when I have a present help, a God at hand.

“For lo the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrows upon the string;” &c. By the wicked man's bow, I understand his tongue; “they bend their tongues like bows.” The arrows are doctrinal lies, lies of slander,

or bitter words: the one is intended to injure the judgment and distress the soul; the other to wound the reputation. The string of the bow appears to me to be the cord of sin, or the bond of iniquity, which keeps Satan in his possession of the heart, and the sinner fast bound to Satan's service; and it is the devil's work to keep this string tight, and to aid this archer with his assistance; hence the Saviour says, this is your hour and the power of darkness; "are of your father the devil, and his works ye will do."

These bowmen are said to shoot privily, or in darkness. They hate the light: hence it is that they generally circulate their heresies, first in a secret, or private way, till they get a majority, or a number on their side, and then the whore's forehead appears abroad; and if they intend to slander the righteous, it is never done to the face, but in secret, therefore such are justly called backbiters.

The upright in heart are the targets at which such archers shoot, in order to remove them from the foundation, or the foundations from them; "but if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" One foundation is the secret purpose and good will of God toward us, which is his prescience or foreknowledge of us; and is a knowledge of approbation, of love, of choice, and of a gracious acceptance of us in his beloved Son. In this his decree he has given us a sure and firm standing in his sovereign love to us in Christ Jesus: as it is written, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

Christ Jesus is the foundation which God in his decree appointed, and in the death of him he laid this foundation in Zion; and he is the foundation that is laid by all the wise master builders that ever God employed in his building, whether prophets, apostles, evangelists, or teachers. He has borne the weight of all our sins, and of all the wrath and all the curses due to us on account of sin; and has approved himself "a tried stone." To this foundation the Father draws us; here we cast our burdens and cares too; here the weary soul rests; here hope anchors, and faith fixes: into sweet captivity every thought goes, and love sweetly unites us to him whose strength is put forth in our weakness, and from whom life is communicated to every living stone that rests upon him: here we are sensibly borne up above despondency, above a spirit of heaviness, above the meditations of terror, and above the dark regions of the shadow of death. Upon this foundation "the sure mercies of David (in the salvation of sinners) are built up for ever;" and in our glorification "truth will be settled

in heaven.”

In laying this foundation, or in the founding of Zion, “judgment was laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet,” Isaiah, xxviii. 16, 17. The undertakings of the Saviour, and the judgment that executed upon him, answered all the demands of “precept upon precept, line upon line;” and the everlasting righteousness that he wrought out and brought in was divine, perfect, complete, and in every sense adequate to the plummet, and answered to the uttermost all the rigorous exactions of vindictive justice. So that this building of mercy upon this foundation, goes up “with the seven eyes of the Lord upon it,” Zech. iii. 9, iv. 10; and is a building complete; there is no breach, shake, or settlement in it, occasioned by any dishonour to the law, nor any part that overhangs to the injury of justice; for both line and plummet have been stretched and laid to this great work, and to every living stone in it, who have all died and suffered in their Surety, and have been justified in him at his resurrection. The divine founder and fabricator has inspected very minutely every part of his building; he chose the corner stone himself, and engraved it with “grace, grace unto it;” and he likewise gave the building its name, “the temple of the living God;” and the city in which it stands, is, JEHOVAH SHAMMA: which names continue to this day and ever will. And sure I am that this foundation will ever sink, and that this building will never be laid in a ruinous heap.

Foundation signifies also the beginning of the work of grace and truth in the sinner’s soul, which is the doctrinal and experimental basis in the believing heart; such as repentance from dead works, and faith towards God, &c.; which are the beginnings of Christ’s work and word in us; because there is no salvation without repentance, faith, &c. which is a clearing away (in some sort) the rubbish that lies between us and the foundation; and because faith, repentance, &c. under the Spirit’s operation, square, fit, and polish, the rude, rough, impenitent, and stony hearted sinner, and make him more fit to join and cleave to the foundation, and when once he is cemented to it by a feeling sense of divine love, he becomes settled, firm, and ornamental in the building. Such an humbled sinner ranges and lines with the rest of the building, and appears to be one of God’s chosen materials, whom God has chosen in the foundation and called to union with it, to rest on it, and to cleave with the whole heart to him, that bears him up as a foundation, and that holds him fast as the head stone in the corner.

“Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God.” If that city be the heavenly Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb’s wife, the triumphant church; then the glorious perfections of the Almighty, agreeing, and harmonizing in Christ, are doubtless the twelve foundations of that holy city, which God founded, and which will be in the end perfect in one; that is, complete in God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and be filled with all the fullness of God, when he will be all in all, all to it, and all in every part of it.

Now if these foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? Satan has got a number of labourers working to undermine these foundations. The children of spiritual pride, who are self-willed, self-righteous, and self-seeking, labour against God’s eternal decree of election, which has this seal upon it, “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” The Arian is working to overthrow the foundation that God has laid in Zion, and warning us from all trust in Christ, because he is no more than man; and cursed is he that trusteth in man: but Christ is God, and “blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

The Deist works at the doctrinal foundations, and ridicules the scriptures, though these can never be broken; while the Atheist and the Sadducee declare that there is no hereafter, nor world to come; but, “if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

“Now if these foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” It is true the self-righteous, and self-sufficient can do well enough, being so wise in building as to set at naught this head stone of the corner. Others build upon Peter; some build without a foundation, and others build upon the sand; and some, like the Babel-builders, begin to build without counting the cost, and therefore must expect not only to leave the building unfinished, but that, when the Judge of all the earth shall appear to confound their language, “the ruin of it will be great, and many will mock, saying, These began to build, but had not wherewith to finish.”

Of this stamp were the children of Edom in the days of old, whose soul loathed Zion, the people of God, and the place where God dwelt, where his people met to pay their homage to him, and to bring their tributes. Whenever any evil happened here, whenever any enemy besieged this holy spot, then these enemies triumphed. “Remember, O Lord, the children

of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof," Psalm cxxxvii. 7. This is the "wicked man's triumph, and the just man's lamentation."

But can these foundations be destroyed? No, not in themselves: but seducers who lead us astray are said "to destroy the way of our paths;" and those who blind our eyes, seduce us from Christ and from the purpose of God, are said to destroy the foundations, because they pervert the word of God, and obscure the foundations he has laid, by explaining away the sense of truth, and throwing false glosses upon it, in order to blind the understanding and mislead the judgment of the simple. In this way the path of the just is blocked up with stumbling blocks, the ways of Zion are unoccupied, and people go in by-paths, and the poor sensible sinner gropes for the wall like the blind at noonday. In such perilous times as these God raises up some of his own workmen, and fits, and qualifies them by his Spirit, as he did John, to raise up these foundations again, as you read, "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not; and they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shall raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in," Isaiah, lviii. 11, 12. Here is an account of new workmen raised up of God to put these foundations in their course again. He calls them by his grace, he guides them continually, and satisfies their souls in these times of drought, when the drink of the thirsty fails; he makes fat their bones, "the joy of the Lord being their strength;" he makes their souls like a watered garden, and his Spirit within them is a living spring whose waters fail not. By such workmen the waste places of Zion are comforted again, which have been wasted by the infernal artillery of these archers, who scattered some, seduced others, threw down many, wounded more, and blinded all. These raise up the foundations again, and bring them forth to light; and root out the heresies, superstition, and formality, that has been cast over them; and these foundations remain again in view to many generations.

Such workmen are called the repairers of the breach, because they are instrumental in removing the lies and falsehood, the self-righteousness, the blindness and ignorance, the pride and superstition, which separate between God and the soul. They are said to restore the paths to dwell in, because Christ, who is the only way to the Father, the way of life and path

of Peace (in which the saints should walk, and in which they should dwell in faith), being obscured by the blindness and wickedness of these works and workers of darkness, are now brought to light again by the preaching of the glorious gospel of Christ; and by these means these paths are restored which were refused, rejected, and set at nought by these sensual men, who know nothing but what they know naturally, and in these things they corrupt themselves; but when God shines upon them again in the word they are restored: for the elect of God shall not be finally deceived, nor the counsel of God frustrated, “for he hath laid the foundations of the earth” in the death of his dear Son, “and he will plant the heavens” with all those that trust in him, Isaiah, li. 16.

Chapter 4.

Heaven’s Greatest Bounty, and the Sinner’s Richest Banquet.

“And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,” Isaiah, xxv. 6.

In this mountain ? the mountain is Zion, or the gospel church consisting of elected persons ? “God hath chosen Zion.” Zion is the mother church under the New Testament, and her offspring are often called the daughters of Zion, and both are redeemed by the blood of Christ. “Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.” To these the Saviour was sent. “Say ye to the daughters of Zion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” From this chosen race the Saviour (according to the flesh) sprung. Mary was a chosen vessel; and of Zion it shall be said that he was born in her, and here “God made the horn of David to bud.”

On mount Calvary Christ was offered, and in the hearts of God’s people Christ crucified is revealed. “Behold, I lay for a foundation in Zion a stone, a precious stone, a sure foundation, and he that believes shall not make haste:” he shall never hasten for another foundation, nor shall he ever be confounded or put to flight before his enemies who trust in this. “I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.” This hill is the heart and affections of God’s people. “The kingdom of God is within you,” saith Christ; and so is the King also. “Believe (saith the Lord) that I am in you, and you in me.” He dwells in the heart by faith.

But who sets him here? "I (saith God) have set my King upon my holy hill. God revealed his Son in me," saith Paul; he opens the door of faith to us, and opens our hearts to receive our King, and circumcises them to love him; and he that loveth abideth in God, and God in him: such kiss the Son, acknowledge the heir apparent, embrace him as their rightful sovereign, complain of other lords having had dominion over them, and promise loyalty and fidelity to him.

"As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there." Local Zion had in her worship much instrumental music; the organ, pipe, harp, and viol, were in their feasts. But the melody of gospel Zion is to be vocal, which succeeded the instrumental; "as well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there." These singers are to sing his praises with understanding, making melody with grace in the heart to the Lord. Isaiah, in the spirit of prophecy, heard these songs among the Gentiles in his day, and bewailed the starving condition of the Jewish nation at their rejection of Christ, and at his departure from them. "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous; but I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me," Isaiah, xxiv. 16. This is Zion, and all God's springs are in her.

In this mountain the Lord of Hosts, the God of armies, will make unto all people (to the Gentiles as well to the Jews), the middle wall of partition being broken down, and the gospel of Christ being preached to the Gentiles? "the least is to be made to all people; and it is to be a feast of fat things." The allusion is to the sacrifices which were offered under the law, which were many, and all of which were types of Christ. We read of "burnt offering," which pointed out Jesus Christ enduring the flames of divine wrath for us; and of "sin offerings," shewing that he should make his soul an offering for sin; of "free-will offering," which pointed out his willingness to suffer; "I lay down my life of myself, and I take it again;" and of "peace offerings;" he made peace for us by the blood of his cross. These sacrifices were to be of young, tender, fat, and good cattle, "not corrupt things," which pointed out the youth, the spotless holiness, and perfect purity, of the Saviour, who was a lamb without blemish, and without spot.

In allusion to these sacrifices, wisdom is represented as killing her beasts, mingling her wine, furnishing her table, and sending out her maidens to invite the guests. Wisdom is a name of Christ; the beasts are the

fatted calf and the lamb of God; the table, ministers' hearts furnished with Christ; the maidens, preachers who are espoused, and presented as chaste virgins to Christ, inviting and bringing in the poor, the halt, the lame, and the blind, that the house may be filled with guests.

“The Lord of Hosts makes this feast. A certain man (says Christ), made a great feast, and bid many. It is a feast of fat things. Go (says the Saviour), and tell them my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come ye to the marriage.” And blessed are all they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

But it is a feast of fat things. Fat things? Yes. These are what no priest under the law was allowed to eat; no, not even the high priest himself. The priests under the law had the hide or skin, and of some offerings they had the heave-shoulder and wave-breast, and of other offerings more; but neither high priest, nor inferior priests, no, nor the person that offered, nor any of the guests that were invited, were ever to have or eat the fat, the fat was the Lord's portion: “all the fat is the Lord's, but ye shall eat neither fat nor blood,” Lev. iii. 16, 17. “Whosoever eateth of the fat of the beasts, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, even that soul that eateth it shall be cut off from his people,” Lev. vii. 25. Hence the charge, “Let them not fail to burn the fat,” 1 Sam. ii. 16. The fat was the Lord's, it was the most delicate and rich, and was to burn upon the altar as a sweet smelling savour; “and as a sweet smelling savour Christ offered himself for us.” It is in allusion to the fat of these sacrifices, that the least in my text is called a feast of fat things.

Various were the distributions observed about, the sacrifices under the law; some priests had the head and skin; others had the shoulder and breast; others all the flesh that the fork or flesh-hook brought up out of the pot or cauldron. The priest's wife and children might eat of the holy things; the person that offered, and the guests that he invited, ate of other parts. So to Hannah, and to Peninnah, Elkanah gave a worthy portion of the yearly sacrifices, but the Lord of Hosts had the fat of them all; hence we may see that under that dispensation none kindled a fire, or shut God's doors for nought. And as it was with the type, so it is with the antitype: Some got the head of christianity, I mean head notions; some the skin, I mean the wolf that puts on the sheep's clothing; thousands and tens of thousands have got a good living by calling themselves his ministers, as the blind watchmen did in Isaiah's days, though they knew not Christ, nor cared at all for him.

All kings get their thrones, and princes get principalities, from him; judges also get their courts from him, for all these come by Jesus Christ. "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice; by me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." The whole government stands upon his shoulders, and he sets these up under him. Many get from his left hand riches and honour; some get an office in his church, and a gift, as Judas did; many thousands take the name of Christ, though they are not partakers of his spirit, and are called christians. All flesh get food and raiment from him, for we lost all in Adam; but Christ is now "heir of all things," and the God of the whole earth shall he be called.

But who gets the fat? The fat falls to the share of poor, sensible, perishing sinners, whether kings or beggars; for all who believe on his name shall be saved; "for thus saith the Lord, In that day the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were ready to perish, and they that be of heavy hearts; let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more." And so it is, for to save our souls after having been at this banquet of wine, we cannot bring all our former guilt, fear, shame, wrath, and confusion of face, back upon us again; the gates of hell are shut, and the door of hope is open; the dark regions of the shadow of death are vanished, and life and immortality is brought to light; wrath is fled, and love is come; his anger in the law is turned away, and in Christ he comforts us. The night is spent, and day is come; "his anger endured but a moment; in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy came in the morning."

But these wines are "wines on the lees." The blood of Christ is called wine. "He blessed the cup and said, Take this cup of the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many." "Oil and wine were poured into the wounds of the poor man who fell among the thieves." Oil was intended to mollify his wounds and heal them, and wine to revive his spirits; and these are wines on the lees, which do not lose their strength. The love of God, says the spouse is better than wine, it makes the lips of those asleep to speak. The love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, will ever rest in God to his people; "he will rest in his love." The blood of Christ will never lose its healing, cleansing, and purifying efficacy to the world's end.

And these are "wines well refined," pure of all dissimulation, unfaithfulness, inconstancy, and fickleness; they are free, generous, unchangeable, and everlasting; and they appear well refined, as they are

conveyed through the instrumentality of God's ministers to the people; not savouring of self, self seeking; nor tainted with pride, arrogance, fleshly wisdom, feigned humility, mock modesty, affected words and gestures; much less with art, guile, and cunning craftiness.

This feast is to consist of marrow as well as fatness. Marrow is the life of the bone, and the bone is the strength of the body; and the oil of the marrow supplies all the joints with moisture, and keeps them supple and active. The dear Redeemer not only gives us his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink, but he feeds us with spiritual might in the inward man, and makes his strength perfect in our weakness; "as thy days so shall thy strength be." But by the power of inbred corruptions, Satan's temptations, and our own foolishness, we often find our spiritual might impaired; we diminish in our prevalency with God in prayer, and our boldness and fortitude against our enemies, and appear weak before them, like Samson when he made sport for those in his weakness, who had formerly trembled at his power: then we cry "Heal the bones that thou hast broken;" and in waiting upon the Lord our strength is renewed, fresh life and health appear in the bones, and fresh oil in the joints, "which knit the body together in love, having nourishment ministered, which nourishment is that which every joint supplieth, and so increases itself with the increase of God."

But who is the "perishing sinner" that shall come to this feast of fat things? I reply, he that feels his guilt, and thirsts for pardon; he that feels the curse, and longs for the blessing; he that labours under wrath, and thirsts for love; he that feels the sting of death, and hungers after the bread of life; he that is condemned in his soul, and longs for righteousness; he that is sick of Satan's tyranny, and thirsts for the living God; he that is miserable, and waits for comfort; and he that is in the dread and horrors of damnation, and longs for salvation by grace. "They shall come, saith the Lord, that were ready to perish." Where to? To Zion, and to the feast of fat things, to a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well refined: and who so proper for such a feast, as those who are ready to perish? seeing all is free, and none but the hungry are invited.

Chapter 5.

The Believer's Pace Slow but Sure

"He that believeth shall not make haste," Isaiah, xxviii. 16.

THIS verse contains a noble account of the foundation which God the Father hath laid in Zion, which foundation is Christ Jesus. God chose this foundation, and he chose all the materials in him which are called his chosen, and chosen ones; and as he laid the foundation, so he brings all the materials to it. "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" and as the foundation and the superstructure must be united together, so the Father "calls us to the fellowship of his Son."

It is the folly of the simple one to believe every word, but the character of the prudent is, "that he looks well to his way." This simple one, in the New Testament language, is one that hears the word, and anon with joy receives it; and this frothy joy, mingling with his legal self-righteous spirit, inflames him with an immoderate heat; he catches the lamp, and off he goes. This sort the Saviour calls "the first; but there are first that shall be last." The prudent man, who looks well to his way, has much work within to attend to, and he is obliged to order his steps in God's word, and to take heed thereunto according to that, so that he is in the general thought to be behindhand, or, as the Saviour says, "he is the last, and yet there are last that shall be first." Saul and David were lively figures of these two sorts of professors. Saul was always too hasty: he was to stay seven days at Gilgal, but Samuel comes not soon enough for him, then he forces himself into the priest's office. At the defeat of the Philistines he curses any man that should eat food till night; Jonathan transgresses the oath ignorantly. Saul inquires of God, and obtains no answer; he puts the matter to lot, to know where the fault lay. Saul and Jonathan are taken, and the people escape. It is cast again between Saul and his son, and Jonathan is taken; and Saul swears by God that he shall die, but lets him live.

He is sent "to the Amalekites, to slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Saul spares Agag, and flies upon the spoil, contrary to God's command; and in his last trouble and extremity, because he got not an immediate answer from God, he goes "to the witch of Endor."

When he is wounded in his last battle, he wants his armour-bearer to thrust him through, which he refusing, he falls upon his own sword, and dies by suicide. "The counsel of the froward carries him headlong." Hastiness, distrust, infidelity, legality, self-righteousness, human applause, and carnal fear, influenced him through all his conduct. He consulted

carnal reason, and conferred with flesh and blood in almost every thing he did; and this self-dependance and self-contrivance pushed him on from bad to worse; and hence we see that “by human strength shall no man preveil.”

But David’s faith waited for God’s warrant. He attacks the champion of the Philistines in the name of the living God. When he was solicited to go against the Philistines he inquires of God, and God said, “Go and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.” Will Saul come to Keilah, saith David? “He will come, saith the Lord. But will the men of Keilah deliver me up? They will deliver thee up, saith the Lord.” O what a safe way is this! In all thy ways acknowledge him.

In David’s behaviour before Achish, king of Garb, in his conclusion of falling one day by the hand of Saul, and in his determined destruction of Nabel’s house, unbelief besets him; self was consulted, and the old man was put on. But this was not the habitual bent of his mind nor the constant course of his conduct, for that was quite the reverse of this. David’s faith was long tried before he came to the throne; and, when he did, he reigned seven years in Hebron before all the tribes of Israel came under his government; yet his faith was the confidence of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; and so faith claims them: “Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine, Ephraim also is the strength of mine head, Judah is my lawgiver, Moab is my wash pot, over Edom will I cast out my shoe; through God we shall do valiantly, for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.” Thus faith goes before, giving glory to God, and calls things that are not done as though they were already done; and God comes after and puts an honour upon faith, that he that believes may not be ashamed or confounded.

He that believes shall not make haste. The work of faith is God’s work; “this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent;” and the Almighty will not be hurried in his work; we are not to say, “Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it,” Isaiah, v. 19. “The Lord will hasten it in his time,” Isaiah, lx. 22. The first work of faith is to bring distant things near: Moses sees the threatened judgment of God coming upon Egypt, and casts off his adoption; “by faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” Noah was warned of the deluge not seen as yet; moved with fear, and influenced by faith, he builds an ark and saves his house; “by the which he condemned the world, and became heir

of the righteousness which is by faith.”

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and this wise man, who is brought to fear, is one that “foresees the evil and hides himself.” The evil that he foresees is the day of judgment, the great day of the wrath of God; and under these fears he seeks the Saviour and flies to him, which in the New Testament is called “fleeing from the wrath to come,” for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us. The work of unbelief is to “put far away the evil day, and to cause the seat of violence to come near;” but the work of faith is to bring the sinner “to consider his latter end;” and when faith comes he cannot put the evil day from him, it will be uppermost in his mind, and always before him, in spite of all that he can do. To these God holds him, and for a while at the “bar of equity” he reasons with him. “Come let us reason together, saith the Lord.” The sinner sees his folly and rues it, and begins to amend and reform, to be attentive, and to ponder matters over a little, and hopes that a change hath taken place; but, alas! self-righteousness is all in all with him still; to strip him of which, God brings in bill upon bill, and terror upon terror, and appears against him: “And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that defraud the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts; for I am the Lord, and change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed,” Mal. iii. 5, 6. Under this trial severe inquisitions are made, and matters discovered to the bottom, sifted up, and canvassed over, till the mouth of boasting is entirely stopped, and the sinner “becomes guilty before God.”

The Saviour is presented now and then at a distance, and the need of him is sorely felt; but the whole work is God’s; we can neither forward it, nor let it. From Horeb the face is turned, and the face is Zionward; the eye of the sinner is to his Maker, and he has respect to the Holy One of Israel; and with supplication and bitter weeping God leads him, and he comes after him in chains. When God shines, then faith sees, not else, for it is in his light that we see light: this ray often withdraws, and we appear again as dark and as far off as ever. Not one sure step do we take, unless God draws us; not one act of faith is put forth, unless the wind blow, and cause the spices to flow out. Under every such pleasing sensation we struggle hard. “The captive exile hastens that he may be loosed, that he may not die in the pit, nor that his bread may fail.” But this hastiness adds nothing to the

work, "for ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight, for the Lord shall go before you," Isaiah, lii. 12.

After a little of this eager struggling of ours, the work seems at a stand again; at which we fret, repine, murmur, are self-willed, stubborn, and perverse, till fear and terror alarm us again, and then we relent, take shame and confusion of face to ourselves, confess our madness, and implore forgiveness; and, when resigned and submissive, meek, and quiet, "come life, or come, death, here I am, let him do with me what seemeth him good," the Lord revives his work, makes known the matter more clearly, and in wrath remembers mercy. Under these self-abasing sensations of humility, meekness, contrition, compunction, and godly sorrow, the faith of the coming sinner takes all the steps that he takes.

When self is denied, abased, and mortified, then faith moves "from this lowest room it is that the Lord bids us go up higher;" before every step that leads us to the honour of adoption is this humility. In this manner we see that self can never contribute any thing to faith, nor can faith and self work in conjunction together; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; the law of sin in the members wars against the law of faith in the mind, and these two are contrary the one to the other: but, if the flesh be mortified through the Spirit, we shall live by faith. Distant views, and budding hopes, at times soften and sweeten the soul, becalm and compose it, insomuch that terrors and torments begin to lose their force, and their violence to abate; the dreadful day looks farther off, and the alarming sight of it is more dim, and our meditations of terror do not recoil with that keenness and sharpness as heretofore; while a daily cross becomes more familiar, and sits easier upon the shoulder, and the chastisements of God yield more peaceable fruits: and when patience has had her perfect work in this business, and submission to the will of God takes place; human strength being exhausted, and the mercy of God in Christ implored; the sweetest savour of Jesus, and the odours of his ointments perfume the poor soul afresh, he appears more in view, and shews himself through the lattice of this chequer-work; the sinner's hopes fly to him, and his mouth begins to confess him, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. Blessed art thou, Simon! for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The fears and terrors of the law subside, an angry God disappears, love operates, and God shines upon the poor soul in the countenance of his dear Son, and gives him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus

Christ. Now the will chooses him, faith flies out to him, and exercises all her power on him, love works by it, and joy and peace flow in; while Jesus takes possession of his own, and is crowned King of Zion, the poor sinner ascribing all glory, might, majesty, dominion, and power to him for ever and ever.

The most puzzling thing to the believer under all this work is, that when he does the most good, as he thinks, he is the least regarded; and when he draws the worst conclusions of himself and his state, he is the most cordially received; that when he detests himself, he meets with the most pleasing approbation of God; and that when nothing but damnation is expected, that then salvation is the most near to them that fear him: yea, and when he would entreat God to let loose his hand and cut him off, as Job did, being desperate against himself and his sin, that even then he finds the sweetest and most heart-melting seasons with God. But alas! we forget that salvation is of grace, and not of works; that God justifies the ungodly who work not, but believe; that his strength is made perfect in our weakness; and that God entertains them who are ready to perish; that he fills the hungry with good things, but sends the rich empty away. A bribe in our hand to obtain Christ, is the only thing that keeps us from him; and a foolish notion of rubbing off some of the debt, is the cause of the debt book lying open so long against us; "for when we have nothing to pay he frankly forgives us." But this state of insolvency is terribly mortifying and degrading to human pride. However, there we must come, or lie in prison till the utmost mite be paid; for the Surety will discharge all or none; he will be all in all to us, or nothing.

The Father of the faithful obtained the promise of a son, and waits for the fulfilment of it till nature itself militates against him; to remedy which Hagar is substituted into the place of Sarah. Ishmael comes into the world, and the end is obtained, and here he rests. "The steward of my house is this Eleazar of Damascus, and lo one born in my house is mine heir." All this human contrivance helps nothing forward; "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" No, reason and all her pleas must give way to faith, and faith must have nothing to look to, or depend on, but the power of God. Against all hope founded in nature, and supported by reason, he must believe in hope, founded on the power, truth, and faithfulness of God. "Abraham must believe that what God had promised he was able to perform, and Sarah must by faith receive strength from above to conceive seed, by judging him faithful that hath promised." And we must look to Abraham

our father, and to Sarah that bare us, if ever our souls are quickened to serve the living God. For their faith and ours must centre, and meet in unity, in the same object; and all our fruitfulness, as well as theirs, must come from his promise; yea, it must come from the same seed, Christ, who is the living vine, and tree of life, from whom all grace and life comes: and he is a tree of life in us as well as in them. "In me is thy fruit found."

Chapter 6.

The Believer's Safest Path in the Darkest Night

"But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold," Job, xxiii. 10.

JOB had been much indulged with the presence of God, and he had obtained a good report through faith, God testifying of him that he was a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil. He acknowledges the felicity that he had enjoyed, the condescension of God to him, and the holy familiarity the Almighty had favoured him with. He had seen the blessing of God upon the work of his hands, insomuch that his substance was so increased as that he became the greatest man for wealth in all the east; and his liberal heart kept pace in some measure with the bountiful hand of his Maker: he was truly blessed in his flock, in the fold, in the store, in the basket, in the city, and in the field.

He was blessed with the fruit of the womb also: he had a flourishing family of ten children, which assembled together often with God's people, and feasted in each other's houses, and who were permitted to assemble, and did assemble, among the sons of God; and were so called on the account of their religious parent, and their adherence to his religion and counsel, who taught them the good old way, and who rose up early and sent and sanctified hem daily; yea, and offered a sacrifice every morning according to the number of them all: "lest, saith he, they have been seduced, and sinned, and have been overcome by Satan to curse God in their heart." Thus did Job continually, and thus will every believing parent do, who knows the grace of God in truth; his family will follow his soul into his closet both morning and evening; yea, and at all other times by day or by night.

Furthermore, his retinue was very great, he had a very great household, which he endeavoured to keep in good order; he never despised the cause

of his man-servant, or of his maidservant; for some of them were brought up with him, and the same God that formed Job in the womb formed them also.

Add to this, as a ruler or magistrate Job shone with peculiar lustre; “his judgment was as a robe and a diadem.” When he went out through the city, when he prepared his seat in the street, the young men saw him and hid themselves, the aged arose and stood up, all waited for his counsel; and after his judgment and sentence of the case they spake not again, but abode by his decision. The cause that he knew not he searched out, he plucked the spoil out of the teeth of the oppressor, and made the widow’s heart to sing for joy. In these things he kept a good conscience, declaring, “My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.” But the glory of all this ought to have been given to God, who works in us both to will and to do.

Moreover, the grace of God was abundant upon him; hence his confession and complaint. “O! that it was with me as in months past, as in the days of my youth; when the Almighty was with me, when my children were about me, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, when the glory of God was fresh in me, when his visitations preserved my spirit, when the candle of God shined upon my head, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.”

But now he saw not his signs; his substance was all cut off; God gave, and God took it away. His flourishing family all assembled in their elder brother’s house; all on a sudden the house is smitten at all the four corners, and they are all buried in its ruins, and sent to the house appointed for all living. The servants in the field all fall by the sword, or go into captivity; none is left but one of each band to bring the heavy tidings of the others’ destruction. His health leaves him, and a loathsome disease seizes him, till his flesh corrupts; he is poured out as milk, and curdled like cheese; and the corruption of his flesh sticks to the colour of his coat; his breath is strange to his wife, and she turns atheist; the youths push away his feet; his religious friends deal as deceitfully as a brook that fails in summer; the devil fills him with oaths and curses against God; and they that had reaped the benefits of his administrations asked contemptuously, “Where is the house of the Prince?” But the worst of all, the greatest of all losses, the heaviest of all calamities, is, his God and Saviour is gone; and this loss can never be repaired by the finding of another. “O that I knew where I might find him! I go backward, but he is not there, and forward, but I cannot

behold him; on the right hand, where he doth work, and on the left hand, but I cannot perceive him." The Messiah is his all in all; and to lose him is to lose all that is worth keeping, and all that is good or worth getting, and all that can be lost both to soul and all. But this pearl of great price cannot be finally lost when once he is found, and all is parted with for the sake of him.

Thus this good man had seen the leadings of God's providence, and observed these things, and had understood the loving kindness of the Lord, as all that watch his hand and handy-works shall do; he had enjoyed the presence of God, and the leadings of his Spirit, and of his grace and counsel; and by faith in him, and watchfulness on him, by feeling for his presence and walking in the light of his countenance, he had cleaved to him, enjoyed union and communion with him; and, like Enoch and Noah, he had walked humbly and tenderly with his God. But now he is gone; he is gone in a path that Job knew not, and he was leading Job in paths that he had not known: God's paths now were in the mighty waters, and his footsteps were out of sight. This was to Job not the old beaten track, but an unfrequented path. Job looks to every footstep of the old way, but he was not there: barrenness was in the field, death in his offspring, sickness in his body, sin and wrath in his soul, destruction triumphing in his servants, deism in his wife, ingratitude in his friends, triumph in his enemies, and all the artillery of hell invading his mind. Which way his God is gone he knows not, but he submits to infinite wisdom, and confesses his own ignorance; "where he is, or which way he is gone, I know not."

"But he knoweth the way that I take" (or the way that is with me). Now in such desperate cases as these, or when at a loss in such perilous paths, in which no ray of light shines, no voice of wisdom or mercy is heard, no footstep of God to be traced, nor any known line to be drawn; when there is none to cast up the way, gather out the stones, lift up the standard, or take up the stumbling blocks out of the way, or to read the handwriting against us; not one interpreter among a thousand to shew unto man the uprightness of God, and what that uprightness is that God requires in a man; when the sun goes down over the prophets, and the shadows of the evening are stretched out; when there is no more among us any prophet that knoweth how long; when we see not our signs nor tokens for good; when the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; when those who utter error against the Lord make empty the soul of the hungry, and cause the drink of the thirsty to fail; when

providence seems to run counter to the promise and to all the expectations of hope; when the smiles of heaven seem to favour the wicked, and the saint is chastened every morning and plagued every day; when Ziklag is burnt with fire, and the Amalekites rejoice in the spoil; when the man after God's own heart is going to be stoned, and those that were doomed to destruction are enriched with his all; when Samson grinds in the prison, and the Philistines are entertained with sport made by the Nazarite of God; I say, in such cases as these the saint of God should be at a point. God, according to our view of things, is gone, and we know not which course he has steered. But this we know, that, however a just God may seem to favour the council of the wicked, yet judgment must come, sooner or later, to vindicate the righteousness of the just, and to be passed in their behalf; "for judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it." For no weapon formed against the just shall prosper; every mouth that shall rise against them in judgment they shall condemn; this is the heritage of the Lord's servants, and they shall never be deprived of it. In the worst of straits the saint of God is never left without a voice, nor without a watchword.

The blessed Spirit of all truth, the miserable soul's comforter, and the distressed soul's faithful and true witness, informed Job now to act in this critical juncture; and that was, to continue in a path in which he was sure to meet his God again. There is one way, to speak in the strictest sense of the word, in which God has promised to meet us, and but one; and that is, not in a way of our own devising, or in a way that seems right in our own eyes, for these are the ways of death; but it is this;½

"Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways," Isaiah, lxiv. 5. Now, though this way is expressed in the plural number, yet that is only on the account of the many ways and means of God's grace, in which the Spirit directs us to the true and only way to the Father, "for God gives his people one heart and one way?" And what way is this in which God promises to meet those that remember him and work righteousness? I answer, Christ himself informs us that "the Father ran and met, and kissed, the prodigal at the sacrifice of the fatted calf," and in the first and best robe he embraced him. This is the way that we are to take in the darkest seasons. "Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." Christ is God's servant whom he upholds, his

servant that is to be extolled, and to be very high; and we are to obey his voice, to trust in the name of that King that the Father hath set upon his holy hill, for he is the Lord our God.

And this is the way that Job took. Did Job relinquish the hold that he had of his Redeemer? No. "I know (saith he) that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter days upon the earth; and, though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job knew that his Redeemer lived, and he knew that he was God, and that he should see him as he is, and be like him.

Did Job cast away his confidence, which hath a great recompense of reward? O no! He fought the good fight of that he might lay hold on eternal life. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

But Job was at the throne of judgment, and therefore complains, "Dost thou bring me into judgment with thee?" Yea, and the handwriting of the law was against him; "thou writest bitter things against me," &c. Yea, and the law discovereth his sins also; "thou makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth, thou hast sealed up my transgressions in a bag, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent." But does all this drive the Messiah out of his heart? No, no; "put me in a surety with thee." When Job felt the curse and wrath of God, he looks to his Redeemer; when God shewed him the debt-book, he calls for the surety; and when he found himself at the throne of judgment, he looks for the throne of grace; "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat, I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments; there the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge. Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he would put strength into me;" for it is in Christ that we have both righteousness and strength; nor will our only advocate plead against us, but for us. And what is this looking to the mercy seat? but the same employ as ours; and what the New Testament calls "looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Did Job give up the truth, or the way of truth? did he give up the doctrines of Christ, the word of life and love that he received from him? No, by no means: truth was his shield and buckler, and he held it fast. "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food," Job, xxiii. 11, 12. This

is walking in the way of truth, and walking in the faith of the Messiah, who was then to come, and whom Job held fast as his redeemer, surety, and mercy-seat, or throne of grace.

But charity is the more excellent way. Did Job walk in love? Yes, he did; he was rooted and grounded in love; and he would resist on it that his circumstances, joys, prosperity, and happiness, were not withered away for lack of moisture, “for the dew laid all night upon his branch;” nor yet for the want of a root in himself, for he declared “that the root of the matter was found in him.”

He held fast his confidence in his Surety, and knew that all his calamities came not in vindictive wrath so as to terminate in his eternal damnation, but that he was judged and chastened, that he might not be condemned with the world. “He also shall be my salvation, for an hypocrite shall not come before him; behold now I have ordered my cause, I know that I shall be justified; who is he that will plead with me?” Job, xiii. 16, 17, 18. Thus Job confesses his faith in the Messiah, and calls him his salvation, his Surety, his Redeemer, and his throne of grace, or mercy-seat: he held fast the words of his mouth as his great prophet, and suffered not his steps to decline from his ways: he held fast his integrity; he abode by the testimony that God gave him; he kept a good conscience, “and suffered not his heart to reproach him:” he walked in faith and in love, and desired the presence of his God above every thing else. “My desire is to reason with God; O that I knew where I might find him!” This is walking in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had in uncircumcision; this was the way that Job took, and he commits his way to the Lord, that his thoughts might be established. “He knoweth the way that I take, and when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.”

And now let us see how he succeeds; whether his predictions are fulfilled; whether God honours his Faith, and confirms his words; whether his decrees are established and his sayings come to pass; that we may do him honour. And upon trial we find him a true prophet: God honours his faith, and the Spirit’s testimony in him; and the whole of his assertions came to pass. “He is tried, and comes forth as gold.” First Elihu is sent to him in the office and character of the great mediator and divine interpreter, who is to be, according to Job’s wish, “in God’s stead.” He reasons with him, shews him wherein he erred, and wherein he has been deficient; shews God’s end in chastisements and afflictions, but yet vindicates Job’s

character as a saint of God. "I am according to thy wish in God's stead; my terror shall not make thee afraid, nor shall my hand be heavy upon thee. I desire to justify thee. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker; truly my words shall not be false; he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee; my words shall be of the uprightness of my heart, and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly." Thus did this pious and faithful youth personate the great Interpreter, whom we call "The wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the Father of the eternal age, and the Prince of peace."

And now the King himself succeeds his ambassador, seconds all his motions, confirms the word of his servant, and performs the counsel of his messenger; he speaks to Job out of the whirlwind, reproves what is amiss, and reprehends him for it; but still vindicates him and his conduct above and before all his friends, who had widened the breach instead of standing in the gap, and helped forward the calamity instead of assuaging the grief of the distressed. These are all bid to take their sacrifices to Job, who is to pray for them, lest God deal with them after their folly, who had not spoken the things that were right of God, as his servant Job had; and no wonder, for not one of all the three ever pointed him to the Messiah; and hence it is that they are all now ordered to bring their sacrifices to Job, to let them know that there can be no access to God, nor acceptance with him, without a sacrifice, which is Christ; nor without an intercessor, which at this time was Job. Take your sacrifices to my servant Job, and he shall pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you according to your folly. Job prays, and God turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends. God also accepted Job; and now, according to his own faith, "he hath been tried, and he comes forth as gold."

God had tried his temperance and liberality with an uncommon store of plenty; and, upon trial, gold was not his confidence, nor the love of money his root. He had tried his parental affections by the loss of his children, but they were not inordinate; he confesses that the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and in all this Job sinned not, nor attributed folly to God. He had tried his conjugal affections, and found them not inordinate neither; for, when his wife advised him to relinquish his integrity and to curse God and die, he did not act like Adam in hearkening to the voice of his wife, but calls her speech that of a foolish woman, and asks, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" The Lord had tried his faith with the withdrawalment of his own

countenance, with grievous bodily afflictions, and with the fiery darts and sore buffetings of Satan; yet Job holds fast by the hand of faith, he abounds in hope, he expects a glorious deliverance, and predicts it in the strongest terms: "When he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."

God tried Job's love to him very sharply by letting an army of terrors into his soul, which filled him with tossings to and fro all night long. He was scared with dreams and terrified through visions; yea, the arrows of the Almighty were within him, and the poison thereof drank up his spirits; yet he discovers the face of God's elect, and sticks to the love of God's heart, even when he was pierced through with the arrows of his quiver. "Also now behold my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high; my friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the works of thine hands."

The fiery trial answers many good purposes; it purges the chaff from the wheat. The way-side hearers, stony ground hearers, the thorny ground too, sat off for heaven, as well as the real hearers of the word of the kingdom, yea, and outran them; only the first in setting out were the last that arrived there; for, when the sun of persecution and temptation waxed hot, all blind zeal, the joys that sprung from natural affections, with all their natural faith withered away, and they fell back, and fell away; only faith that worketh by love went through, neither of which can fail. "Charity never faileth;" and "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Here the real saint sees the difference, and the good hand of God that makes him to differ. At the river Jordan Gideon's army was tried, and a discovery was made to him who were hearty in the Lord's cause and who were not. Abraham's order to kill his son Isaac tried his love to God; not that God might know it, but that Abraham might, and that God might have an opportunity of applauding it; and in this affair Abraham had an opportunity of trying God, and that in this respect, in offering up his all, to prove what he should get in exchange. And here it was that he saw his Saviour's day, and found him not only a tried stone, but a sure foundation; he gets his Isaac back, sees his Saviour in the type, obtains another promise, another blessing, and both confirmed by oath.

And so Job had in this trial an opportunity of trying the faithfulness, affection, and sympathy, of all his friends; and upon proof he found them forgers of lies, miserable comforters, and physicians of no value. It served to try also the affections of his spouse; and it appeared upon proof that

she did not care if the devil had him, so as he was but dead: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die." He made trial also of those who had formerly honoured him and caressed him as a magistrate; and it appeared now that Job was their by word, who beforetime was as a tabret. God tried Job's faith, hope, love, and patience; and Job tried God's faithfulness, to see if he would honour his former testimony of him, and the Spirit's work in him; whether one whose name was recorded in heaven could be cast away; whether the root of the matter could be lost; whether faith could fail; whether all things were possible to be done for those that believe, and whether according to his faith it would be done unto him. And he found his God and Saviour faithful and true: his faith was honoured, and all his predictions of future enlargement were fulfilled, and he comes forth as gold: rich in faith, rich in promises, rich toward God, and in the full assurance of a treasure in the heavens, where no moth corrupts nor thief approaches. He sees his Lord in open vision, and comes forth into the glorious liberty of God's children. Job must be the high priest to offer the sacrifices of his friends, and to pray for them; and they present to Job their free-will offerings, and God's blessing falls upon them. He receives once more ten children, double the number of cattle he ever had before, and lives to a good old age; his hoary head is a crown of glory, because it is found in the way of righteousness. "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

I have often thought that Moses, who left Egypt in faith, and was by divine Providence directed to Midian, where he continued twenty years, was the instrument under God of spreading the savour of his knowledge in those countries. Elihu, Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Jethro, were in mine opinion the spiritual children of Moses; and I am inclined to think that Moses was the writer of this book, and perhaps an eye and an ear-witness of the wonders of God in it; but this is only conjecture.

Chapter 7

The Unanimity of Paul and James

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," James, ii. 24.

THE apostle is here cutting at such professors as talk of their faith, while their souls were dead to God, without any love to him, motion towards him, or exercise upon him.

Now such a confidence as this, which is without the proper works that attend genuine faith, “what doth it profit, my brethren?” It is of no avail. It doth not apply the atonement, nor put on an imputed righteousness; it is not attended with peace, it doth not work by love, nor doth it prevail with God in prayer, nor hath it been attended with the seal of the Spirit, nor with the witness of him; and therefore the talker of this faith is as dead and as barren to God as ever he was; and then what “doth it profit? Can faith save him?” No, faith is no saviour; there is salvation in no other name under heaven but in Christ: and such a faith as this, which performs not the works of faith, can never bring Christ into the soul, to dwell in the heart; nor lead us out of self, that we may dwell in Christ by faith. He that believes shall be saved; but this is not that faith that accompanies salvation. Faith which comes from God, and which is God’s gift to us, and God’s work in us, is given us to live by: “The just man shall live by his faith.” But this faith brings nothing in, and therefore must starve the soul.

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” This brother and sister sets forth the state and case of the miserable sinner, who is poor and wretched, blind and naked, and destitute of all food but husks and the bread of deceit; but then, does the faith of God’s elect send the poor creature away in such a miserable condition as this, saying, Be ye warmed and filled, but at the same time does nothing for him? I trow not.

Faith is a hand to clothe the naked. “The righteousness of Christ is revealed from faith to faith; and is to and upon all that believe.” It not only puts on clothing, but it warms us also; for “it works by love,” and love “makes the heart burn within us;” it brings daily food to the soul. “We live by the faith of the Son of God,” who is the bread of life; and “whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed;” and they that believe have everlasting life, and shall never die.

Now, as such a poor brother or sister, being sent empty away, with a Be ye warmed and filled, without any relief given, profiteth nothing; “even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

But true faith is never alone, for where true faith is there is Christ; “for

he dwells in the heart by faith. I live by the faith of the Son of God; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The Holy Ghost also always accompanies true faith. "The day you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Beside, faith has two sisters, that are sure to abide with her, and ever will. "And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three." And, as faith always works by love, and cannot work without it, it is plain that this faith cannot be the faith of God's elect, because "it is dead, being alone." But can faith, which is a fruit of the Spirit of life "be dead?" or can faith that works by love "be alone?"

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works." James still pursues this prating fool. Before this man is represented as saying, "I have faith;" and this report, conveyed by sounding his own trumpet, goes abroad, and another circulates it, and says, "Thou hast faith;" then says James, "I have works." But "shew me thy faith without thy works:" which is what no man can do; for faith is as a grain of mustard seed in the heart, which is hid from all but God, and the possessors of it. "I will shew thee my faith by my works," says James. Faith overcomes the world, and separates us from it, insomuch that our old companions can see it, "and wonder that we run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of us." Faith centres in Christ. "We all meet in the unity of the faith," that is, in our covenant Head; and the believer abides in him, and abides by him, both in faith and affection, while others despise him. Faith obtains promises, and mixes itself with the word, which may be known by sound doctrine, sound words, sound speech that cannot be condemned, and by the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, spoken in faith and love. Faith is attended with the light of life, "for he that believeth in Christ shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life;" and this light is to shine before men, and is attended with good works, such as holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, a willingness to live honestly, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; which are some of the blackest of all crimes: by manifestation of the truth, setting it forth in all its freeness and fullness, appealing to every man's conscience in the sight of God; dealing faithfully with souls, and setting light by the world; abhorring covetousness, and willing to relieve the poor of the flock; watching over each other for good, seeking the welfare of their souls, guarding them against all those who lie in wait to deceive, especially the free-willers, who hold the "leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy;" and by a warm attachment to Christ, and a steady adherence to truth; not like the "simple,

that believeth every word,” but like a “wise man, that looks well to his way.” James shewed his faith by such works as these.

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well.” This is a bare assent of the natural mind, founded upon divine history, which is what none but a heathen will deny. But true faith exceeds this assent, and confession too; “it sees him that is invisible” to the eye of the body, and to the light of nature; it gives credit to God’s word, and flies to him as to the great rewarder of all that diligently seek him; and receives the blessings of life, and peace, love, and comfort, that are in him, and views him as the greatest of all treasure; such “are rich in faith, and rich towards God.”

“The devils also believe and tremble.” These devils go further than this man in his dead confidence, which fixes the poor carnally secure hypocrite in such a state, who sits down at ease under the woe of God, dead in sin: “Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion,” and to the dead in such a profession under the sound of gospel grace.

The devil’s faith has some feeling in it. He believes in one God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and he feels his own guilt, and God’s curse; he is in chains, and he knows it; he knows that Christ has destroyed his works, and bruised his head, and he hates him for it, and opposes him, and yet trembles at the thought of future torment from him as his just judge.

Devils know that the Holy Ghost casts them out of sinners’ hearts, and sets up God’s kingdom therein, which is a translation of them from the kingdom of Satan to that of God’s dear Son; and hence it is that they are so exasperated against the power of religion; and this is the reason why he raises such storms of calumny and opposition against every minister of the Spirit, and such floods of damnable heresy against the true gospel, to carry away the Lamb’s wife from the truth by a flood of errors: but this deceivableness of unrighteousness works effectually only in them that perish, who never received the truth in the love of it, and who in just judgment God gives up, some of them to speak lies in hypocrisy, and others to believe in the strong delusions, that they may have no part in the heavenly city, but in the lake prepared for all liars.

“But wilt thou know, vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his

son upon the altar?”

Was not this act of obedience by Abraham a full proof that Abraham's faith was of divine origin, a faith that is of the operation of the Spirit of God? and which always gives credit to God's word, and yields the obedience of faith? For could the faith of nature, or the false confidence of the most refined hypocrite, which is nothing else but a carnal assent, ever give credit to this, that a man's murdering his own child could be pleasing to God, when this law was gone forth into the hearts of the children of men ever since Cain's slaughter of Abel, "that he that sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed?"

But this deed is the highest act of obedience that ever Abraham's faith produced. This faith is of the same kind as Jonah's was, who told the mariners that he was a Hebrew, and one that feared God that made the sea and the dry land; and that he had fled from his presence, and on his account the singular storm fell upon them; and that the only remedy, the only way to appease God, and obtain a calm, was to drown him; which is what no natural man in his senses would ever believe, and they themselves could not; therefore they rowed hard; and, when all was in vain, and they were brought to this strait, either to sink him or sink themselves, they were obliged to cry to God, whom they had never known, not to lay innocent blood to their charge: and they were so astonished to see the storm and the prophet both sink together, that they did that which they never had done before; they sacrificed to God, and made vows. Some people talk of rational religion; they may as well talk of human divinity; for sure I am that such a faith as this is not the produce of nature, and such acts are far enough above the reach of nature.

This work of Abraham's made it appear to all that his faith worked by love; and both his faith and his love came down from the Father of lights; he believed God under the operations of a faith from God, and loved him under the constraining power of divine love shed abroad in his heart: this is plain, because it appears so much stronger than all natural affections, or even than the most inordinate affections, and all the ties of nature. Abraham denied self in every sense, and crucified every affection and every desire in this business.

"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works?" You may see how faith wrought within by his works without. "And by works was faith made

perfect.” By this trial of Abraham’s faith it was found and manifested to be genuine; and upon trial, and being tried, it was more precious than gold that perisheth.

“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness;” the scriptures having before asserted that, when God promised to Abraham that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, he believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.

This testimony went long before; and, when the long looked for and much expected seed came, he was bid to offer it up to God; which he did; and by this his obedience it was proved, upon trial, that the former testimony to Abraham’s faith was true, and it was fulfilled hereby, for Abraham was manifested to be a righteous person, that yielded the real obedience of faith.

“And he is called the friend of God,” being justified by faith, he had peace with God; and, receiving by faith the promised Mediator, his natural enmity was slain, reconciliation took place, communion and fellowship with God followed; peace, harmony, and friendship, succeeded, and ever subsisted between Abraham and his God.

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Justification is ascribed to different persons, and is attributed to various things, as follows. Sometimes justification is ascribed to God the Father.

“It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.”

Sometimes it is ascribed to Christ: “And by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquity.” And to the Holy Ghost also:

“But ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

In what sense does God the Father justify us? Answer, God is our creditor, and he appointed his own Son to be our Surety; and accepts his Son’s obedience in our behalf, and places it to our account. “He made him

to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This imputation is the Father's act. "To us it shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Christ from the dead."

It was Christ who bore our sins, and obeyed the law for us; he made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness; and, having undertaken in covenant engagements to be made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, whenever it pleases God to reveal him in us, and Christ manifests himself to us, and we are brought to believe in him, to know him, to feel him, and to receive him, "as the end of the law for righteousness," justification passes in the court of conscience, and we find that our hunger and thirst after righteousness is now satisfied and filled, and that it is life eternal to know him; and thus by "his knowledge," or by the knowledge of him, "he justifies many."

The Spirit's work, which he undertook to do, is to convince us of sin, and of the need of righteousness, and to take of the things that are Christ's, and to shew them unto us; he opens the heart to receive the Saviour, shews his righteousness to us, and works faith in the heart to receive it. "It is to all and upon all that believe;" he produces peace in the conscience as the blessed effect of it. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." The Spirit silences all the clamorous accusations of Satan, law, and conscience, and bears his witness to our acceptance with God in this "best robe;" and in this sense "we are justified by the Spirit of our God." Justification is said to be by various things, as follows. It is ascribed to grace.

"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." By Christ's obedience also.

"By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," or shall be justified. By blood.

"Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." By faith.

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." By words.

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shall be condemned." In Christ.

“In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” By works also.

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Now, to reconcile all these things, take notice that, as God appointed Christ to be our surety, to obey the law for us, and be made righteousness to us, and Christ is said to be given for a covenant to us, with all his saving benefits, without any merit, worth, or worthiness, as procuring causes hereof in us; and, as the Spirit that testifies of this righteousness is a gift, and faith that puts it on is a gift of God also, so the righteousness of Christ is a gift too. “We receive the abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, and shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” All this, being freely given, not to self-righteous persons, while they continue such, but to ungodly sinners; as it is written, “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Now the gift of righteousness, to an ungodly sinner, must be free and unmerited; and hence we are said “to be justified freely by his grace.”

This righteousness, being the spotless obedience of Christ (our surety) to the law, whom it became to fulfil all righteousness, and who declared “that not one jot or tittle should fail from the law till all was fulfilled;” this is what God calls magnifying the law, and making it honourable; which perfect obedience of the Surety is imputed and given to the poor debtor; and hence it is that “by the obedience of one many are made righteous.”

Moreover, to shew us that we are justified freely from all things; if the suggestions of Satan, and the workings of unbelief, should terrify us, that we have no screen from the future curse of the law, and terrify us with the terrible expectations of wrath to come, we are said to be “justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Christ endured the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, and redeemed and ransomed us from both. And “God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;” and, as a righteous judge, to “give us the crown of righteousness in that day.” Now this ransom-price, which Christ paid for us, is to redeem us from the pit, and from all future demands of law and justice; hence we are said to be “justified by his blood, and saved from wrath through him.”

Faith is an eye which apprehends this righteousness. Abraham, who was “justified by faith, saw the promised seed at a distance,” and by the hand of faith “embraced him;” and faith has this honour of putting this robe on the sinner; it is “revealed from faith to faith,” and “is unto all and upon all that believe;” therefore, instrumentally or applicatory,

“We are justified by faith.”

In the next place, we are “justified by words.”

“For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” A man is justified by words, when the words of his mouth agree with the oracles of God and with God’s testimony of man, and when his heart and mouth go both together.

For instance: the publican in the temple dares not lift up his eyes to heaven, conscious of his guilt, shame, and confusion of face; he feels his guilt, and smites upon his breast, where the wound lay; he confesses honestly his true state and case, and has nothing to look to, hope in, or sue for, but the sure mercies of David, which are in Christ; not one good work or good word does he plead, but guilty he pleads before God. And what was the consequence! Why he went home to his house justified. Justified by his words, for he had confessed the truth; and justified in his hungry soul by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to him.

Again, see in David his honest confession. “Have mercy upon me, O God; according to thy loving-kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest,” Psalm li. By all these words David was justified. He sues for mercy, which is a rejecting all confidence in the flesh. He prays for God’s loving-kindness, which is a tacit confession of his own enmity and alienation. He prays to be washed, which shews the sense and need that he had of the fountain God hath opened for sin. He confesses his sin, which is an acknowledgment of the omniscience of God. He confesses his corrupt state from his conception, which is a confession of

the fall of man, of every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart being evil, and only evil, and of the impossibility of bringing a clean thing out of an unclean, which no man, however good, can do.

He confesses that all his sins were against God, which is an acknowledgment of his justice, and that to God vengeance belongeth. "I will repay, saith the Lord." All this confession is ingenuous, honest, true, and consistent with the testimony of God respecting the fall of man, his sinfulness, and the depravity of human nature. He owned God to be true, and himself a liar; his unrighteous conduct he detested, and by his detestation of it consented to the law that it was good and just; for his unrighteousness commended the righteousness of God: nor did he think God unrighteous, who in a way of chastisement taketh vengeance, as it is written, "that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged," Romans, iii. 3, 4.

Once more. The sensible sinner, who has felt his own depravity, like Paul, and owns himself the chief of sinners, and the vanity of all self-righteousness, as he did, and owns it to be dung and dross; and who confesses, to the honour of God, that by the grace of God "I am what I am," and that he hopes and waits for the righteousness of God by faith; he is justified by words, or justified in his sayings, being the real truth of the case, and having confessed it to the honour of God's grace; and such an one "with the heart believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth makes confession to salvation."

And at the day of judgment such souls will act the same honest part. "I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink," &c. saith the Lord. They ask, "When saw we thee an hungry, or thirsty?" &c. knowing that it was himself that wrought in them both "to will and to do," and therefore put it far from them, and refer the whole of it to the Agent and efficient cause of all good; and these are justified by their words, "for they are blessed, and go into life eternal."

"And by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

The words of this condemned criminal are lies, contradictory to the judgment and testimony of God, and contrary to the confession of all God's saints; and to the verdict of their own thoughts, and to the judgment and sentence of their own conscience. Such is that of the pharisee in the temple.

“God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, no extortioner, unjust,” &c. “nor as this publican.” He lied in the name of God; for the heart of one man answers to the heart of another as in water face answers to face; he was proud, not humble; “he exalted himself, and shall be abased;” and he that said, “These many years do I serve thee, and never at any time transgressed I thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid; but as soon as this thy son was come, that hath devoured thy substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.”

Here is first his long service in the oldness of the letter; he never transgressed, which is an arrant lie, “for there is no man that sinneth not;” and yet “thou never gavest me a kid,” charging God with ingratitude, partiality, and injustice, and as countenancing iniquity, shewing a respect to him that had wasted his substance, and discountenancing the frugal soul; and therefore, though God called the prodigal “thy brother,” he disowns and disclaims him, and palms him upon God, calling him, “this thy son.” But he is no brother of mine, and for this he is condemned, and left to his pride, self-righteousness, blindness, and insensibility, like the pharisees, who said, “Are we blind also?” To whom Christ replies, “If ye were blind ye should not have sin; but since ye say, We see, your sin remaineth: for judgment I am come into this world, that those that see not might see, and that those that see may be made blind; for the light that was in them was darkness.”

Those that say, I am holier than thou, are a smoke in God’s nose, “and the smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever.” They that justify themselves before men are abomination in the sight of God, and those that charge him with being an austere man, reaping where he had not sowed, and gathering where he had not strawed, are condemned out of their own mouth; and so will they be who talk of free will, human power, inherent grace, salvation by works, and fleshly perfection; which is giving the lie to the testimony of heaven, which declares the perverseness of man’s will, the frailty of man’s nature, his corruption and enmity to God; that by works there is no flesh living can be justified; and, so far from sinless perfection, that, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness, and that every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart is evil, only evil, and that continually.

These proud wretches contradict their Maker; they give the groaning

confessions of all the saints the lie; they belie the verdict of their own thoughts, and the judgment and sentence of their own conscience; and, in effect, charge God with folly for sending a Saviour, and providing an everlasting righteousness by him, when man's state did not require it, and when human power and self-righteousness never stood in need of his being either righteousness or strength to them; all which counsel and clemency of heaven is viewed by them needless, or superfluous. These are the sort that appear outwardly righteous before men, but knows their hearts, and they will plead their performances even in the great day.

“When saw we thee an hungry, and did not feed thee, thirsty, and gave thee no drink?” &c. “But these shall go away into everlasting punishment, for by their words they shall be condemned.”

We are also said to be justified in Christ; “for in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” Christ is our covenant head, in whom we are all chosen, and in whom we are all accepted; and to the fellowship of whom we are all called in one hope of our calling: to this “Shiloh the gathering of the people is to be;” and by him, and in him, the whole family of heaven and earth are called.

And, as we all find pardon in his blood, rest in the satisfaction he has made, and peace with God through the blood of his cross, so in him all God's elect are to confess that “in the Lord have I righteousness and strength,” and to him shall all men come; that is, for justification towards God, and for acceptance with him. In this sense it is that “all the seed of God's Israelites indeed are justified in God's sight, and in him they shall all glory.”

And, lastly, we are justified by works. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Two instances James produceth as witnesses of this truth: the one is Abraham's offering up Isaac, and the other is Rahab's receiving the messengers and sending them out another way. Now to the first of these.

It is plain that James cannot mean justification towards God, or before God, by works, for this reason. God promised Abraham a son when it could be hardly expected, Abraham and Sarah being very old; however, “God told him that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, and he believed in God, and God imputed it to him for righteousness.” This was justification towards God, or before God, by faith, without any

works; and this was ten years, or more, before Isaac was born: and, if it be true (what some chronologers assert) that Isaac was twenty years old when Abraham offered him up, it is plain that Abraham was justified by faith before God thirty years before he was justified by works, or by the fruits of his faith, before men.

Again. When was Rahab justified by faith? I answer. God told Pharaoh that for this cause he had raised him up, to shew his power in him, and that his name might be declared throughout the earth. The judgments of God upon Egypt, and upon Pharaoh and all his host at the Red sea; the salvation of Israel at that time; the cloud and pillar that followed them by day and night; the manna wherewith they were fed; the conquests they obtained over Og and Sihon, kings of the Amorites; and of their coming to Canaan to inherit it; reached the ears of Rahab, and she pondered them over in her heart, and traced them up, not to idols, but to the Almighty and Eternal God; and the spirit of faith attended this report to her ears and heart, and fixed it in her mind, that all that she had heard was true, and that it was the great work of the God of heaven; and she beforehand saw the evil that would come upon the inhabitants of Canaan, and wished to hide herself, being warned of God of things not seen as yet. And accordingly the spies were unexpectedly directed to her house, and she informs them what she had heard, and confesses their God, and asserts that he had given them their land, and that there was no more spirit in any of them on the account of Israel, and owns that the God of Israel was the God of heaven and earth; and implores an oath of them, in his name, to obtain mercy. She is intrusted with their secret, and enjoined to keep it, which she does; she withdraws all her affections from her own people, and cleaves to the children of God, hides them, lets them down by a wall, sends them away safely, and predicts their safe return if they abide three days; all which they observe, and succeed; and she gathers all her family into her own house, according to the covenant and charge they gave her, and keeps the secret with which she was intrusted; and the consequence was, that, when all the other parts of the walls of Jericho fell down, her house, that was built on thrown wall, stood, with her and all her friends in it.

Salmon, a prince of Israel, marries this woman, and, according to Matthew's genealogy, Christ came through her.

Both Abraham and Rahab were justified before God by faith long before either of them was justified before men by works. The first act makes

the tree good, and the last makes the fruit appear to be good. The first is attended with a divine ray from God; “He that believeth in me shall not abide in darkness.” the other is a letting our light shine before men. The first makes the man good, and the latter is a letting men “see our good works, that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven.” James does not say, Shew God your faith without your works, but “Shew me your faith without your works, and I will shew you my faith by my works.” Hence it is plain that justification before men is meant, and not justification before God.

All that has been here said respects justification in the court of man’s own conscience. But the elect were decretively justified from eternity in the purpose of God; for, as he preappointed us “to obtain salvation by Christ with eternal glory,” so he preappointed us to righteousness as our title to it; for we were predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son, “which stands in righteousness and true holiness.”

2. We were justified federally in Christ from everlasting: “from everlasting I was set up;” that is, to be future man and mediator; and was then made of God unto us “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” This is proclaimed in the covenant, “Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified,” Isaiah, lx. 21.

3. We were justified representatively in Christ at his resurrection, “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.”

Chapter 8.

The Saint’s Mystic Death and Perfect Freedom

“For he that is dead is free from sin,” Rom. vi. 7.

THE elect of God, as well as all others, are by nature dead. they are dead in sin, living without any spiritual life; and to be carnally minded is death: they are without any affection for God, motion towards him, delight in him or in his service: and they are dead in law, being condemned in Adam, for judgment by one offence came upon all men to condemnation: and they are under the curse of the law, and by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

In this state the law could give us no strength to obey its precepts, and consequently it could give us no life; for all our obedience thereto is only dead works. But “what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God hath done us, by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and, by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,” Rom. viii. 3. Christ was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh. “The children being partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same.” And to him were our actual transgressions and inbred corruptions imputed. “He was made sin for us,” and he stood charged with the whole of our sins, and was arraigned and condemned, “being numbered with the transgressors;” and, under the sentence that fell on him, “our sins were condemned in his flesh.” He dies the death of the cross, and “makes his soul an offering for sin.” And “our old man is crucified with him,” and we too, for we died in our Head by virtue of a preceding union with him. “I am crucified with Christ,” says Paul; I died in my Head; in him I have died the death due to me for sin by virtue of my union with him, and by his being cut off, not for himself, but for me; in him I died, in him I suffered the law; “for, if one died for all, then were all dead” when he died. And in this sense we were all dead together; the Head, and all the members in him. But there is a voice in the promise, “Thy dead men shall live,” saith God. “With my dead body shall they arise,” saith the Saviour. And in our Head we all arose. “Ye are risen with Christ; God hath quickened you together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;” his blood has purged your sins, his resurrection is a pledge of ours, and eternal life is in him for all his members.

To let us know this, the law that cast, condemned, and cursed to death, the covenant head (who was made sin for us), that law comes to us, sin revives, and we die; which is a planting us together in the likeness of his death: the spirit directs the eye of faith to the death and atonement of Christ, and quickens us by his influence; “and we rise under the operation of the Spirit of God, and are planted together in the likeness of his resurrection.” Now we live no more in the old way; we are dead, buried, and risen with Christ. To the lust of men, to the lust of the flesh, to the will of men, and to sin, and to the law, we live no more.

“Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” We are dead to self. “No man liveth unto himself, nor dieth unto himself. Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord’s.” And to this end “Christ died, rose again, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the

living;" the Lord of those elect souls who are as yet dead in sin, and of them that are already quickened. He is dead to sin, and lives no longer therein. He is dead to the law by the sentence passed on the body of Christ, and by the sentence felt in himself; and expects no life from that. And by a sweet union to Christ, and the enjoyment of it; by communion with the saints, and affection for them; "he is crucified to this world;" he can find no life in the company of the dead; "and the world is crucified to him;" they can find no delight or life in the company of one that is dead to sin and alive to God.

The old life, and all old things, are now passed away, and all things are become new. He is born again, walks in newness of life, in a new and living way; lives by faith on the Son of God, or the risen Saviour lives in him; he has a new heart and a new spirit; "he speaks with a new tongue;" finds new desires and new delights; pursues a new end, and chooses new company; the form of godliness passes away, and every branch of vital godliness is entirely new to him.

And "he that is dead is freed from sin." What, from the in-being of it? No. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Are we freed from the in-dwelling of it? No. "I know that in me, that is my flesh dwelleth no good thing." Is it a freedom from the oppositions, notions, and struggles of it? No. "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind." Are we free from all slips and falls into it? "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not. In many things we offend all. Who can understand his errors, cleanse thou me from secret faults. For the just man falleth seven times, and riseth again. And, if thy brother sin against thee until seventy times seven, and turn again, and say, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." Are we freed from all carnal desires after evil? No. "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. The spirit in man lusteth to envy." Are we freed from all the usurped power of sin? No. "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that do I." But are we freed from it in the house of God, and when engaged in his service? No. Groundless fear and trembling are often in the pulpit, and carnal wanderings in the pew. "When I would do good, evil is present with me." Is there nothing in us that serves evil? Yes. "So, then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

What is this freedom then? Answer, The new man of grace is put on,

which is created in righteousness and true holiness; such are new creatures in Christ, and complete in him.

The old man is put off, as condemned, crucified, dead, and buried, by the sacrifice of Christ for sin; and therefore, saith Paul, it is no more I the new man, nor I the saint, that do it; but the old man. "It is sin, that dwelleth in me," which evil I allow not; which evil I would not; which I hate, which is the source of all my misery. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; having a soul on the stretch for heaven, and yet clogged with corruption.

What is this freedom then? Freedom from the reign of sin; for grace shall reign in every believer, over sin, to eternal life: but sin never shall reign in a believer, over grace, to eternal death, for "the just man shall live by his faith." We are freed from sin touching the handwriting, or debt book, that was open against us. "The handwriting is blotted out, and nailed to his cross;" and so are our transgressions blotted out as a cloud, and as a thick cloud our sins. Free from the destroying power of sin, and from the imputation of it. Sin shall not be our ruin, for "blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin." Freed from all obligations to eternal punishment on the account of sin. "The sins of Israel shall be sought for, but there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." Christ shall present us to himself a glorious church, having neither spot nor wrinkle.

I am redeemed from all evil; the price of my ransom is paid; I am justified freely from all things. And who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died to expiate my crimes; and is risen again to see me justified, and to plead my cause, and revenge my wrongs. I am in Christ, and there is no condemnation to them that are in him; I have the law of faith (by which I am to live) written on the tables of my heart, and that law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath made me free from the law of sin, which is in my members; and from the law of death, engraven on tables of stone.

Moreover, my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; he has taken possession of it, and dwells in it, and is the pledge and earnest of the future inheritance, and has sealed me up to the last day of redemption; that is, the redemption of my body from the grave, which will be revealed in the last times, when Christ will be the plague of death, and the destruction of the

grave; when the last enemy death shall be destroyed, and he that only hath immortality be all in all. This is Paul's language.

Furthermore, God's promised grace is sufficient for me. What I am as a saint, an apostle, or as fruitful, "by the grace of God I am what I am," saith Paul. If my success is great in conversion, in victory, gifts, fortitude, I am not the labourer, "but the grace of God that is with me;" that which changed my heart at first was "the abundance of his grace upon me."

If I stand fast, it is by faith; and I am a debtor to his grace both for my faith and my standing. Should I fall, I shall not be utterly cast down, for grace shall raise me again; should I backslide, he will heal my backslidings, and grace shall restore me. His grace is sufficient for me.

Thus am I free. If I look to the law, the handwriting is blotted out, and nailed to his cross. If I look to the book of God's remembrance, the debt is cancelled, and God will remember my sins no more. If I look to justice, that is satisfied, and God is just in forgiving me my sins, and in cleansing me from all unrighteousness; nor is he unrighteous to forget my works of faith and labours of love; nor will his justice forbid me the crown of righteousness when I have finished my warfare; no, the righteous Judge will give it me in that day. If I look to Christ, I am complete in him; if I look to God the Father, it is he that justified me; and, if I look to my infirmities within, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me, for my soul hates evil. My will is sanctified; "I would do good." My mind is renewed; "with the mind I myself serve the law of God." My affections are sanctified; I delight in the law of God after the inward man. I will glory therefore in my infirmities, for they drive me from all confidence in the flesh, and make me cleave the closer to Christ, and rejoice in him; they keep me humble, watchful, and grateful, to my Saviour for so great a salvation. I have renounced all that I was and all that I had, and have received Christ as all in me and all to me. I am a dead man in his death and in the law; and, as such, he took possession of me, and I live by him; yet not I, but Christ lives in me, shines out of me, speaks by me, and mightily works in me and through me. I fill up the measure of his suffering in my flesh, and his strength is made perfect in my weakness; his wisdom is displayed in my ignorance, his beauty in my deformity, and his matchless grace in my preservation and salvation, and in the salvation of all that believe on his name. "For me to live is Christ (for he lives in me), and to die is gain," for Christ is the portion of my soul, and my all in all. "He that is dead is freed

from sin.”

Chapter 9

The Sanctification of the Sinner, the Matter and the Manner of it

“Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth,” John, xvii. 17.

To sanctify is to appoint, ordain, consecrate, or set apart, any person or thing to a holy and special use; and thus God sanctified the sabbath day, the tabernacle, its furniture, and all the vessels of the ministry, Gen. ii. 3; Exodus, xl. 9, 10, 11. These things were not only to be set apart by the appointment of God to be used in his service, but they were to be sprinkled with blood and anointed with oil. To sanctify, in one sense of the word, signifies to wash, cleanse, or purify: the priests were sanctified by washing in water, and with the anointing oil, and by blood upon the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot; the common people by washing their flesh, clothes, &c. &c.; and others by the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, Heb. ix. 13. But it is the substance of this shadow that I am at, which sanctifies wholly body, soul, and spirit.

“Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” The elect of God were sanctified in the purpose of God from everlasting; and in this purpose of grace Christ was made sanctification and redemption to them from all eternity. “From everlasting I was set up,” Prov. viii. 23. And in his undertaking for us “he went forth from of old, yea from everlasting,” Micah, v. 2. In this sense we are said to be “sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called,” Jude, i. God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; and this is his will of purpose, which in time, when he began to speak to men, became the will of promise, and in the fullness of time it became the good will of God in Christ Jesus; that is, at Christ’s appearing, who came to execute every branch of the Father’s good will and pleasure, and to be manifested to us at our sanctification, according to the ancient settlements, or councils of old. “Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will O God; by the which will we are sanctified,” Heb. x. 7, 10. This branch of sanctification, being in the purpose and good will of God, must undoubtedly signify setting apart and appointing us to it; and, as it was settled and done in the purpose of God, it is spoken of in the past tense; “sanctified by God the Father” from everlasting, “preserved in Christ Jesus” in time, from the womb to conversion; “and called” in due

time to the fellowship of the Lord Jesus; for, being chosen in Christ from eternity, we are preserved in him throughout our state of nature, as his own remnant. "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: and even to your old age I am he; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you," Isaiah, xlvi. 3, 4.

2. We are sanctified by the blood of Christ, which has appeased the offended Majesty of heaven; which blotted out our transgressions as a cloud from the book of God's remembrance; which satisfied justice, removed the curse, purged our conscience, and procured our enlargement from the prison. By the blood the covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners "out of the pit therein is no water. Wherefore Jesus also, that the might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate," Heb. xiii. 12.

3. We are sanctified by the Spirit of God, who reveals God's secret purposes of grace to us, and applies the great atonement to the conscience, and who, by his powerful operations, regenerates and renews us, which is called "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Under these operations the soul is cleansed, renewed, and the faculties of the soul turned to God; the will submits and chooses the better part; the heart relents, and repents towards God, and becomes soft, broken, and contrite; the mind begins to be heavenly, and to mind heavenly things. Such have life and peace; the affections go after God, and are placed above, and the conscience acts an honest and just part for God; "that the offering up of the Gentiles might be accepted, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 16.

Thus it may be seen that each person in the Godhead has hand in the sanctification of God's people. We "are sanctified by God the Father" in his purpose; Christ sanctified us by his own blood when he suffered without the gate; and we are made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, we may see that the word sanctification, both in the Old Testament and in the New, signifies something more than setting apart; in this sense we were sanctified in the purpose of God. But we read of purging our sins, and of purging the conscience, of purifying the heart, "of sanctifying and cleansing the church, with the washing of water by

the word,” Eph. v. 26. “And of the washing of regeneration, &c.; and of cleansing us from all our filthiness, and from all our idols.” Now this sanctification reaches to body, soul, and spirit. The body is sanctified by the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost; the body is his temple, and he is the Lord that sanctifies us. The soul is sanctified as above described; and even the animal spirits are often high, and much elated in the service of God, when the powerful operations of God are upon the believer; much more so than a fainting, wearied man is inebriated and made merry with the most generous wine.

Furthermore, to cleave close to Christ in love, and abide in him; to walk with God in filial fear, and with a good conscience; to serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter; to follow peace with all them that call upon God out of a pure heart; to shun the works of darkness, and abide in the truth; and to persevere in faith; is “possessing the vessel in sanctification and honour.”

“Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” This word of truth is not the old law, though that was true. No, nor yet the prophecies of the Old Testament, though they are the more sure word of prophecy, and are all infallibly true, and cannot be broken. But then Christ is the truth of all the legal types, and he is the substance of all the prophecies; “for to him gave all the prophets witness,” and of him they all prophesied. He is the end of the law for righteousness, and the substance of all the prophecies, for life and salvation; and therefore “he magnified” the one, and sealed the other; “he magnified the law, and made it honourable;” and he fulfilled and “sealed up all vision and prophecy,” Daniel, ix. 24. “Moses the lawgiver, and Elijah the prophet,” both resigned their offices to Jesus on the mount, Matt. xvii. 3. And hence it is said, “the law and the prophets were until John,” Luke, vi. 16. Before Christ came, the law, both moral and ceremonial, was in full force; and the prophecies respecting Christ lay open, unaccomplished, and unfulfilled; but, when Christ came, he abolished the one, and fulfilled and sealed up the other: and now we must look for all truth cleared, fulfilled, and fulfilling, in Christ; for “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ:” and, as he is the substance of all the ceremonial shadows, the truth of all the legal types, the true light of all vision, and the subject and subject matter of all predictions or prophecies, he styles himself “the way, the truth, and the life.”

The truth therefore mentioned in my text, through which we are

sanctified, is, without all doubt, the absolute and unconditional “promises of God, which are all yea and amen now in Christ Jesus to the glory of God by us,” to the glory of God’s grace by the eternal salvation of us. I have shewed that we are sanctified by the election of God, by the blood of Christ, by the Holy Ghost, and by the continual communications of grace; and, as we are to be sanctified through the truth (thy word is truth), we must look for some true word of promise, where this sanctification is held forth and promised to us; and, let them be where they may, they are all now in Christ.

And first, “I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away; mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” Here is his choice of us, in which decree we were sanctified.

“I will cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed. So shall he sprinkle many nations. From all their filthiness will I cleanse them; and by the blood of thy covenant I have sent them out of the pit.” Here are the promises of sanctification by the blood of Christ.

“I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” Here is the promise of sanctification by the Holy Ghost.

This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise; I will direct their work in truth; I will give them one heart and one way; I will keep them; I will water them, and put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me. Here is the sanctification and honour that shall be upon every chosen vessel.

Now, Holy Father, as thou hast promised thus to sanctify them, and hast made me sanctification to them, and hast promised that they shall be sanctified through me; and as thy choice of them is in me, and the blood I am going to shed is for them, and the fullness of the Spirit that is upon me is to flow to them from me; and as all the fullness of grace is in me for them; then sanctify them according to thy true and faithful word of promise, for “thy word is truth.”

“Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” Where-ever thy word is preached by those who are chosen in me, and appointed to preach; who declare thy whole counsel; who are pardoned by me, and

preach pardon; who are born again and are ministers of the spirit; who are partakers of grace and good stewards of it; let the knowledge of thine election of them, the atonement that I have made for them, the spirit that thou hast promised to them, and the abundant grace given them in me, ever accompany the word of truth preached, and be communicated to all the appointed heirs of it, who receive the word with power, and in the love of it. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."

And every believer that is called under the ministry of the word, or by the operation of the spirit without the word preached, which is promised in the word, and comes according to it, is a living witness of this truth. By these means they make their calling and election sure; receive pardon and peace by faith in the blood of Christ, which faith mostly comes by hearing; they receive the spirit by the hearing of faith; and find the good work of grace begun and carried on under it, which is a full answer to this prayer, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."

And in this way the disciples were sanctified under the personal ministry of the dear Redeemer. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you: abide in me," John, xv. 3, 4. What word was this? He told them of his Father's election of them. "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

Blood was drink indeed. He promised to send them the Spirit, the promise of the Father; and a measure of the Spirit was upon them, though they knew not what manner of spirit they were of. And virtue had gone out of him to them all; the grace of life was in them; and by faith they had passed from death unto life, and had everlasting life. And thus God's promised sanctification attended the word of the Saviour to all that heard the word and kept it; they were sanctified through the truth, and clean through the word that the Lord had spoken unto them. This is the sanctification of the Lord's people, and it is all of God. "I am the Lord that sanctify you." The prophecies and promises of the Old Testament respecting Christ were two branches; the one was what he should do and suffer; the other branch was the glory that should follow his sufferings. The former were all fulfilled by him, and then all the other became yea and amen in him; and all the promised blessings, and all the glory that should follow, are in him also. Hence he is made "sanctification to us" in all its branches; he is the first above, and our election is in him; our sanctification by blood is of him, who is the fountain opened for sin; our sanctification by

the Spirit is the same, for the Spirit with all his fullness is in him; he sends the promise of the Father upon us, and all the communications of grace to us are out of his fullness; our sanctification is complete in him, and we are sanctified by a believing cordial reception of him into our hearts; and our life of sanctification in this world stands in our walking in him, cleaving to him, and holding communion and fellowship with him; for “he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

Chapter 10.

The Womb of the Morning and the Children of Light

“In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth,” Psalm cx. 3.

THIS psalm begins with the glorification, exaltation and intercession of Christ (after his resurrection), at the right hand of God the Father. “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,” &c.

As the second Adam, and everlasting Father of the elect family, he is appointed heir of all things, and all things are put under his feet, and he is head over all things to the church. The Jews in particular, who put him to death, and rejected his reign, are styled his enemies, and therefore “he casts out his shoe over them;” they are subdued by his wrath; they refused the bosom of his love, and therefore he says, “I will trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment, for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” This is spoken in allusion to warriors, who often appear in garments rolled in blood; who, when they have subdued a rebellious people, reduce them to the most servile drudgery; which is called making “his enemies his footstool;” upon the conquest of whom, as upon a footstool, he raises himself in fame and glory the higher (as Christ’s fame was by the destruction of Pharaoh in the Red Sea). This was done likewise at the destruction of Jerusalem, by leaving that people without a sceptre, without a ruler, and a synagogue of Satan, even to this day.

“The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies,” verse 2. Rod signifies a sceptre, and this sceptre is his power. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. This derived power respects Christ

as man, and as mediator, not as God; for as God “he is the first and the last, the Almighty,” Rev. i. 8; and no power can be added to omnipotence. Besides, as God, all things are his own by creation, and by right of nature. “For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the church,” Col. i. 16, 17. If all things were created by him and for him, then all things are his own by right of nature. This power, therefore, called the rod of his strength, is a derived power given to him as man and mediator. And this rod, sceptre, or power, is over all and all things; and is displayed first by his gospel, which is the power of God to salvation or damnation; called therefore a savour of life unto life to some, and of death unto death to others; which is termed smiting the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slaying the wicked with the breath of his lips: thus his sceptre reaches even to the souls of men. Moreover, his rod is seen in executing vengeance on the enemies of his people, and in their destruction by various ways, especially by war. “In righteousness he doth judge, and make war.”

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,” ver. 3. Thy people are the elect of God the Father, given to Christ as man and mediator; “thine they were, and thou gavest them me.” This people are a rebellious set, reluctant to all that is good, contrary to Christ, and enemies to God; but “Jesus hath received gifts for the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell among them.”

This power is put forth to make them willing to come over to his standard, to submit to his yoke, and bow to his sceptre; which is done in the day of his power. There is a time for every purpose, a set time to favour Zion, and a day of power to every chosen vessel, when the power of the Lord is present to heal. Every chosen vessel hath his day, his appointed time. When the sinner is cut up and subdued, it is a day of power to him; when Christ is revealed, it is one of the days of the Son of man; and, when taken into the bosom of his love, it is the day of his espousals. “In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth.” I will treat,

1. Of the beauties of holiness.
2. Of the morning.

3. Of the womb of the morning.

4. Of the youth. And

5. Of the dew of the youth.

I. Of the beauties of holiness. There are many things which the scriptures call beauty, or beautiful; such as a beautiful crown, beautiful rod, beautiful for situation, and beautiful face or countenance; and all these are of God: but the beauty in my text is divine beauty; it is all reflected or derived from God, and there are various branches of this beauty; and hence they are mentioned in the plural, and by way of distinction are called “the beauties of holiness.” All divine and human beauty put together is now to be seen in Christ Jesus; “he is the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.” If we consider him in his divine nature, he is God over all, and the Creator of all, and the Author and giver of every natural beauty that is to be found in this world or the next; “he hath made every thing beautiful in his time.” In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; he possesses in himself, in the highest sense, every attribute and perfection of divinity; “he is the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person;” visible and invisible things, thrones and dominions, are the work of his hands, and he fills heaven itself with his fullness, and all that are in it. The light of his countenance makes eternal day in heaven; his life is an endless fountain there, and his love a river of everlasting pleasure. Now if he is the sun of that world to come, who shines in it, adorns, beautifies, and glorifies, all that boundless expanse, and all the celestial inhabitants of it; and if an angel’s appearance is so bright and glorious, that Daniel turns into corruption, and faints at the sight; and if Moses and Stephen shining in his lustre was such a terror to men, all of which are nothing but rays reflected from him, what must he himself be “who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire!”

If we consider him in his human nature; in which he is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, and in which he is crowned with glory and honour; we must conclude, with the royal Psalmist, “Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” His humanity, both in soul and body, was pure and spotless; all the fullness of the Spirit was upon him, and all the fullness of grace, and treasures of wisdom and

knowledge, were in him; and every perfection of his Godhead dwells in, and shines through, the gracious, the anointed, and the consecrated, manhood.

Adam in innocency, Aaron in his beautiful garments, and Solomon in all his glory, (put them altogether) were only shadows or figures of him who is the "second Adam, the High Priest of our profession, and the Prince of Peace." Adam's innocency was soon lost, Aaron's garments and priesthood are now no more, and Solomon's glory faded like the flower of the field; but the glory and beauty of Jesus can never fade. But it may be objected, that many who saw him in the days of his flesh bear quite a different testimony; namely, that "He hath no form nor comeliness; and, when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him," Isaiah, liii. 2. But the hearts of these men were shut up in prejudice and unbelief, and the god of this world had blinded their eyes; and men that are blind can be no better judges of beauty than they are of colours: these people are called the children of night, and of darkness. The children of light, and of the day, saw him in his own rays; they beheld his glory, "and saw him as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And I know that he is to be seen now, and his beauty too, even in this world. They had a glorious glimpse of him under the former dispensation. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple," Psalm xxvii. 4. But his beauty is more conspicuous under the present dispensation. "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, that despiseth the gain of oppression, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing of evil; he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks, bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off," Isaiah, xxiii. 15, 10, 17. Here we have a promised view of him, in all his beauty and majesty, as King of Zion; who rescues us from all our spiritual enemies, who conquers us by his kindness, and holds us as delightful captives, by ravishing our hearts with a view of his glory and majesty.

Ask the young believer, who is just verged out of darkness, who has escaped the corruptions of the world, the bondage of sin, the wrath of God, the fears of death, and the dread of endless misery; and he will tell you that he can set his seal to the truth of the following promise. "In that

day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel," Isaiah, iv. 2. The faith of a believer views him in his own light, in ancient undertaking, in his glorious visits paid to the saints of old, in his suffering circumstances, triumphant ascension, and glorious exaltation, with all his brilliant trains of glorious grace, with which he has gone forth, and with which he has paid his courtly and love visits to poor sinners, ever since his coronation in heaven. To them his royal sceptre is beauty, and his pastoral crook is bands, Zec. ii. 7. The finest and most beautiful ornament that can adorn a young prince is a diadem, and the noblest cap of state that can deck the brow of a sovereign is a crown; and Christ, as God and man, is both these to the children of Israel. When he shines into their hearts, and discovers himself to them, then it is day with their poor souls, and they see the truth of what follows. "In that day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people," Isaiah, xxviii. 5. Christ crucified dwelling in the heart by faith is the believer's diadem of grace in this world; this proclaims the believer heir apparent to a future kingdom. And Christ exalted and glorified will be his crown of glory in the world to come, which secures his endless reign in heaven. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Thus we have seen a little glimpse of the beauty of his sweet face; but this is not all, for it must be felt as well as seen, for his beauty is reflected upon his people, the lustre of it shines into them, and spreads its glorious and ornamenting lustre over them. "O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us," Psalm xc. 15, 10, 17. Here is mercy, rejoicing, and gladness. Here is God's regenerating and renewing work prayed for, that it might appear upon his servants; and his glorious light and truth, yea the Spirit of God and of glory is sought after in this prayer, that it might appear to the children of his servants with every heavenly endowment of the mind, every ornamental grace and needful gift; "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

This beauty is not the varnish of a harlot, nor artificial beauty, which consists in being "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls," Rev. xvii. 4. This gaudy shew is the attire and only beauty of the whore of Babylon, all which is strictly

forbidden the church of God, 1 Pet. iii. 3.

Now for the various parts of this beauty of the Lord, which is upon his church. It consists in an illuminated understanding, and in a well-informed judgment, where the Holy Spirit is a spirit of judgment to them that sit in judgment. "My judgment was a robe and a diadem," says Job.

In a cheerful heavenly countenance, the true index of pardon and peace in the conscience, and of a lively hope in the heart. "Sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely."

In a humble, meek, and lowly mind, which is not corruptible. "The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit in the sight of God is of great price."

It having the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; walking with God, who ordained peace for us; walking in Christ, who is our peace; and in keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O princess daughter," Cant. vii. 1.

It stands in the glorious robe of imputed righteousness, which is the wedding garment, and the covering that is of God's Spirit, and in being clothed with humility, which acquits us from the legal yoke of servile fear, and from the yoke of our own transgressions. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! Loose thyself from the bonds of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion," Isaiah, lii. 1, 2.

It consists in the application of free salvation to the soul, by which the poor sinner is saved from guilt and filth, death and wrath, and in which he stands proof against all the attacks of sin, Satan, and sinners, though they are always at him. "For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation," Psalm cxlix. 4.

Another part of the spouse's beauty lies in her eye, and in her necklace. The eye is the eye of faith, which is always looking to Jesus; the necklace is the doctrines of Christ, which is the mystery of faith in a pure conscience; by which consistent and harmonious chain of truth, and new covenant promises, we abide by the Head; the bond of which covenant unites Christ and his members together, as the neck does the human body; the word of truth, and the eye of faith, are the church's eye and necklace. "Thou hast

ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck," Song iv. 9.

O how the Lord applauds this; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life; and, touching the truth doctrine, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation. "Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

All the sacred mysteries of the ancient tabernacle and temple; the mystery of the ark, mercy-seat, golden table, shew-bread, golden pot, manna, Aaron's rod, candlestick, holy fire, incense, cherubim, brazen sea, and even the SHEKINAH itself, with the cloud by day and the fire by night in the wilderness; are now to be found in Christ, and in his church. Christ is our ark where the law is hid, our mercy-seat where we come; the golden table is a gospel minister's believing heart, containing, living on, and holding forth, Christ as the bread of life; the golden pot, a vessel of mercy; the manna, the comforts of the Spirit; Aaron's rod is the church of Christ in his hand, the candlestick, the church holding forth the true light; the holy fire, the word and Spirit; incense, spiritual prayer; the brazen sea, regeneration; the SHEKINAH, the glory of the Lord risen upon us; our everlasting light, our God and our glory; the cloud by day, the favour of the King of kings; the fire by night, the eternal love of God, which never waxes cold to us, though ours does to him. All those things were the beauty of the ancient tabernacle and temple. "Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary," Psalm xcvi. 6. The temple was built of the cedars of Lebanon, on which account it is called by the name of "Lebanon. Open thy doors. O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars," Zech xi. 1. A dreadful prophecy this to the Jews! The doors of the temple did open of their own accord, as Josephus relates; and soon after the Romans set fire to all the cedars; but the spiritual glory and beauty of it was gone some time before, and was all translated to the gospel church, agreeably to ancient prophecy. "Therefore thy gates shalt be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be bought. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious," Isaiah, lx. 11, 13. Thus we see that all the mysteries, glory, beauty, strength, and honour, of the ancient tabernacle

and temple are now to be found in gospel Zion. Not only the carved work of the cedars, but that of the fir, pine, and box tree: which evergreen verdure sets forth the life of the saints, and their verdant profession, as well as the carved work; all of which shall never be destroyed or broken down “with axes and hammers. Here is beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. O how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids,” Zech. ix. 17.

Let this beauty of Israel, this altogether lovely one, be viewed and considered as the Spirit of God by the ancient saints has set him forth, and then consider and view him as shining with all his glory and majesty into his beloved spouse, and it is no wonder that he praises her as he does. “Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah;” yea, beauty itself, both perfect, and eternal. “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.” I have almost lost myself in these beauties of holiness; I must quit them, and go to

The morning. The morning sometimes signifies the spiritual resurrection of a poor soul after many months groping and stumbling upon the dark mountains of Horeb and Sinai, amidst the blackness and darkness, till we look “like a bottle in the smoke,” Psalm cxix. 83. But all our toil to find a way to God and to heaven there, has been labouring for the wind; a deliverance from this is a blessed morning indeed, and that my soul knows right well. No wonder then that the poor self-lost soul is bid “to look to him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning.”

Morning sometimes signifies a restoration of the soul to love, peace, and joy, after a long and sad night of spiritual desertion. “His anger endureth but a moment, in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Moreover, morning signifies the beginning of endless light and glory with us in heaven, of which the light that shines unto us at Christ’s rising and shining into our souls is the glorious dawn. “He that overcometh, I will give him the morning star.” Which light of life, joy, and comfort, is a pledge and earnest of everlasting day in heaven. “Like sheep they are laid in the grave, death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;” that is, when Christ shall be revealed from heaven to raise the dead, at which time “the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of

their Father for ever and ever;" the wicked dead will not rise till a thousand years after the just.

The beginning of the creation of the world is called the morning. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job, xxxviii. 4, 7. But, literally, the morning signifies the early part of the day, when the rising sun brings the day on; to which the church of God is compared. "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" Song vi. 10. This fourfold appearance of the church may signify the different figures that she has made in the different ages of the world. With "the womb of the morning" Christ revealed "the beauties of holiness." Adam and Eve were types of Christ and his spouse; the tree of life, another representation of the Saviour; the tree of knowledge of good and evil, a figure of our fallen state, when nothing but a bare knowledge of what was good was left, and hardly that, and nothing but evil done by us, and felt in us; the garden of Eden was a figure of the church, as God's husbandry and walk of pleasure; and she bears the name of Eden to this day; every plant there, being planted of God, represented the trees of righteousness, which are all planted by the same hand, and he plucks up all others. After the fall, the beauties of holiness appeared in the tree of life; in the sword that kept the way to it; in the cherubim; in the sacrifices offered; in the Lord's appearance as judge and saviour to our first parents; in the clothes he covered them with; in the promised seed held forth; in the bruising of Satan's head; in the suffering of the heel; in salvation from Satan's power by it, and the enmity that would by the grace of God be put between the children of God and those of the devil, which soon began when Abel obtained grace and Cain trusted in dead works. In all these things "the beauties of holiness appeared even from the womb of the morning." And the church, from this time to the giving of the law, is said "to look forth as the morning." The whole religion and devotion of the saints was pure, simple, and spiritual; the doctrines and commandments of men, human traditions, grievousness which they prescribe, the vain pen of the scribe, superstition, and will worship, ceremonies, and a form of godliness, had not obtained then as they have now. It is true that now and then one of these crept in among them; but, not having the canon of scriptures to pervert, as now, they went into the most glaring presumption, and were soon discovered; so that they were presently purged out, as Cain, who was excommunicated by God himself. The sons of God (in name) who married the daughters of Cain,

and became renowned for wickedness, were condemned by an overflow of water; and the select few which were preserved in the ark, among whom Ham escaped, and Canaan, and abode for one year, and then were cursed, and condemned to a double servitude. Next Abraham and his chosen spouse appeared, and many circumcised ones with him; till Hagar would be the mistress, the princess, and the mother of us all, and her illegitimate son the heir of promise; when the true heir at law, and the mistress of the tent, became the sport and ridicule of these “from the tabernacles of Ham.” All this mocking at Sarah and Isaac was laughing and sporting at God, for which insolence and presumption both are banished at the command of the most High. Next Esau struggles from the womb, runs, sports, cooks, and cries for the blessing; and is determined to keep his ground and foot-hold, at the expense of his brother’s blood; till Jacob flies from the church to save his life, and the God of his life goes with him, and by his instrumentality brings two more into the household of faith, namely, Rachael and Leah, if not one of the hand-maids, which two did build the house of Israel; by the handmaid I do not mean Bildah, who committed incest with Reuben. I might have mentioned Melchisedec, Tamar, &c. but I forbear. Thus the church of God, from the morning of creation, “looked forth as the morning,” in her first dawns of grace and glory, “and worshipped God in the beauties of holiness.” And the church in the days of gospel light is a pattern and copy of that, when God, as then, is worshipped in spirit and in truth. Hence Christ is the person of whom “Adam was a figure” i; ½ Christ’s priesthood is taken not from Aaron’s order, but from the order of Melchisedec, after which order he is consecrated for evermore. In Abraham’s loins, Levi pays tithes; and the father of the faithful, who had the promises, is blessed by Melchisedec, who is the greater both in dignity and office; the one being a king of righteousness, the other a prince; the former a priest of the most high God, the other a prophet. The one received tithes, the other paid them; the former blessed in God’s name, the other received it in faith. Hence it is that we are commanded to look unto Abraham our father, and not unto Moses; and to Sarah that bare us, and not to the Jewish synagogue in her moonlight state; but to Abraham and Sarah, because their religion is a copy of ours, and not that under the law; and because our call, faith, justification, blessing, promises, and devotions, are like theirs; I mean “in the beauties of holiness;” and not scented nor tainted with will-worship, or a specious form of godliness, as theirs was. But the most remarkable thing of all is, that God, as a God in covenant, takes his eternal name and memorial from the church in this her morning state. “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;

this is my name for ever, and my memorial to all generations.” And the very blessing, and blessed seed, that was promised to Abraham, is the same which is now come upon the uncircumcision through faith, which reaches to all generations to the world’s end; promised to Abraham, and to his mystic seed for evermore. The next appearance of the church is,

“That she is as fair as the moon,” which has much borrowed light, but no heat; many spots, but not much transparent brightness; never in one stay, always waxing and waning; to which the church is compared from the times of giving the law to the coming of the Son of God (under all their new moon observations of feasting and fasting); at which time the true light of the Sun of righteousness (not of the borrowed light of the moon) appeared, when life and immortality was brought to light; “then the day broke, and the shadows fled away.” The national church of the Jews, which were God’s people by national adoption (as God says to Pharaoh, “Israel is my son, my first born,” &c.), had, like the moon, little or no heat, full of spots; their light was borrowed from the letter, not from God shining into the heart; they had a form of knowledge out of the law, not the knowledge of him by perfect love casting out all fear; they were always in the wax or wane. But God had a peculiar treasure in this sand a remnant in this roll of national genealogy; a few berries on the top of the utmost boughs of this olive tree; a few good figs in thus garden; a gleaning after the harvest was done; a few clusters, with a blessing in them, upon this degenerate and strange vine, that bears so many wild grapes; a holy seed in this deciduous oak; an ox and an ass (I mean the apostles) to send forth from Jerusalem, when that city was low, in a low place; which the Saviour calls the light of the world, and the salt of the earth.

The next appearance of the church is “clear as the sun.” She began to put on this appearance as soon as “the day spring from on high visited her,” when those that sat in darkness saw a great light, “and those who sat in the shadow of death, upon them the light shined.” The church in this glorious state was enlightened with knowledge, experience, purity, doctrine, discipline, and worship; and she has so continued, more or less, ever since: and the church in that glorious time was expressly called “a woman clothed with the sun,” with the moon (the shadowy appearance of the former church state under the law) under her feet, with a crown of twelve stars upon her head; that is, with the crown of loving-kindness, knowledge, spiritual virtue, and glory; which twelve stars are those shining lights (I mean the twelve apostles) by whom Christ diffused and spread the light of

life in the Gentile world.

The next appearance of the church is “terrible as an army with banners;” which appearance is altogether military, in which the national church of the Jews often appeared; but the remnant, according to the election of grace, among them never cut so formidable a figure, for they were so hid in Elijah’s days as not to be known, and therefore called “hidden ones,” a solitary family, sparrows upon the house-top, owls of the desert, pelicans of the wilderness, a very small remnant, faint and feeble; without this small remnant the Jewish church had been as “Sodom or Gomorrah.” This formidable and military appearance of the church never hath taken place in the world as yet, though it was prefigured in the times of Constantine; therefore it is a prediction of a singular appearance yet to come, which will commence when the witnesses, who have long prophesied in sackcloth, will throw it off, and rise upon their feet as a cloud of witnesses for Christ; when the kings of the earth will be converted, and come to the brightness of Zion’s rising, and have their hearts turned to hate the whore, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; when the vials of wrath will be poured forth upon antichrist, and the whore of Babylon, by an army of saints upon white horses, and the King of kings and Lord of lords at the head of them; when eternal majesty will appear on his robes and victory on his sword; and it will be manifest, to all who can read either providence or grace, justice or mercy, “that he has a name written on his vesture, and on his thigh, King of kings and Lord of Lords.” For this will be taught them by his omnipotent power and just judgment. Now will the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, even Christ; who will destroy antichrist in the east, and in the west, both soul and body, branch and root; the one by the ministry of his word, the other by the force of his sword. When the greatest kingdom under the whole heavens shall be given to the saints of the Most High; greater than the Babylonian, the Median, and Persian, the Grecian, or the Roman; “for this shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river Euphrates to the ends of the earth; when all that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust.” Now shall all rule and all authority of the wicked be put down, and those kings only shall reign who come to the light of Zion, and to the brightness of her rising; who shall be nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers, to the church; yea, all kings shall bring their glory and honour into Zion. O what a time must this be, when none but saints are on the throne, none but saints in the council; “when the officers shall be peace, and the exactors righteousness; when Christ shall

break in pieces the oppressor; when violence shall no more be heard in her, neither wasting nor destruction within her borders; when she shall call her walls salvation, and her gates praise!" Now shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ, and none but his saints shall fill the thrones; "for the nation and kingdom that will not serve him shall perish, yea, those kingdoms shall be utterly wasted;" yea, the kings shall bring their gold and their silver, their glory and their honour, into Zion; and all their gain shall be consecrated to the Lord of the whole earth, for the God of the whole earth shall he be called. O could my hand keep pace with my heart! could my pen run like my thoughts! O could I describe what I see, and express what I feel! But, alas! I can think what I cannot write; I can see what I cannot express; and triumph in the future prosperity of our family, although I see one of the most dreadful nights before us that ever beclouded the horizon of mount Zion since the dawn of immortal light cast the first radiance upon her. Having shewn that the church is called or compared to the morning, and described her morning state, her moonlight state under the law, her sunshine state under the gospel, and her formidable appearance and triumphant state yet to come, I shall proceed to offer a few thoughts upon

The womb of the church, which is compared in my text to "the womb of the morning." The womb of the morning is the darkness that covers the hemisphere; which covers, conceals, and hides, the day from our eyes, as the womb of a woman conceals an infant. When the beams of the sun, which brings day, and which is the light that rules the day, shoot forth, this veil of darkness opens and gives way, and day breaks forth with the beams of the sun, which is called day-break, and day-spring. But what is the church's womb? Some say it is the church herself, where saints are converted and born again with the incorruptible seed, the word of God; but some are born out of the church, as I was; and some "out of due time," as Paul was. The womb is not the church. It may be said, perhaps, that the womb of Zion is the Mediator, because he is called Shiloh, which signifies the secundine, in which the infant is wrapped, and because we were chosen in Christ, hid in him, and God gave us life in him, before the world was made, which is true; but then Christ is called the husband of the church, and the everlasting father of the family, in whom they lay in embryo, in non-existence, from everlasting. Nor is the purpose of God in election, or his decree of predestination to adoption, the church's womb; for this is called the Lord's secret, and "secret things belong to God;" but, when revealed to the elect in effectual calling, then "the secret of the Lord is with

the righteous.”

Isaac is the pattern of us all. Now as Isaac was, so are we; and where did he lie? Why in Sarah’s womb. True; but he lay in the womb of the morning before he lay there; and that is in the promise of God. “Sarah shall have a son; Abraham shall have a seed.” And I believe Isaac lay in the promise forty years before his conception; Ishmael is born after the flesh, but “Isaac is by promise.” You read of children of the womb, and the son of her womb, “but we, as Isaac was, are children of the promise.” Zion’s offspring are spiritual: and what can cause her to labour and travail, in expectation of a family, if no spiritual family is promised to her? “Thou shalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles; a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation; I the Lord will hasten it in his time.” Here they lay. And shall I make such promises to Zion, and not perform them? “Shall she labour” in hope and expectation, “and bring forth nothing but wind? Shall no deliverance be wrought in the earth? Shall I cause to travail, and not cause to bring forth? Shall I raise” thy hopes and expectations, and shalt thou be disappointed of thy hope, and have all thy expectations cut off? “Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth?” Shall I make such promises to thee, and not fulfil them? “Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.” Shall the children struggle, being quickened, and then die in the place of the breaking forth of children? No; I, that give them life to labour, will give them love to cast out fear. “Before she travailed she brought forth;” before the apostles began to form churches, and they to labour in hope of increase, numbers of children appeared in the world; “before her pains came she was delivered of a man child,” of a strong manly family, who were young men, who were strong, who overcame the wicked one, and the word abode in them. I go now to consider the youth which is to spring from the womb of the morning.

The youth which is to spring from the womb of the morning, which is to be as numerous as the drops of dew, seem to be at a time yet to come; when popery shall be discovered “by the brightness of the Lord’s coming, and be destroyed with the breath of his lips;” when the earth shall be covered with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; when there shall be such a wonder performed as never was heard of till God revealed it. “Who hath heard such a thing? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day?” Yes, it did at the creation, when God commanded it; “Let the earth bring forth abundantly. But shall a nation be born at once?

Yes, when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;" when the spiritual seed of Abraham shall be as the stars of heaven for multitude, and as the sand upon the sea shore innumerable. Now that this is a promise yet to come appears in my text, and in the whole psalm out of which it is taken. "In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth." But then why are they called youth, when the spiritual family is said to consist of "babes, little children, young men, and fathers?" Why, because of a nation being born at once; the Gentiles' fullness and the Jews' call and conversion coming in together; for, if the earth is to "bring forth in one day," if a nation is to be born at once, if a little one is to become a thousand, and a small one a great nation, and if God will hasten this in his time, then it cannot be supposed that there will be one old man in faith in a thousand, or one father in ten thousand; on which account it appears plain that the family will consist chiefly, if not entirely, of youth; and so saith the Spirit, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth," Psalm xlv. 16. Now the off-spring of the womb of the morning being called youth, this text mentions nothing but children; and the birth of this family is to be all over the world, "for these children are to be made princes in all the earth:" this must be when the greatest kingdom under the whole heavens is given to the saints, and they shall take it, and when both kings and subjects shall be the saints of God; kings nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers; the officers peace, and the exactors righteousness; "when spears shall be beat into ploughshares, and swords into pruning hooks; when nations shall learn war no more, but the abundance of peace shall be enjoyed as long as the moon endures."

But then it may be asked why the womb of the church at this time is called or compared to "the womb of the morning?" Answer. When the church shone forth in the antediluvian world, soon after the creation, soon after the morning stars had sang their hymns of creation together, Rev. iv. 11. Soon after which the songs of grace begun, when the church shone first forth, "when men began to call on the name of the Lord." Under the law, when she was compared to the moon, then they were called "children in bondage, under tutors and governors, under a schoolmaster, shut up to the faith which should afterward be revealed;" in which state they were said to grope as the blind for the wall, wishing the day to break, and the shadows to flee away. But, when Christ the day-spring visited them, and the dawn of gospel day began to shine, then the saints bore a name suitable to the state of their mother, who then "looked forth clear as the sun;" then her family

bore another name, a name which they never bore before, being called by Christ himself the “children of light,” and “God the father of lights;” and, as the church was then said “to be clothed with the sun,” so her family, says Paul, “are all children of the light, and of the day; not of night nor of darkness.” Hence it appears that, in this future time to come, the church’s womb will be the womb of the morning, her offspring the children of light and of the day, in a glorious sense; “her watchmen will see eye to eye; the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days, when the Lord shall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound;” when the teachers of the saints shall be hid in a corner no more, but their eyes shall see their teachers.

Now that this time is yet to come will appear by the contents of the psalm out of which my text is taken; and the first is putting down all idolatrous kings, popish, Turkish, and Pagan; “He shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath,” Psalm cx. 5. Secondly, the judgment that shall be executed upon the heathen, and their death, and the wounding the head, Satan, in popish, heathen, and Mahometan countries. “He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies, he shall wound the head over divers countries,” verse 6. Which leads me to consider

The dew of the youth, which shall spring from the womb of the morning; which I think is not so much expressive of the number of the saints, though they are sometimes compared to stars, to sand, and here to the drops of dew; though in that sense it may be true, yet I think their flourishing state, and abundant refreshing, is signified by the dew more than their number. Sometimes “the poor and needy seek water, and there is none;” at other times the ministers of Satan “speak so much villany, that they make empty the soul of the hungry, and cause the drink of the thirsty to fail;” then there “is a famine not of bread nor of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord;” at which times the Lord promises that “he will hear them, and that he the God of Israel will not forsake them, but pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” The dew principally, represents the flourishing state of the church at the time that this prophecy alludes to; “when the everlasting gospel shall be preached,” stripped of human forms, and unadulterated with human inventions, human traditions, and carnal ceremonies; “when the pure doctrine of Christ shall drop as the rain, and distil as the dew;” when there shall be no complaining of leanness, dryness, and barrenness; “when the sun (of persecution) shall no more smite them by day, nor the moon (of legal

devotions) by night; when Zion shall call her walls salvation, and her gates praise. In those days the Lord will be as the dew unto Israel; they will thrive as the corn, and grow as the vine, and send forth their roots as Lebanon.” All which is expressive of the gentle distillations of grace, and the abundance of it; when hard hearts will be softened, barren souls revived, parched souls refreshed; the sun of persecution, and the flames of carnal lust, shall be allayed; and both the floor of the Lord’s harvest, and the fleece of the Lord’s sheep, will be wet with the dew of heavenly grace. The morning mentioned in my text, the womb of it, the innumerable progeny, the universal ruin of the wicked, the spread of the gospel, the wonderful increase of Zion, and the universal call of her family, are all mentioned in one psalm, which is as follows, Psalm lxxii. The first is, the committing all judgment into the hands of Christ, and the execution of all righteousness by him: “Give the king thy judgments, O Lord, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son,” verse 1. The next particular is, the justification of his people, and the avenging their wrongs by executing the righteous sentence of God upon them. “He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment,” verse 2. Next comes the free publication of the finished work on mount Calvary, and sweet reconciliation by the preaching of peace and imputed righteousness upon every little hill of Zion, or in every little assembled flock of the chief Shepherd. “The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness,” verse 3. The next branch of his work at this future time is, to execute true judgment in behalf of the poor in spirit, to proclaim and save them that feel the need of salvation, and to execute vengeance and eternal damnation on all the covetous, overreachers, defrauders, and oppressors. “He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save ye the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor,” verse 4. When this is done all the world will fear him and every generation will share in the benefits of his reign till time is no more. “They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations,” verse 5. And now comes in the dew of his youth mentioned in my text. “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth: in his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth,” verses 6, 7. All this alludes to the time when all the kingdoms of this world shall become his, from one end of the world to the other; for so it follows. “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust; yea all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him,” verses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. I must now conclude this subject, having said what I

can of the beauties of the Lord Jesus Christ; of his beauties on Zion by the manifestations of himself to her, of the beauties of holiness in the worship of the saints, of the mystery of it, of the womb of the morning, of the youth, and of the dew of grace that is to appear upon these youths, and of the glory of these children of light, which are to spring from this womb of the morning.

Chapter 11.

The Gain of Godliness, or the Beggar's Profit

“A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled,” Proverbs, xviii. 20.

BY the belly, here, I presume, is meant the heart or the soul. It is said that the “prodigal would fain have filled his belly with husks:” but a better banquet was provided for him; namely, the fatted calf and best robe, which is Christ crucified and his imputed righteousness; neither of which are food for the bowels, but for the soul. Again, Elihu, who declares that he was inspired, and that the Spirit of God had given him understanding, finding the Spirit to operate strongly upon him, says that “his belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles,” Job, xxxii. 19. And so the Saviour says, “If any man come unto me and drink, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit,” John, vii. 38. But it must mean the heart, for it is the heart, and not the bowels, that is the seat of divine inspiration. “I will give them a new heart and a new spirit.”

This heavenly merchant in my text, whose belly is to be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and to be filled with the increase of his lips, cannot be the person that the wise man calls a prating fool that shall fall; for a fool is not a praying man, and he that falls can never be said to be satisfied; nor can this merchant be a man employed in temporal concerns, for it is not by talking, but by working with the hands, that the generality of men are fed and filled in a temporal sense. “He that laboureth, laboureth for himself, for his mouth craveth it of him,” Prov. vi. 26. This is working for the belly, not talking. Hence it appears that this trader in my text is not an earthly trader, for in the general they live by labour, not by talk; no, nor a prating fool about religion, “for the kingdom is not in word; in all labour there is profit, but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.” But this man that I am describing hath his belly satisfied by the fruit of his mouth, and filled by

the increase of his lips.

Again, This trader must be an hungry man, a man that hath an appetite, for he cannot be said to be filled if he is not in some measure empty; for “God filleth the hungry with good things, but, as for the rich, he sends them empty away:” it is they that hunger and thirst after righteousness that are blessed, and they shall be filled: “But woe to them that are full, for they shall hunger.” Furthermore, this empty man is one that is empty of good, empty of righteousness, of the bread of life, and of the satisfying grace of God in Christ: and he must be in a good measure emptied of self, of self-sufficiency, of self-righteousness, of human confidence, and of all satisfaction in and from dead works and a form of godliness: for the worldly wise sinner is too proud to hear the gospel, and the self-righteous too rich to beg a covering, and the full soul loatheth the honey-comb, and therefore will hardly beg for that which his soul hateth.

This man in my text is a praying soul, not a hearer of the word only; for, if his belly be filled by hearing only, and not by praying, his belly must be satisfied with the fruit of another’s mouth, and not with his own: but my text says that “a man’s belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth;” that is, his own belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his own mouth. I know that there is no satisfaction, nor fullness, for a sensible sinner, but in Christ Jesus. I know that in him pardon and peace, regeneration and adoption, are promised, a new heart and a new spirit is to be given, and every thing else, both spiritual and temporal; but then it is added, “For all these things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel, that I may do these things for them.” So that without prayer nothing can be expected. The prodigal wanted bread, and he begged it; the publican wanted mercy, and he craved it by prayer; Hannah wanted a son, and she begged for one and got him; David wanted pardon, and he prayed and obtained it: the belly of all these were satisfied by the fruit of their mouth. And how can a man’s belly be filled without it, when God declares that “he will pour out his fury upon the heathen that know him not, and upon the families of the earth that call not upon his name?”

Besides, can a man belong to “the house of David,” and not have “the spirit of grace and supplication poured out upon him,” which is promised to all the royal Family? No, by no means. Again, can I conclude that I belong to God if I have no communion with him in prayer, or that I am a believer, if my prayer brings nothing in from him? “Verily, God hath heard

my prayer," saith the psalmist, "and not turned away my petitions, nor his mercy from me." "This is the confidence that we have in him (says John), that, if we ask any thing agreeable to his will, we know that he heareth us; and, if we know that he hears us in whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

An hungry man's belly is to be satisfied by the fruit of his mouth, for he draws this conclusion i;½ If I am an enemy to God, he will not regard me; if I worship him not in the spirit, I cannot be accepted; if I pray not in faith, I cannot expect an answer: but God hath heard me, and therefore regards me, respects me, relieves me, and accepts me in his dear Son; and therefore he must be my friend, not my enemy; my father, and not my angry judge; my God in covenant, and not a consuming fire to me. "The apostles prayed till the place was shook where they were assembled, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost." And thus Cornelius prayed till he was ordered to send for Peter, through whose ministry the word of life and Spirit of God came upon him and his. "Ask (saith the Lord), and you shall receive, that your joy may be full;" for a man's belly shall he satisfied with the fruit of his mouth. David prayed for pardon, peace, and life; Jabez to be kept from evil; Jacob for a blessing; and Paul for the removal of Satan's buffetings. And all of them prevailed; they got their doubts and fears removed, their minds settled, their evidences brightened, and their interests in the Lord made clear and plain to them; and these things satisfied them, "and they found quietness in their belly;" Job, xx. 20.

"By the increase of his lips shall he be filled." Godliness with contentment is great gain, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Solomon prayed for wisdom, and he got riches and honour into the bargain, which is what he did not ask for. This increase of the lips mentioned in my text is answers to prayer; which consists in an increase of knowledge, of experience, of faith, of life, of peace, and of love, comfort, joy, and strength. Some folks make many long prayers, and think that they shall be heard for their much speaking; but, if God gives no answer, there is no increase; and, if no increase, how can they be filled? Great is the delight of the Lord in the prayers of the faithful. "Let me hear thy voice, let me see thy face; sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." The prayer of the upright is the Lord's delight. "Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth," &c. &c. And again, "Call upon me in the time of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt

glorify me. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” O how great is the condescension of God to listen to the prayers of such poor rebels! and how sweet and savoury are those blessings and gracious answers, that are obtained by much importunity in prayer! Reader, as long as one doubt remains touching the goodness and safety of thy state, if suspicions are working, if any fears are cherished, if any pro and con in the court of conscience, if any jealousies; let these things be manifested, let them be sifted to the bottom, let them be canvassed over, and set to rights; make straight paths for thy feet; remember that thy belly is to be filled, and thou art to be satisfied with the fruit of thy lips; there is a great gain in godliness, a choice revenue in wisdom, and a blessed increase in prayer. Begging is the most profitable branch of all the heavenly trade. “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory,” 1 Samuel, ii. 8. But without prayer what can be expected, when God hath said that, for all the spiritual and temporal blessings promised, he will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do these things for them? Read Ezekiel, xxxvi.

Chapter 12.

The Threefold Record in Heaven Reflected in a Threefold Witness in Earth, and the Triune Harmonious Witness One in the Believer’s Heart.

“For there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself,” 1 John, v. 8, 10.

JOHN informs us that whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; that is, that every grace, such as faith, hope, love, peace, meekness, humility, or whatever grace is produced and brought forth in the soul under the prolific operations of the Holy Ghost, is a real fruit of his, and must reign in the heart, and shall overcome both the frowns and flatteries of this world, verse 4, “for that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” saith the Lord. It is spiritual grace, and is of a spiritual nature, and therefore must overcome. And not only the reign of grace is here intended, but the Holy Spirit, who produces these graces in the heart, and doth, by shedding abroad God’s love in us, unite us to Christ Jesus; by virtue of which union we are made to share in all his suffering, benefits, and triumphs. “Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.” But why should I be of good cheer on account of his victory, if I have no share in it? but all believers

have a part and lot in the whole of it. The Lord of hosts, mighty in battle, fought the field for us, and all the great spoil is divided among us; for, when he overcame Satan, sin, death, and the world, we were redeemed from all these; and, when he is revealed to us, we are delivered from them all; and there is victory for the sinner in no other way than by faith in Christ. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son or God?" verse 5. And this faith is a cordial reception of him into the heart, and an embracing of him gladly, in confidence and affection, as the only begotten Son of God, as the true Messiah, and as our only Saviour and Redeemer.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth," verse 6. Jesus is said here to come by water, and to come by blood, and that the Spirit of truth bears witness to these things. The water, blood, and spirit, are in the next-verse traced up to God in three persons, and each distinct person in the Godhead is said to bear record in heaven. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST: and these three are ONE," verse 7. The record of these three persons, which are in heaven, is to be found recorded in the book of God, that is the Bible; for those souls that are in heaven, and made perfect in knowledge there, need no record to comfort, encourage, or to assure them; or to give them a strong consolation; no, not so much as to have their names shewn them in the Lamb's book of life; for their happy state of life, and immortal glory in heaven, is a full and all-sufficient proof of that: nor are they ignorant of the distinct personality and essential divinity of either the Father, Son, or Spirit; for those that are there, "are the pure in heart, who see God," and "Christ shews them plainly of the Father."

This threefold record is for our sakes, and for our instruction, and is recorded in the Bible; and they each "bear record" to the Godhead of Christ.

"But unto the Son, he (the Father) saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Compare Heb. i. 1st and 8th verse. This is the Father's record.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else," Isaiah, xlv. 22. This is the Saviour's record of himself, and his record is true, that he is God, and "besides him," or to the exclusion of him, "there is no God," Isaiah, xlv. 6. For the one Lord God of

Israel is three persons.

“And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,” Isaiah, ix. 6. This is the Holy Ghost’s record to the Godhead of him. This holy man of old spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, and this is the Holy Ghost’s record of Christ throughout the Scripture, for to him gave all the prophets witness.

These three persons bear record likewise to the sonship of Christ. The Father’s record is, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The Saviour’s record is, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live,” John, v. 25. And the Spirit’s record by John the Baptist is this, “And I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God,” John, i. 34.

All the three persons in the ever blessed Trinity bear record likewise to this truth, that he that believeth on the Son of God shall have eternal life. God promised a seed to Abraham, which seed was Christ. Abraham believes in God, who made the promise to him; and that seed promised was reckoned to him for righteousness, being the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe; and God calls himself “the God of Abraham; but he is not the God of the dead, but of the living;” which shews that Abraham ever lives, for the just man shall live by his faith while upon earth, and shall live for ever in glory in heaven. Christ bears the same record; “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” And the Spirit in all the prophets and apostles bears record that “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed, and they that believed lived by the faith of the Son of God.” Thus there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these, three are one.

“And there are three that bear witness in the earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one,” verse 8. These three are said to bear witness in the earth. The Spirit bears his witness in every believing soul; this is granted by all believers whose faith has any growth at all. And the blood of Christ hath undoubtedly a voice in every pardoned sinner “who is come to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel,” because it speaks pardon, peace, and reconciliation; but the difficulty seems to lie in “the witness of the water.”

I believe that many good men think that water baptism is meant by

this witness, because God bore testimony to Christ his Son at his baptism by John, and because persons are baptized in the name of the Son as well as in the name of the Father and of the Holy Ghost; but this water in my text is said to “bear witness.” Now the witness at Christ’s baptism came from God, and not from the water: and at the baptism of any person the minister mentions the name of Father, Son, and Spirit, agreeable to Christ’s command; but the water itself has no voice, and of itself bears no witness. I know that inanimate things are sometimes called witnesses, as the “two tables of stone,” and “Jacob’s heap in Mount Gilead;” but then the former bore the commandments of God, written with his own finger; and the latter was a quantity of stones gathered by Jacob and Laban, and laid together in a heap, as the joint work of both their hands, to remind them, upon sight of the joint promise made, never to pass the same heap to each other for harm; and both these were to help the memory. God wrote what he said that men might never forget it; and Jacob’s heap was to bring to mind and memory their former promise or covenant. Some may object, and say, from Peter, “The like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God),” 1 Pet. iii. 21. But when this answer is not obtained “by putting away the filth of the flesh” by water, for water cannot “cleanse the conscience, nor make it good,” nor furnish it with an “answer towards God.” It is the blood of Christ, and that only, that can purge the conscience; and it is the Spirit of God that renews it, and bears his witness in it. The blood of Christ makes it clean, and the Spirit of God makes it good; and the Spirit’s witness in it “is an answer towards God;” and in this way “Christ saves us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Besides, there are many in the world who have had water poured on them, and many that have been plunged into water, who never had “the answer of a good conscience towards God,” nor has the water ever bore any satisfactory witness to them or in them.

Moreover, it is said that Christ “came by water and by blood.” This coming spoken of I take to be his first coming into the world at his birth; and that “he came by blood” is plain; “for, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise took part of the same;” and this he took in the virgin’s womb, and he took it of the substance of Mary’s body; and in this sense his manhood was born of the flesh, and of blood; and he came also by his own most precious blood, or in his dyed garments, when he

manifested himself to his apostles and disciples after his resurrection; and so he has come to poor sinners in his gospel ever since, evidently crucified and set forth before them.

But, if this coming spoken of in my text is to be understood of his coming into the world at first, (as I think it is) how can it be said then that he came by water? And, if it be replied that all infants come into the world by water, it is granted; but that water bears no witness; and, as for his baptism, he had been thirty years in the world before he was baptized by John. And, if it be objected that he came into his ministry at thirty years of age by water, because he began to preach soon after his baptism, my answer is, that I find nothing in the whole chapter that confines this coming spoken of in my text to that time. "He came by blood" from the womb, and "he came by the Spirit" from the womb; for the Holy Ghost came on the virgin at his conception, and he was filled with him from the womb; and was manifested and made known as the true MESSIAH, CHRIST, or the ANOINTED, within eight days, to Simeon, to Anna, the shepherds, &c.; and I believe "he came by water" at the same time.

I must confess that this obscure text has greatly puzzled me for many years; nor has the opinion of any one that I have ever yet read or heard fixed my mind, or given me satisfaction, about it; and for this reason, John, having in the preceding verse testified of the threefold record of the three divine persons in heaven, proceeds to a threefold witness in the earth as a proof of this; which triune witness in the earth is represented as an echo, or it is a threefold witness in the earth, reflected from the three that bear record in heaven; and, as the threefold record of heaven is in the Bible, so the threefold witness in the earth is in the souls of all believers. But then to which of the three distinct persons, who bear a distinct record in heaven, can this distinct witness of water be traced up to, or ascribed to, as reflected into men on each, seeing that baptism is administered in the name of all the three divine persons, as an ordinance appointed by all the three, and in the name of them all?

In this matter I would not wish to be wise above what is written, but in all things submit to divine revelation; and I feel enough daily of my own ignorance to convince me that he, who thinks he knows any thing, knows nothing yet as he ought to know; it is in God's light we see light, and who teaches like him? In this matter I shall presume, as others have done, to shew mine opinion, and to submit it to the judgment of God's household,

which is the pillar and ground of all truth, if not in light, it is in life; if not in knowledge, it is in power; having Christ in it, who is truth itself, and that in the abstract.

What I am going to advance came, I believe, from God, who has promised to guide the meek in judgment, and to teach the meek his way.

Water in scripture hath various meanings; sometimes it signifies the wrath of God, which drowns men in destruction and perdition, of which the waters of Noah were a type; and, as God swore that he would no more drown the earth by a flood, so he hath sworn not to be wroth with nor to rebuke his people in a vindictive way. Sometimes waters signify children. "The fountain of Jacob shall be on a land of corn and wine. Let thy fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of thy youth;" meaning, Let thine offspring be legitimate from thee and thy wife, which is the fountain that children spring from. Sometimes it signifies troubles, which are called deep waters; and sometimes an army that sweeps away all before it "as the hosts of the Assyrians are called the waters of the river strong and mighty." But sometimes water means THE ETERNAL LOVE OF GOD, which no child of God will ever deny.

"God is a fountain of living water" (saith the prophet). "God is love" (saith John). And he will circumcise thine heart (saith Moses) that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest live. Again, "And there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams," Isaiah, xxxiii. 21. This river, saith Ezekiel, is a river to swim in; it bears the soul above all the fears of death, apprehensions of wrath, and dread of damnation. This love is called "the river of God's pleasure." Nothing can be a river of divine pleasure to a sinner but divine love; it is a river that makes glad the city of God; and what can make one that is by nature a child of wrath happy, and afford him pleasure in God, but love, which casteth out all fear and torment? This love of God John himself calls "a river of life, which flows from the throne of God and the Lamb," Rev. xxii. 1; which river is the love of God in Christ Jesus, and which love terminates in eternal life through the death of Jesus to all that believe in his ever blessed and ever adorable name.

"When the Lamb is said to lead those (who are to hunger no more, nor thirst any more) unto fountains of living waters, when God is to wipe all tears from our eyes," what can be meant but "being filled with all the

fullness of God, “being” made perfect in one?” In one God, “and God is love.”

And it ought to be remarked that the text on which I am animadverting mentions the Lord’s “coming to be by water first;” whereas, if water baptism be intended, then it follows that he came by water last; for he came by blood, and by the Spirit, from the womb of his mother, but not by water till thirty years after; but in the text water is mentioned before the blood, and blood before the Spirit.

He came by water first; for God loved his people from everlasting, and therefore from everlasting Christ was set up to be future man, and in man’s nature to be man’s covenant head, representative, and mediator. He was then made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, to us; the Father’s choice of us was in him, and in him he gave us life. In his loving kindness to us the covenant of life and council of peace was held and agreed on from the ancient settlements, which bear an everlasting date. “His councils of old are faithfulness and truth.” And, in love to us, the king, mediator, and ruler’s “goings forth appear to be from of old, yea, from the days of eternity,” Micah, v. 2. In the death of Christ God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. In this was manifested the love of God, in that he sent his Son to die for us; and in this agrees the Saviour. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This love is the first and self-moving cause in God of all our salvation in and through Jesus Christ. I know of no cause previous or antecedent to this. It was love in God that moved him to pity us, and it was love that influenced his will to choose us in Christ, which is called the good will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us; and, as it sprung from love, it is called “the good pleasure of his will, and the good will of him that dwelt in the bush.”

Hence it may warrantably be concluded that “Christ came by water,” by the river of God’s pleasure; for God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son. And that he came by blood, in his assumption of human nature, as man’s Redeemer and Saviour, by whose incarnation and suffering he manifested the greatest love that could be shewn to the children of men. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

And he came by the Spirit, who operated on the virgin Mary at his conception, formed the human nature, and filled it with all his gifts and graces, even from the womb; and this was “the oil of gladness with which he was anointed above all his fellows; for God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him,” as he does to all them that have fellowship with him, for to them “is given only a measure of the Spirit, and that to profit withal.”

Hence I conclude that the Father bears record in heaven to the divinity and sonship of Christ, and to a free salvation for sinners by the faith of him, as the fruit and effect of his eternal love to them in the gift of him. And this record reflects a witness in the believer’s heart when the love of God is shed abroad there by the Holy Ghost. But then it may be asked, What witness has this love when shed abroad there? Why it casts out all fear and torment, and makes the new birth manifest; “for whosoever loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” The voice, therefore, of the love of God in such an heart is this, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.” Everlasting love says this, and adds God’s YEA unto it, which is yea and amen to the believer. Thus Christ came by water; and this water has a witness in the earth, a Yea, I have loved thee; and this is in every heart that believes on the Son of God.

2dly, He came by blood at his incarnation and birth. His own blood was shed for us by his sacrifice for sin; and when he discovers himself unto us, it is as Christ crucified for us; and this his atoning blood speaks peace, pardon, and reconciliation, to us and in us. Thus he came by blood; and this blood has a voice and a witness in every believing soul, “which speaks better things than the blood of Abel.”

3dly. The Spirit also hath a voice in us, which is his testimony, or witness, that he bears to our adoption; for so it is written, “And, because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Thus “there are three that bear record in heaven, the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST, and these three are ONE.” Christ came by water and by blood, and the Spirit beareth witness. And these are the three that bear witness in the earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. The first person that bears record in heaven, is GOD the FATHER; and Christ is said to come first by water. The second person that bears record is the Word, and he is said to come by blood. The

third person that bears record in heaven is the Holy Ghost and he is said to bear witness in the earth, because he is truth.

Now for the witness of each person. The eternal love of the Father says, "Yea, I have loved thee."

"The blood of sprinkling speaks pardon, peace, and reconciliation." And the Spirit says, "Abba, Father."

This is the third and last witness. And, as the three that bear record in heaven are ONE, so all those three witnesses (says John) agree in One. And then he adds, If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; and this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth hath the witness in himself. Now, as these three agree in one, what is that one witness in this triune harmony? I answer, it is our sonship.

The Father's everlasting love that says, "Yea, I have loved thee," proves our "predestination to the adoption of sons;" the witness, therefore, of this love is to our sonship.

When faith receives the blood of sprinkling, and the heart is purified by it, then we are manifested to be the SONS OF GOD "by faith in Christ Jesus;" the witness, therefore, of blood is to our sonship.

And, because we are sons by predestination, and manifestly so by faith in Jesus, the Spirit is sent into our hearts to assure us of it; and to make us claim it he cries, ABBA, FATHER. The Spirit's witness is to our sonship. Thus "these three agree in one;" and he that believes hath this triune witness in himself, which is to be preferred above all the witnesses and testimonies of men. Such souls are enlightened to see, quickened to feel, and instructed to know, by efficacious grace and divine operations, three persons in one God. All others know nothing of these things but what they know naturally, and in these things they corrupt themselves. For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Chapter 13.

The Scorer's Highest Seat and Deepest Fall

“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and shall be innocent from the great transgression,” Psalm xix. 13.

PRESUMPTION is a bold, daring, and audacious venturing to lay a claim upon God, while the man is living in all manner of wickedness, without any reverence of him, faith in him, or scriptural warrant from him; and without any internal evidence of interest in him, or likeness to him. Thus Balaam ventured against a positive command from God upon a wicked and vile attempt; hence the angel of the covenant withstands him with a drawn sword, and tells him “his way is perverse before him.” He “seeks for enchantments,” after this awful vision of the Almighty, with his eyes wide open; yea, after God had met him twice in his way to the high place, and had both times sent him back with a fresh message, yet he must seek a definitive answer from Satan, namely, “There is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel.” And he claims God as his God, when he had no other faith than that of devils. “I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do more or less;” when, at the same time, “he loved the wages of unrighteousness,” and would have cursed the whole family of heaven for a little money; yea, and tempted God with repeated sacrifices, in hopes that he would alter his mind and change his word to gratify his covetousness, that he might thereby curse the people, get the rewards of divination, and be promoted to great honours. And just so many covetous professors in our days presume upon God; while the love of money, the root of all evil, is deeply fibered in every faculty of their souls, it sears their conscience, “they mind earthly things;” they “will be rich, though they fall into divers temptations;” they love the mammon of unrighteousness, and yet they will call God their God, and their Father, when he tells them in his word that his righteous soul hates them. “They speak well of the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.” And is not this presumption, for a sinner whom God abhors to lay a claim upon him? And they lay the same claim upon Christ, and call him their Lord and Saviour, when they know in their own consciences that “the thorns have sprung up in their hearts, and choked the word; and that the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, have rendered them unfruitful.” And, although Christ tells them in his word “that that which beareth briars and thorns is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned, and that a camel shall go through a needle’s eye sooner than such shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,” yet they venture on, like Ananias and Sapphira, serving God and Mammon, with their hearts fixed on their earthly treasure, and yet

dream of treasure in heaven. These covet the worst, though they will feign to covet the best gifts: and in this matter they imitate and run after the error of Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, and yet wished to die the death of the righteous, and that his last end might be like theirs. But the hope of this hypocrite perished, for he fell in the field of battle, fighting against God and his people; and afterwards his soul fell by a worse sword, namely the sword of justice: and this the angel shewed him before, for his sword was drawn against him when in the way to curse Israel, and how much more when fighting against them! Surely "he hated blessing, therefore let it be far from him; and, as he loved cursing, so let it come, says God, like water into his bowels, and like oil into his bones. Keep back thy servant also, from presumptuous sins."

Presumption is venturing without a divine warrant, and persisting in a course contrary to the word of God, and expecting God's help and blessing in a way that is repugnant to his revealed will. And thus, many professors, who give themselves up to "idleness, and go from house to house, busy bodies in other men's matters," but mind no business of their own, presume upon the providence of God, and tell you that they live by faith; they have had this promise applied, and the other promise sent home, and they believe them, and so expect to be fed by the ravens, as Elijah was; when the whole of this work is the work of Satan. He first tempts them to idleness, which God hates; he then stuffs their heads with various promises, which the fool believes to come from God; then they are looking out for the fulfilment of them; they boast of their faith, and tell of the power that attended the promises, and so draw many eyes upon them; and, when the issue comes, their promises come to nothing, their faith fails, the devil laughs at their folly, and they rebel against God. "Thus the foolishness of a man perverteth his way till his heart fretteth against the Lord." God tells us "to be diligent in business, and fervent in spirit; to work willingly with our own hands, and with quietness to eat our own bread; and, if they will not work, neither shall they eat." Idleness and fullness of bread, were some of the reigning sins of Sodom. Adam and Eve must both work; but these hypocrites mump a living out of other people's labour. "He that provides not for his own house hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." And can those who deny the faith, and are hypocrites in Zion, who are worse than common infidels, expect God to feed them, and indulge them in idleness, when their boasted faith is nothing but presumption, and the promises, which they say God has applied to them, are only the delusions and perversions of Satan? And this is plain, for their predictions fall to the

ground, and their false confidence too, being disappointed of their hopes, and having their expectations all cut off; “for what they have spoken in the name of the Lord follows not, or comes to pass; and that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but they have spoken it presumptuously,” Deut. xviii. 22. “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, and let them not have dominion over me.”

What presumption must they be guilty of who thrust themselves into the ministry without any call or commission from God, and without any qualifications for it? Idleness, a genteel appearance, their own honour, or a wife with money, is all they have in view. They are fitted for the work at an academy by men, at the expense of those who subscribe to carry on the work, and who, according to prophecy, “heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” And some of this stamp have had the audaciousness to call the power of the gospel enthusiastical cant: this is the best name they can give to “the kingdom of God, which stands not in word but in power.” There is scarcely a damnable heresy advanced, revived, or published in our day, nor few arch heretics in sheep’s clothing to be found, but what are sent out of these forges; ½ I mean the academies. What can be more presumptuous than taking the highest seat, when they never took the lowest room; assuming the first office in the church of God, when destitute both of grace and truth; an ambassador, without call or commission; a builder, who knows not, or sets at nought, the head stone of the corner; a shepherd, but knows nothing either of the green pastures or still waters; a watchman, stone blind; a ruler of the Lord’s household, while a servant of sin; a nurse, without the sincere milk of the word; an ensample to the flock, when a haughty scorner; an enemy to God, preaching peace and reconciliation; a dead sinner, holding forth the word of life; a condemned criminal, preaching righteousness; and a bond slave, promising liberty? And these will by and bye urge their plea, “Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.” This was the presumption of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; they contended and resisted the Mediator and the High Priest both. “You take too much upon you, the people are all holy,” &c. They were princes, and they would be priests; they took their censers, and fetched fire from their own tents; for they knew no difference between the holy flame from heaven and the sparks of their own steel. And the same work is going on now. Their fervent prayer is inward heat from passion; their fiery zeal is neither tempered with humility nor knowledge; the light they give is that of a wandering star;

and, as their own hearts were never fixed by the Lord, so they fix none by their ministry. I know that Christ makes his ministers a flame of fire; but the Lord tells us that these kindle their own fire, “and compass themselves about with sparks. Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled; this shall ye have at my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.”

To avoid presumption, a scriptural warrant must be obtained as the ground of our proceedings; to go against this is presuming. “And the Lord said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight, for I am not among you, lest ye be smitten before your enemies. So I spake unto you, and you would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and went presumptuously up into the hill; and the Amorites came out against you, and chased you as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah,” Deut. i. 42, 43. “Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.”

To shun this perilous path, is to submit to divine revelation, to open to conviction, and not to rebel against the light that gives. To be proud and obstinate, contentious, stubborn, and to act counter to these things, is perilous presumption. “If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, thou shalt come unto the priests and Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment, and thou shalt do according to the sentence; thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left; and the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest (that standeth there to minister before the Lord thy God) or unto the judge, even that man shall die,” Deut. xvii. 12. Such a man goes against light, truth, and caution; and is subverted and stiffened in pride by Satan, and is condemned of his own conscience; for this is condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light; for he that doeth evil hateth light; and he that hateth the light hateth God, for God is light; and this is condemnation with a witness; for he not only hates God, but reproaches him. “The soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him,” Numbers, xv. 30, 31. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.

God favours his children with four antidotes against the sin of

presumption; and while he adheres to these “he keepeth himself so that the wicked one toucheth him not,” 1 John, v. 18.

The first is. “He puts his fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from him.”

2. “The Spirit guides them into all truth,” that they may cleanse their way, by taking heed thereto according to God’s word, and not presume without a Thus saith the Lord.

3. He blesses them “with faith to walk by,” and they know that “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” And

4. They have the witness of the Spirit and their own conscience; and without these things it is impossible to please God. “Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me, then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.”

This great transgression, whatever it may be, must be the violation of some law; for all sin is the transgression of some law that forbids it; “for where there is no law there is no transgression, nor is sin imputed where there is no law.” Furthermore, the magnitude of this transgression must rise from the magnitude of some law. It is called “the great transgression,” because it is sinning against a great law. And what can this law be? “The heathens are a law unto themselves; their thoughts and conscience in the mean while accuse or excuse one another.” This shews the work of the law written on their hearts. But the worst transgressors of this law have been pardoned. Wizards, necromancers, idolators, and sodomites; the first sort of these “have confessed their deeds, and burnt their books before all men;” and the others “have been washed and sanctified, yea justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Again, this great transgression cannot be a transgression of the moral law, for the worst sins that have been committed against that have been forgiven for Christ’s sake; such as idolatry, murder, adultery, incest, enmity to God, and covetousness; and these are the worst. Idolaters were all the first gentiles that were converted; Moses shed blood, and Paul shed the blood of the just; and both were pardoned; covetousness was pardoned in Zaccheus; adultery was pardoned in David; incest in the Corinthian; and “enmity against God” hath been pardoned in us all. Hence I conceive that

this “great transgression” is not a breach of the law of nature, nor of the moral law, it therefore must be the transgression of some greater law.

The covenant of grace “is called the better covenant, established upon better promises;” yea, it is called “a more excellent ministry,” and “a ministry that exceeds all others in glory;” and, if it exceeds in glory, it doth in greatness also. The one is called “the new covenant” the other “the old covenant;” the one “the New Testament,” the other “the Old;” the one “the ministry of the Spirit,” the other “of the letter;” the former “gives life,” the latter “death.” “For, if the ministry of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory; for even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth,” 2 Corinthians, iii. 8, 9, 10. The law is a “revelation of the wrath of God against all the unrighteousness of men,” and the gospel is a revelation, “of God’s eternal love in Christ Jesus” to poor miserable sinners. “There is a sin not unto death,” and we may pray for those who commit that sin; and God gives life to them that sin not unto death. “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death: there is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it,” I John, v. 16. There are sins committed which are not unto death; and they are all sins but one; and the covenant of life and peace, or the gospel, which is the word of life and the promise of life, and which brings life and immortality to light, holds forth life as the gift of God to them that sin not unto death. God shall give him life for them that sin not unto death; but there is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it. Now, if we consider this sin as it is variously expressed in holy writ, and consider its consequences, which are mentioned with it, they will help to lead us to the sense and meaning of this “great transgression”.

As 1st. It is called presumption, because the transgressor is internally proud, rebellious, and obstinate; he sins after having the sentence of God from the priest and the judge; and acts contrary to the light, knowledge, and conviction, that he has received; who is said to rebel, and despise the word of the Lord, to reproach his Maker, break his commandment, and sin with a high hand, which is the meaning of the word presumption. Now he that despised the priest and the judge, despised the “High Priest of our profession,” and “the Judge of quick and dead,” whom they personated; and by despising the Word they despised the INCARNATE WORD, and the sentence which came from his mouth; and by despising

the word of Christ by his representatives they “reproached their Maker, their Savior, their Priest, and their Judge.” And sure I am that God the Father had given them very strict cautions against this perilous “sin of presumption.” “Behold! I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared; beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him,” Exod. xxiii 20, 21. This was the caution, and the “unpardonable sin is in it;” but they presumed, and rebelled against him at the entrance of Canaan, and would not obey him, Acts, vii. 39. Yea, they despised him, and made a captain over them, to return again to Egypt; thus they refused the Captain of our salvation, and then provoked him by going up the hill, after he had sworn in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. Thus, says Paul, “they tempted Christ,” they provoked and grieved him forty years, and, by choosing a new captain, despised him; and then went up to fight contrary to his word, oath, and commandment; and thus they provoked and despised “the Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ;” so they entered not into the promised land because of unbelief; for he, having delivered them out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them which believed not: and in this sense it may be truly said that they “to whom the gospel was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.”

This sin is called “the sin unto death,” because every other sort of sinners have had “repentance unto life granted them;” but these transgressors “find no place of repentance,” yea, “it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance,” and therefore it is called the sin unto death; because such an one sins out of the reach of the “covenant and promise of life;” yea, against “the living God in Christ,” and “the promise of life from him;” against the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and “eternal life by him; against the Spirit of God,” and all his quickening operations; and against the “everlasting gospel,” and “all life and immortality brought to light through that;” and to such “the gospel is the savour of death unto death” in the worst sense; for the sinner, being dead in sin and dead in law when the gospel finds him, and being guilty of the great transgression against it after it was professed by him, it must then leave him twice dead, “plucked up by the roots;” that is, dead at Horeb and dead at Zion, and without hope either in the law or in the gospel.

It is called “doing despite to the Spirit of grace,” which springs from malice in the abstract, with infernal hatred and anger; yea, it is a defying of

the Holy Ghost, resisting his will, and resenting his conduct, with a fixed determination to counteract the designs of him, and frustrate his purposes, in order to “grieve him,” and to prejudice every favourer of his powerful operations; and, as much as possible, to resist and fight against him, from a supposition that they are not honoured by him according to their merit, or supposed deserts. This DOING DESPITE TO THE HOLY GHOST, THE GIVER OF THE LAW OF LIFE, is “the great transgression.” Yea, and such hate Christ with desperate hatred. “They have seen and hated both me and my Father; and, being not with me, they are against me; and, gathering not with me, they scatter.”

This great transgression is called “a crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame.” It was Judas, one of his professors and followers, yea, his purse-bearer and apostle, that betrayed him; and it was his own professing people, his brethren according to the flesh, that condemned him; and he priests, scribes, and pharisees, that delivered him over to the secular power: these were the greatest professors of God and religion; and all of them professed, expected, yea, and longed for, the promised MESSIAH. “But woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light, as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him,” Amos v. 18, 19. And so it came to pass. The day of the Lord was darkness to those that said, “We see.” And as it was then so it is now. All that have committed this sin have been professors; and, in my judgment, this great transgressor must be a professor of religion, as the scribes and pharisees were, and zealous ones too; and, like Judas, they must be followers of Christ, and be in external communion with his church and people; and then go out from among them, that it may be made manifest that they are not of them, as Judas did; and then, like “the swine which have had the pearls laid before them, they must turn again and rend them;” that is, “turn again to their ungodly companions, and rend the church of Christ, his seamless coat, his body mystical, and rend and scatter the members, who are commanded to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” They rend the Saviour’s uniform doctrine by errors, his mystical body by divisions, and the unity of the saints by sowing prejudice, slander, and discord; and such souls deal with his body mystical as the Jews did with his body personal.

The graceless preacher, with his blind zeal and deceitful heart, who never aimed at any thing but the bag, betrays Christ, by going into some damnable heresy, for the sake of some worldly applause and more money,

as Judas did to get a good name from the scribes, and a little more for the pocket.

Those who begin with gospel notions, though never delivered from the law, under all their pretensions to the faith of the gospel; whose fiery zeal abates, whose knowledge vanishes, and whose abilities and gifts wither; who go back to the flesh, to Arminianism, and so to the legal bondage of the law, trusting in human merit; being conscious that God has done nothing for them, they then begin to do something for God; and from hence springs pride, and implacable hatred to the experimental and evangelical preachers of the gospel; and this brings coldness and deadness upon them, and at last it terminates in envy and malice against those who contend for the simplicity, power, and truth, of the everlasting gospel; and this envy and malice conceived is no less than murder; for he that was a murderer from the beginning hath so filled their hearts, that they are in pain and labour till they have brought it forth; this is “lusting to envy; and lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

The Lord himself describes the progress of this sort of sin, and the danger it exposes the sinner to; “But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say unto his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

This sin is called “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,” and “speaking against him.” Hence we may see that this “great transgression” is sinning with a high hand against “the law of the” Holy Ghost; for the gospel is called “the law of the Spirit of life,” Rom. viii. 2. This sin is wholly against the power of godliness, and it springs from desperate heart-hatred to it, attended with speaking against and blaspheming of the Holy Spirit in his works and operations in the souls of men, and that knowingly and wilfully against all convictions, as the pharisees did when they saw the mighty power of Christ put forth in his miracles; who said, “This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils;” to whom the Lord answered, i; ½ “Wherefore I say unto you that all manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men: And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world,

neither in the world to come," Matt. xii. 31, 32.

But then it may be objected that the pharisees did all this ignorantly and in unbelief, and therefore could not sin knowingly and wilfully. To which it may be replied, The miracles that Christ wrought, the power that attended his ministry, the wisdom he displayed in silencing and confounding all gainsayers, together with the holiness of his life, and the good deeds that he continually did, convinced them of the truth of his divine power; "for the husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." Yea, says Nicodemus, "We believe that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles that thou doest except God be with him." John goes further, "Among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but, because of the pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God," John, xii. 42.

Thus by Moses this sin is called presumption. Provoke not my angel, says God, for my name is in him, and he will not forgive your iniquity; but they did provoke him and grieve him forty years, he ordered them into Canaan, but they refused to go, and despised the land, and brought up an evil report of it; yea, they threatened to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, and to make a captain of their own to return to Egypt, until he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest; and then they would go and fight, contrary to his word, command, and oath. And all this was sinning wilfully and knowingly; for they had seen his judgments in Egypt, and his wonders in the wilderness, and his glorious majesty on the mount, and had heard his voice there; and they had seen his fiery and cloudy pillar day and night, in which he went with them for forty years together: the sinning against all which is daring and perilous presumption.

David calls it "the great transgression," because it is sinning with a high hand against the covenant of grace, or law of faith, which is always applied and made known and written on the heart by the Holy Spirit of God; for God ministers not the Spirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith. Now, as the psalmist calls the covenant of grace a law, so he calls this sin a transgression of it; "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the WORD which he commanded to a thousand generations, which he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a Law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant," Psalm cv.

8, 9, 10. In this passage the covenant of grace, the word of life, and the law of faith, are distinctly mentioned; in which covenant God promises to be our God and our Father, and to give us the heavenly country; all which is revealed and made known to us by the Holy Spirit; for he comes by virtue of this covenant of promise, and is “therefore called the Spirit of promise.” It is the covenant of grace; and the Holy Spirit that comes by this covenant is called “the Spirit of grace.” It is a covenant in which God promises to be a father to us; and the Spirit is called “the Spirit of adoption,” that witnesseth our sonship; and to commit this sin against this great law is committing “the great transgression;” all which, in the New Testament, is called “the sin unto death,” because the Spirit will never regenerate, quicken, renew, or sanctify, such a sinner; and without this there is no seeing the kingdom of God, much less entering into it. Paul calls it “doing despite to the Spirit of grace;” and Christ calls it “blaspheming him and speaking against him.”

Now every sin that is committed against the Holy Ghost is not this sin; for, as the Holy Ghost is a person in the Godhead, and is truly and properly God, all sin that is committed is committed against him as well as against the Father and the Son. And, if every sin be this great transgression, then all would commit it, for “there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.” There are various sins also which are expressly called sins against the Holy Ghost. Some are said “to have rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit,” Isaiah, lxiii. 10. Some are said to resist him; “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye,” Acts, vii. 51. Others are said to quench the Spirit; which is done by hardening the heart against all the reproofs, rebukes, counsel, cautions, or warnings, that are given under his influence; so that he never takes possession of such sinners, nor operates upon them, but leaves them without excuse. “Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings.” The Antediluvians turned a deaf ear to the ministry of Noah, who preached under the Spirit’s influence; and they persisted in sin till they wearied that blessed Spirit, and therefore God says, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” Now, although these are expressly called sins against the Spirit, and are crying sins, and some of them damning sins, yet I much question whether they all come up to what is called “doing despite to, or blaspheming of, the Holy Ghost.”

This sin is chiefly a soul sin: the soul is principally concerned in it; it cannot be committed by any member of the body except the tongue, and even that can only bear a part in it: the soul conceives its bitter hatred, which is despite, and out of the abundance of malice in the heart the

mouth speaketh. "He that blasphemeth," and "he that speaketh against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven," saith the Lord.

Paul killed, persecuted, and blasphemed; but "he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly and in unbelief."

Peter denied his Lord, and swore to it; but this sprung not from hatred in the heart, nor was it done wilfully, for he had vowed and determined to abide by Christ in prison or death; he fell hastily (not deliberately), and that through fear and weakness: and, when he came to himself, it occasioned the greatest grief that he had ever known.

David sinned grievously by his adultery, in which "he sinned against his own body;" I Cor. vi. 18. And he cut off Uriah with the sword of the children of Ammon, which was the power of his hand. The first sin was through a violent temptation, and the other was to cloak or hide his shame; the first hardened the conscience, and the second crime was done deliberately. But yet David had no spite against the person of the Holy Ghost, or the power of godliness in the souls of men; nor did he speak against him, nor were his crimes of a desperate or spiritual nature, so as to do despite to the Spirit of grace. Did he speak against him? No. The thought of his being grieved, and the fear of his departure from him, cut him to the quick. "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Nor did he resist the Holy Ghost when he reproved him by Nathan, but immediately confesses and fell before him. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil."

The incestuous person lived and cohabited with his own father's wife, which was such fornication as was not named among the Gentiles; and this was done and continued in when he was in a profession of the gospel, a member of the church, and in communion with it: but we have no account of his despising reproof, nor rebelling against his separation from the saints; nor did the violent temptations which he fell into harden his heart, fill him with malice against the church, the Spirit of God, or his powerful work in the saints; so far from it, that he was like "to be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow:" hence he was pardoned, and received in again.

The sin of Thomas, in giving no credit to the testimony of truth by the many persons that had seen the Lord after his resurrection, and his declaration never to believe unless he should thrust his hand into his side,

was doubtless going great lengths; but this was in a violent fit of unbelief, in which the devil had the chief hand, in order to bar his heart against the testimony, in order to keep his soul from the “joys of a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead:” but here was no hatred to Christ, or to the Spirit; for he thought the tidings were too good and too great to be true; nor could all his infidelity destroy the faith of interest in Jesus; for he had no sooner a sight of him “but faith cried out, My Lord and my God.”

From what has been said it appears to me that this perilous sinner must be a professor, or he cannot be guilty of this great transgression. Cain was a professor, and brought his offerings to God; but, trusting in his own performances, and being rejected for it, he became an open enemy to grace; his anger and resentment rose against the power of godliness; he saw the approbation of heaven and the testimony of God given to his brother, and was wroth, and his countenance fell: the work of faith and the fruit of righteousness, was that which offended him. Abel looked through the firstling of his flock to the Lamb of God, and Cain looked to his sheaf. Abel trusted in the promised seed, Cain to the work of his own hands. Abel expected acceptance for Christ's sake, Cain for his own performances. The first offered in faith, the latter in infidelity. Abel's was by divine appointment, Cain's an human contrivance. Abel expected admittance through God's new and living way, Cain by the gate where the drawn sword was placed, which was a rejection of Christ: he hated the work and testimony of the Spirit, and it, his brother fought against God, because God respected the one and rejected the other; for Abel's was evangelical obedience, but Cain's was superstition and will worship; which God vindicates upon the rules of equity, and appeals to his own conscience: “If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? And, if not, sin lies at the door.” My acceptance of Abel shall not infringe on thy pre-eminence as the first-born, for “to thee shall be his desire (or he shall be subject to thee), and thou shalt rule over him.” But, after all this condescension of God, and communion with Cain about his conduct, Cain slew his brother, only because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. The devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, influenced the one, and the Holy Ghost the other; the one was of God, and the other of Satan. This was the first perilous step; and Cain was the first man that ever broke through the bounds, or trod the path, of the great transgression; and for which he was banished, or excommunicated, from the church of God, which at that time was only in Adam's household.

Canaan was in the church of God in the ark, but he got his curse after he came out of it; Ishmael, Esau, Korah, Abiram, and Dathan, and Ahithophel also, were all in the church of God, and all of them were professors of religion, and they all had expectations of the Messiah. Hence it appears that this great transgressor must be (according to all the precedents that are set before us in holy writ) a professor of Christ; he must be enlightened also in some measure into the mysteries of the gospel, and have some understanding of spiritual things; for no sin committed in ignorance and in unbelief is this great transgression. Paul obtained mercy because he sinned ignorantly.

He must have had some rebukes, frothy joys, relish for spiritual things, or some stirrings of natural affections; or else he must remain ignorant of the power of godliness, and thereby cannot sin knowingly and wilfully. Paul says, "they taste of the heavenly gifts." Some of the Pharisees "rejoiced in John's light for a season," and others "tasted of the powers of the world to come; they heard the word, and anon with joy received it." Their understandings, says Paul, were enlightened, and they were drawn into a profession (as in Hebrews, chapters iv. x.) Persons thus stirred up, when they set off their zeal blazes forth, a reformation ensues, confession is made, and a gilt of utterance in prayer and speaking follows; and then church fellowship takes place, "the unclean spirit goes out," enmity and prejudice against the truth appear to vanish, and all inward opposition against Christ abates; carnal ease and security, false peace, joy, light, speculative knowledge, untempered zeal, false confidence, and feigned love, all work together to complete the character of this hypocrite in Zion.

But, "when the unclean spirit returns to his house," and begins to operate upon this man's unrenewed mind, and upon his undiscovered and unsubdued lusts, his joys wither, for want of the root of divine love; his zeal abates, under the motions and stirrings of sin and Satan; when guilt appears, conscience awakes, and wrath begins to work; and then his dissembled love waxes cold, and his confidence staggers; for, as Christ says, "such for a while believe;" and then the lamp goes out, and his false heart is diverted, either into the letter of the law, into some abominable heresy, or into the world. His affections being abated, and his zeal quenched, he now begins to find his feigned love alienated from Christ, and from his saints. The christian who knew him pursues him, and entreats him; but he remains sullen and unmoved: the christian at last considers him, and tells him honestly wherein he thinks he was deficient in his profession;

at which he immediately goes into self, self-seeking, and self-exaltation, with his mind alienated from the just, and all affection to them turned to hatred; he then goes over to the bond-children, with whom he finds an union, even in the bonds of servile fear and legal strife: all which time conscience is neither satisfied nor silent, but accuses him, and refuses to bear a testimony, or to let him have peace in any dead work or legal performance done by him, but makes his countenance testify against him: this knits his brows, and beclouds his mind; wrath works in him, and Satan, his deceiver, begins to reproach him; the doctrines of God's sovereignty are opposed, and free-will is embraced; imputed righteousness is despised, and dead works are pleaded for; divine energy is exploded, and human ability contended for. These bonds of iniquity not only tie him to the bond-children, but lead him to sympathize and feel for all the primitive apostates; his bowels sound towards them, his affections are knit to them, and he contends for them; and in this channel runs the whole current of his affections. Cain, Esau, and Judas become the objects of his pity, and his companions, till the congregation he is in union with are "in the depths of hell." Now gospel simplicity becomes his bane; the gall of bitterness works in him, till a saint with a broken heart provokes him; the power of godliness enrages and exasperates him; and, at last, envy, hatred, and malice, overcome and possess him; and then no simple soul, no true penitent, no minister that enforces truth, and insists upon the Spirit's work, can stand before him; his soul hates Zion, and he is desolate; every report of the application of truth, and the savoury enjoyment of power, touches him; and "it is a vexation only to understand the report:" he perceives that every discerning christian sees his nakedness and his shame, and therefore he shuns and hates the light: the meek and simple deportment of the just provoke and exasperate him; till at length, no character in the pulpit, or professor in the pew, that has an honest and a good heart, can live or stand before his envy; and his "heart fretteth against the Lord;" he cavils at him, as partial and unjust; and imagines himself injured and dishonoured by him: he hates the name of his secret decrees and councils, until the malice of his heart breaks out into words and actions; and then he has no other way of easing his mind than by opening his mouth to vent his spleen in public ridicule and slander before the enemies of God, which is called "a crucifying of Christ afresh, and putting him to open shame."

Satan, having thus beaten him off from all his presumptuous claims upon Christ, and from all the profession of his name and truth, then leads him to attack and oppose the power of godliness in the souls of

the saints; which is commencing open hostility against the Spirit of God, and that knowingly and wilfully. Simplicity, meekness, tenderness, conscientiousness, contrition, humility, godly sorrow, fervour, pious zeal, earnestness, experience, holy familiarity with God, love, joy, and peace, are things that his soul hates; he despises them, speaks evil of them, resists them, and hates all those who enjoy them: and, if he is at any time inwardly checked by conscience, and for a few minutes he relents, it soon goes off, and the heart appears more callous, his mind more stubborn, and his malice and revenge more rampant than ever. An apostate thus armed with envy, and whose palate is thus vitiated, finds no entertainment so sweet as that of seducing the saints or followers of Christ. If he can corrupt a weakling from the simplicity that is in Jesus; if he can lead any believer into error; if he can prejudice any against the Lord and his ways, and alienate their minds from him; if he can distress, rob, strip, or plunder, any child of God of his peace and comfort; if he can see any misconduct in an eminent believer, or hear of the falls of any who are noted for faith and practice; of any discords among the just, or of the apostacy of any that have stood high in profession; or make any one miserable who has walked comfortably; these things are his sweetest morsels; he eats up the sin of God's people; and this dust is the serpent's meat, it is the food of devils. And this is counteracting the Spirit in his work and operations, and is doing despite to him. None are so hateful to him as humble souls; he watches for their halting, and magnifies himself when their feet slip; and rejoices if God be but dishonoured; and, if he hears of or sees the success of the gospel, and the prosperity of those whom his soul hates, it inwardly sinks and grieves him; and, if at any time he meets with reproof or rebuke for his madness, and is closely pressed by the righteous, who contend for the power of the Spirit, and who braid him for his former hypocritical profession, he then breaks out into open blasphemy, by speaking evil of the power of godliness and the possessors of it, in order to stop their mouth; and this completes the "great transgression," for it is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Such a sinner is in league and union with Satan, and has the mind of the devil himself, as Christ says of the pharisees, "You are of your father the devil." Such are influenced and actuated by him as they were; "His works ye will do." Such rejoice at an opportunity of doing mischief to the cause of Christ; "This is your hour and the powers of darkness." It is the Powers of darkness that drive them on, as it did the pharisees, till they called "the master of the house," the Lord of Hosts, Beelzebub, and the Power of the Holy Ghost infernal agency; charging the Saviour with being influenced by a "foul spirit."

The evident tokens of this “great transgression” are various; some are given up to uncommon lightness and levity, which we often see in Persons possessed by an evil spirit, who are filled with laughter for an hour together.

Others are reserved, gloomy, and sullen, like those possessed of a dumb devil.

Others “are given up to work all uncleanness with greediness,” like some persons in a mad-house, who will play with their excrements.

Some are led into such a thirst for money, that they are like some persons who are worth thousands, and yet go out of their mind, owing to a continual fear of coming to want, which drowns men in destruction and perdition.

Some are driven to such desperate rebellion as to defy God himself, and threaten to plead with him at the day of doom.

But there are others who are “given up to a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation,” like those in a mad-house whom we call raving mad.

While some have been so influenced by him “that was a murderer from the beginning,” that they have persecuted the saints, even unto blood, and that wilfully, like the apostate Julian; and such souls imitate those mad persons, who are always watching to do mischief by violence, either to themselves or others; and many of this last description, like Judas, go out of the world by suicide. But whatever kind of spirit it may be that influences this “great transgressor,” it is a kind that “goeth not out by prayer and fasting;” for “wherever the seven spirits, which are more wicked than the first, re-enter, the last state of that man is worse than the first.” “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.”

Chapter 14. Great Exploits by Simple Means

“And Samson said, With the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps,

with the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men,” Judges, xv. 16.

THOSE great men of God who have appeared in the world at different times, and who have cut such a figure and performed such wonders upon earth, both in the antediluvian world, in the age of the patriarchs, and under the former dispensation, all appeared as personating, representing, and introducing, one greater, that is, CHRIST JESUS, in whom all their offices and characters meet and centre.

Moses represents him as Mediator; Aaron as High Priest of our profession; Joshua as Captain of our salvation; the Judges as Judge of quick and dead; the prophets as the great Prophet of his church; David as King of Israel; Solomon as Prince of Peace and Builder of the temple; and Samson as Israel’s great Deliverer.

There was an almighty power put forth and displayed in the conception and birth of this hero; the Angel of the great council, the Lord himself, reveals it to the wife of Manoah, who was by nature barren. The Lord tells her this, “Behold, now, thou art barren, but thou shalt conceive and bear a son:” hence it is plain that Samson was a child, or an heir of promise; and, as he was to spring from one who was by nature barren, it is as plain that the power of God was put forth to make that barren tree bear. Christ also was the promised seed, and a greater power was displayed in the wonderful conception of him.

Samson was to be a Nazarite to God, and Jesus was to be called Netzer, “the branch,” the branch of the Lord, which is beautiful and glorious; sanctified and devoted to the service of God from the womb.

“And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of God began to move him at times in the camp of Dan.” In this also he was a type of him who had grace poured into his lips, and who is blessed for evermore, and who at twelve years old was so moved by the Spirit to speak as to astonish the Jewish doctors with his understanding and answers.

Samson sees a woman of Timnah, a Philistine, whom he loved, and desires his father and his mother to get her for him to wile, Judges, xiv. 1, 2. This was contrary to the law of God; but God is above all law, “for even this thing was of the Lord,” Judges, xiv. 4. We know that there were women

enough in Israel; but this thing must be done to represent what his ante-type would do, who has done the same thing. Christ sees the elect Gentiles, and falls in love with them; and he desired his father and mother to “get them for him to wife.” Well, says the Father, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession,” Psalm ii. 8. Christ desires his mother (gospel Zion), the Jewish church, “to send forth Barnabas and Paul to the Gentiles.” and she did so, and defrayed their expenses in the work; “They went forth for his name’s sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles;” and they espoused the Gentiles “to a good husband, and presented them as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

But in Samson’s courtship “there was a lion in the way; but Samson rent him as he would rend a kid.” And there was also a lion in Christ’s way, the old roaring lion of the bottomless pit, who roared sadly against him in the hearts of his persecutors; but the Saviour “destroyed him who had the power of death,” that is the devil. And there was a young lion that roared against Jesus in the ministry of Paul, I mean that savage “beast,” the pagan Roman empire. But, saith Paul, “I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion,” 2 Tim. iv. 17. And both were soon rent. Many of the Lord’s murderers were converted at the preaching of Peter, Acts, ii. 41; and the Roman lion was at a long run rent, and the empire under Constantine became Christian.

“Samson returns and finds honey in the carcass of the lion;” and so does the true Deliverer of Israel; for, in many a rebellious sinner’s heart, which has been the strong man’s palace, where Satan has reigned and ruled, and out of whose heart and Satan hath often roared, “there hath been found the sweet consolations of the Holy Ghost, compared to honey,” Prov. xxiv. 13; and the precious promises of the gospel, “which are sweeter than honey, and the honeycomb,” Psalm xix. 10; cxix. 103. Samson eats some of the honey, and so doth his father and mother; and what saith our great Deliverer? Why he saith, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; eat, O friends;” Cant. v. 1. Yea, after his resurrection from the dead, as soon as he had destroyed the old lion, “they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb,” Luke, xxiv. 42. And Zion, our venerable mother, feeds on the same fare; yea, and even our heavenly Father is better pleased with our sweet savour of Christ, than with “sweet cane,” Isaiah, xliii. 24. He taketh pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, and saith at the return of the prodigal, “Let us eat and be merry,” Luke, xv. 23.

Samson's feast, and the riddle put forth at it, were the occasion of the first disturbances among the Philistines; and Christ has made a most delicious feast for his bride and all his bridal friends; and hath put forth a riddle that hath puzzled the most wise and prudent in the world, and all others, except the few that "plow with his heifer." And sure I am that the destruction of the old lion by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the destruction of sin in the souls of men, by the blessed Spirit and sweet word of the Lord, is the substance of the gospel mystery to this day, "What is stronger than a lion, and what is sweeter than honey?" To answer this spiritually, and experimentally, is a good explanation of the riddle.

But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend. The Lord Jesus was a husband to the whole Jewish church; and they called him so, and boasted much of the Messiah: but the great doctors and fathers of that national church, by their rejection of Christ, and by their threatenings, excommunications, and murders of his saints, gave themselves and others up to the law, and to Moses, and rejected the divine wooer, for which she was put away; and thus "she played the harlot," Hosea, ii. 5.

The Saviour had a spouse also in the Roman empire; but a pretended friend of the Lord's, such as Samson had, seduced that national church to apostacy, and, under the character of the Lord's bishop, became the Lord's rival, styling himself "the head of the church, and a God on earth."

And what did Samson's wife get by her conduct? She was burnt with fire. And what did the Jewish synagogue get? Why, the Romans burnt the temple, and many in it, with fire; and, at the Lord's threatenings fell upon them "that they could not escape the damnation of hell," then they were burnt in a worse fire. And shall the great whore of Babylon escape for her adultery? No. "She shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God that judged her;" and he will judge her as one that breaketh wedlock is judged. The law requires that all "priests' daughters," (as the Jewish synagogue and popish church are,) "if they play the whore, should be burnt with fire," Levit. xxi. 9.

But (to be short) Samson was raised up a deliverer for Israel, and he set his heart upon their deliverance; and he sought many occasions against the enemies of God's people; and the Saviour "had the day of vengeance in his

heart when the year, of his redeemed was come." Samson admitted even harlots to his bosom, and revealed his greatest secrets to them; and even idolators, spiritual harlots, as well as publicans and literal harlots, have been taken into union with our great Deliverer, who in the days of his flesh, and ever since, "hath received sinners and eaten with them," and to such poor miserable creatures the greatest mysteries of his kingdom have been and still are revealed, while they are hid from the wise and prudent.

Samson was bound and delivered into the hands of his enemies his own people, whom he was born to deliver; and so was Christ bound, and sent to Herod, and to the Roman governor, and into the hands of the Gentiles. They blinded Samson, and they blindfolded Christ; the former ground in the mill, and the latter was ground himself, to be the bread of life for his people. Samson was put in prison, "and the Lord was taken from prison and from judgment." Samson, in his greatest distress, was called forth to make sport; and Christ, in his greatest agonies, was buffeted, smote, mocked, spit upon, enrobed, crowned with thorns, sceptered with a reed, called upon to prophesy who smote him; they bowed the knee to him, derided him, and spoke blasphemous things against him.

But Samson did not long make sport; the joy of these hypocritical sportsmen was but for a moment; he bowed with all his might, and lifted up the two main pillars of the idol's temple, and reed all their laughter into weeping and gnashing of teeth, though he buried himself in the ruins. And so the greater Judge Israel, when he bowed his head, threw down sin and death, the main pillars of Satan's kingdom, and triumphed over principalities and powers, and overcame the world; and by the resurrection of many of the dead, the appearance of them to many living in the city, the darkness, the earthquake, and the descent the angels from heaven, soon put a stop to the derision of the Jews, and made the Roman centurion smite his breast, and the soldiers tremble.

"With the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men." The ass is a dull, sluggish, head-strong, obstinate animal; and to a creature is fallen man compared; "Vain man would fain be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt," Job, xi. 12. This sluggish animal is noted for strength, and seems to be deigned chiefly for burdens; and to this creature Jacob compares stupid tribe of Issachar. "Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens; he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed his shoulders to bear, and came a servant to tribute,"

Gen. xlix. 14.

The ass under the law was ranked among the unclean beasts, and was never to be offered as a sacrifice, when bulls and he-goats were; and there are mystical asses that will never fall as sacrifices to divine justice, when many fat bulls of Bashan and goats will.

“The firstling of an ass was to be redeemed with a lamb; and, if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck,” Exodus, xiii. 13. And there are mystical asses which are redeemed by the Lamb of God; and those that are not will have their necks broke; that is, all their false confidences and their false claims upon Christ will be broken off, and they will be separated from him who is “the head of the church.” The church of God bears the name of this beast; “A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure, in her occasion who can turn her way? All they that seek her will not weary themselves, in her month they shall find her,” Jer. ii. 24.

The scriptures give an account of two animals that have spoken in the world, the serpent and the ass. The voice of the first was to destroy man, and to bring him under the curse of God; the “voice of the latter was to rebuke the madness of a prophet, who was going to curse them whom the Lord had blessed.” The devil opened the mouth of the serpent, but God opened the mouth of the ass. And there are serpents, and a generation of vipers, in the world, that speak for Satan to this day; and there are mystical asses that speak for God. What the serpent said was lies, but the whole speech of the ass was true; and she appealed to Balaam’s conscience for confirmation, and he was obliged to justify her in her sayings, and take the guilt and shame to himself.

Balaam smote the ass, and wished for a sword in his hand to kill her, only because she turned out of the way that was perverse before God, crushed his foot against the wall, and fell under him, rather than carry him to the point of the angel’s drawn sword; and there are some in the world now that would be glad to see the death of those asses that want to prevent their being “cut asunder, and having their portion appointed with hypocrites and unbelievers.”

The ass is a creature that in general is kept for burden, slavery, and drudgery; and there is no heavier burden than sin, and no worse drudgery

than that of the service of Satan. "But who hath sent the wild ass free, or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?" Job xxxix. 5. I answer, the same glorious person that said to his disciples, "Loose the ass and the colt, and bring them unto me; and, if the owner say, Why loose ye them, say, Because the Lord hath need of them, and he will send them." And it is a blessed thing to be made free from the bondage of sin and death; and they shall surely be loosed which the Lord hath need of; "and, if he makes them free, they shall be free indeed."

Notwithstanding the meanness of this creature, it hath been used and preferred before the horse by many very great personages in the world; the venerable patriarch Abraham rode on one when he went to offer up his son, Gen. xxii. 3, 5. The ram was offered upon the mount for a sacrifice, while the servant was bid to abide with the ass at the foot. The judges of Israel used "to ride upon white asses," Judges, v. 10. But what is the most remarkable instance, is, that the King of Israel, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, should choose this despicable animal to ride on; but no wonder, when he hath chosen the weak, the foolish, and the base things of this world, to confound the mighty, the wise, and the noble.

There were two prophecies that went before concerning the Lord's appearance on this creature; the tribe of Judah was to have a hand in this: "Binding his foot unto the vine, and his ass colt unto the choice vine," Gen. xlix. 11. And it is plain that the Lord Jesus Christ, the "living vine," was seen upon an ass's colt. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," Zec. ix. 9.

Stupid as this creature is, the blind and ignorant Israelites have been reproved by it, and sent to school to it. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know (his owner), my people doth not consider," Isaiah, 3. And hence we see that "young asses have been redeemed with a lamb;" that "the Lord hath opened the mouth of an ass to speak; that he hath sent out the wild ass free; that the Lord himself ordered the asses to be loosed and brought to him, for that he had need of them;" and that the church of God is compared to, and called by the name of, this creature: yea, and about the time of Jerusalem's ruin, when the judgments of God were coming on, before and after the desolation of that city, when many eminent ministers of the gospel were sent out into the world to

preach, and many inferior ones, such as ordinary teachers and helpers, they are called by the name of oxen and asses. "When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place. Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass," Isaiah, xxxii. 19, 20. The hail that came down upon the forest was the judgments of Christ upon his unconverted enemies, who were not trees of righteousness in the Lord's garden, but corrupt trees in a forest: "the city in a low place," is Jerusalem in her calamities and desolations; "sowing beside all waters," is preaching "the word among all nations;" sending forth the feet of the ox and the ass is sending out fresh labourers into the Lord's husbandry, some in the yoke, and some with the cross.

"Heaps upon heaps, with the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men." But Samson slew his enemies not with a live ass, but with the jaw-bone of a dead one. True, and the mystical ass of which I am speaking is not fit for the Lord's work till he is "dead; a sinner alive in himself, and alive to sin," is of no use. "The commandment came, sin revived, and I died," says Paul; "I am crucified with Christ, I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified unto me." Such asses are of use to carry the Lord, and to bear him among the Gentiles. But Samson slew his foes with the jaw-bone of this creature. True, and so doth the Lord. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all nations for a witness against them, and then shall the end come." Real ministers in the ministry are made "the savour of death unto death, and of life unto life." But can a man preach without moving his jaw-bone? I suppose not. Peter, under one sermon, was the savour of life unto life to three thousand souls, Acts, ii. 41. But there was a great company of mockers who charged Peter with intoxication. "These mockers had their bands made strong," Isaiah, xxviii. 22. And to how many of these was Peter a savour of death unto death? I suppose the Saviour slew more by the moving of Peter's jaw-bone than ever Samson did. Samson slew a thousand men; but our David, by the foolishness of preaching, hath slain his ten thousands. "He shall judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies (as Samson did); he shall wound the heads over many countries," Psalm cx. 6. This slaughter is "heaps upon heaps."

When Samson had slain his enemies "a violent thirst came upon him," which was satisfied by a miraculous spring of water; and when Christ wounds the heads over divers countries, and fills the places with the dead bodies, it is added, "He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall

he lift up his head," Psalm cx. 7.

Samson slew them "hip and thigh." By hip I understand foot soldiers, who move their hips in marching; and by thigh horse soldiers, who use their thighs in riding: "hip and thigh" foot and horse. And his work is not over yet; "the riders and horses have been confounded" as well as them that pad the hoof. Samson wished to be avenged of his adversaries for his "two eyes;" the glory of the Lord is called eyes, Isaiah, xxxviii.; and his church "the apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. And for the sake of these he will be avenged of his enemies, and of them that hate him, and hate Zion. The most mysterious judgment executed by Samson was burning the harvest of the Philistines with fire-brands carried by foxes. God compares false prophets to these cunning stinking vermin. "O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the desert," Ezek. xiii. 4. And false doctrine is false fire. "Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; this shall ye have at my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow," Isaiah, l. 11. Christ promises to send not only three hundred, but many of these false prophets. "And false Christs shall come, yea, many shall come in my name, and shall deceive many. And these shall set fire both to the tares and to the stubble." Samson is ranked among the Lord's worthies. "The time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak, and of Samson," Heb. xi. 32. "Heaps upon heaps, with the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men."

Now for the mystery of his strength, and where it was concealed; not in his back, nor yet in his shoulders, nor in his arms, for we are to put no trust in either of these. "Let not the strong man glory in his strength." Samson's strength was hid in a "lock of his hair," a strange match! the greatest power in the weakest members. Samson's hair was a type of God's left, as sure as Samson was a type of Christ. Christ is the head of the church; and all his members stick as close to him as Samson's locks did to his head. But the locks of his head were shorn off; true, and this has been done over again since that time by the express order of God. "And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head, and upon thy beard; then take the balances to weigh, and divide the hair. Thou shalt burn with fire a third part, in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled; and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife; and a third part thou shalt scatter into the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them. Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts. Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them

in the fire; for thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel," Ezekiel, v. 1, 2, 3, 4. This prophet is a type of Christ the great prophet in his incarnation, and therefore is repeatedly called "the son of man" from one end of his book to the other, as Christ calls himself throughout his whole gospel. Now the Messiah had caused the national church of Israel to cleave to him, their king and head, as Ezekiel's hair had cleaved to his head; and they were as helpless without him as the prophet's hair when severed from his head. "Cutting off the hair" prefigured the sword of war, Chaldean and Roman, and Israel's banishment and separation from God's temple, and his presence there. "Weighing the hair" shewed his just dealings with them; they were weighed in the balances and found wanting. "Dividing the hair" shewed their different calamities according to the nature of their crimes. "One part was to be burnt," which shewed the fire of God's jealousy, and that some should be burnt in Jerusalem, and some roasted in the fire in Babylon; Jer. xxix. 22. "Another part was to be smitten with a knife. These were to be scattered into the wind, and numbered to the sword. And a few in number were to be bound in the prophet's skirt." These were those that "the Lord bid to live when he passed by them and spread his skirt over them," Ezekiel, vi. 8. Nevertheless, even these were to be put into the fire, the furnace of affliction; and another prophet tells us who they were. "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God," Zech. xiii. 9. "And from these a fire was to go out into all the house of Israel." And this was fulfilled in the apostle's days; they "took hold of the skirt of him that was a Jew," and he made them "the light of the world;" and by the "cloven tongue" the Lord "made these his ministers a flaming fire," and the whole house of Israel that opposed their doctrine "was as stubble before them; and the day of the Lord, that burnt as an oven, left neither root nor branch" of them in the land of Israel. Samson's hairs were his weakest members, but here lay the Lord's power, and so it is now, the weakest souls that cleave to Christ have the greater share of promised strength. "Let the weak say, I am strong. To them that have no might he increaseth strength," for his strength is made perfect in weakness. "Heaps upon heaps, with the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men;" true, and the jaw-bone is slaying still, and that with a much greater slaughter.

Chapter 15. The Heavenly Bridegroom, and his Virgin Company

"These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are

virgins," Rev. xiv. 4.

IN the preceding chapter we have an account of the beast of Rome and his religion, of his admirers and followers, of his adherents and worshippers; consisting of such persons as have not their names written in the Lamb's book of life: likewise of the cruelty the pope has exercised upon the saints in killing those who would not submit to his pernicious doctrines.

In this chapter we have an account of "the everlasting gospel being preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people;" of the hour of Christ's judgment being come, when he will avenge the blood of his saints by executing judgment on them that shed it; and of the fall of Babylon. After which we read of a vast number of souls called and converted to Christ, expressed figuratively by an hundred and forty and four thousand; all of whom appear in an open profession of faith, and are represented as standing on mount Zion, which is the militant church on earth, distinguished from the triumphant church, which is called the heavenly Jerusalem.

In this blessed company "the Lamb of God is seen standing," he being the head of the church, and now standing up to plead the cause of his people against their enemies, and as gathering them together to himself. The various voices of this company are said to be from heaven, because the kingdom of heaven was already set up in their hearts; and because their birth, happy deliverance, and happy state, were all from heaven. Their voices are compared to many waters, expressive of the large concourse of souls now flocking to Christ; and to thunder, signifying their loud acclamations of joy, and their triumphs over their enemies; and to harps, expressive of the melody of their souls. "And they sang a new song, which none could learn but those that were with the Lamb on mount Zion." This is peculiarly one of the songs of Zion, which cannot be sung by a stranger in a strange land; none but pardoned souls, who have the application of the atonement on them, can say, "Thou hast redeemed us."

"These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins." At first sight this company appears a perfect band indeed, especially if we consider that not only adultery and fornication are intended by this "defilement, but that he that looks on a woman and lusts after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." To be free

from this defilement in every sense, in thought, look, desire, word, and deed, is “escaping the corruption of this miserable world” with a witness. Neither Abraham, Jacob, David, or Solomon, could stand among this number; for they had all of them other women besides their lawful wives, for which they had no command, leave, or grant, from God; “for from the beginning it was not so.”

Lamech set this first bad example, who is not to be followed in any sense, being of the race of Cain; he was a polygamist, and, like his father, a murderer. The example God set to the world was forming one woman for one man, and marrying these two, calling hem no more twain, but one flesh, Mal. ii. 15.

Virgin is the pure name which is given to all the followers of Christ, whether gracious or graceless. “Ten virgins went forth to meet the bridegroom, five were wise, and five were foolish.” The five wise virgins which entered into the marriage chamber had oil in their vessels, or the Spirit’s grace in their hearts; and the foolish had not, on which account they were disowned by the bridegroom: and no wonder, when the scriptures declare that, “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, ho is none of his,” nor will he ever be acknowledged by him.

These virgins mentioned in this passage are spiritual virgins. Their bridegroom is “the last Adam, the quickening Spirit,” who now inhabits a spiritual body, as we all shall at the end of time. His virgins therefore are not earthly, but spiritual or heavenly virgins; “for, as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly, for they bear his image; and, as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy.”

A wise and spiritual virgin, in the sense of scripture, is one that is a partaker of the Spirit of Christ; into whose heart the word of truth has come with power, and in the Holy Ghost; who believes in Christ, has a heart purified by faith, and by faith is justified, having his righteousness imputed, apprehended, and enjoyed by the faith of him. Christ always receives his spouse in “the wedding garment” which he has wrought out for her; this is called “spreading his skirt over her, entering into covenant with her, and she becomes his,” Ezek. xvi. 8. He never received Adam nor Eve into fellowship with himself till he himself had clothed them; nor the prodigal son till the best robe was put upon him; then, but not till then, does he feed on the fatted calf, and wear the ring.

Furthermore, a spiritual virgin is one that has the love of God shed abroad in her heart, who has spiritual affections, who loves Christ and cleaves to him; for this is the bond of union, and such are one spirit with Jesus; he loves them, and they love him. "For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 2. Paul had been instrumental in the conversion of these Corinthians, "and he had commended them to the Lord on whom they believed." But what were the characters of these Corinthians previous to their espousals? I answer, so bad, that they will bear no investigation. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. Here we may see the cause of their virgin purity; they were washed in Christ's blood, sanctified by him Spirit, justified and enrobed in his righteousness; and such rare spiritual virgins.

We must consider also that there are two sorts of whores mentioned in scripture: the one is a carnal whore, that defiles the bodies of men; "He that commits fornication sins against his own body, and makes the members of Christ the members of an harlot:" the other are spiritual whores, that defile the souls of men. These are false churches, bearing the name of Christ, without being partakers of his divine nature; as a whore takes the name of the man who keeps her, to hide her shame, when she never was lawfully joined to him. Hence we read so much about these spiritual whores in the proverbs; who call to passengers that go right on their way; who deceive the simple; who talk much of peace offerings, and of paying their vows; who cast down many wounded, and have slain many strong men; that is, not strong men in faith, but strong in themselves. These whores are said "to forsake the guide of their youth, and to forget the covenant of their God;" which is their whoredom: and such are idolaters and heretics. One holds false gods, and the other false doctrines; and both have "their guests in the depths of hell."

These whores defile the mind with heresy, and make souls drunk with the spirit of error, which is called "the wine of fornication." They throw false glosses upon the scriptures, blind the understanding, and alienate

the affections from Christ and his covenant; and lead souls to trust in themselves, in their own righteousness, in lies and falsehood, and in heart to cleave to the father of lies. And all such liars will go with the devil and his angels at last, for no liars can enter the heavenly city.

Hence we read of Jezebel in this book, “who calls herself a prophetess, who seduces the Lord’s servants;” and of the “whore of Babylon, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,” in circulating and establishing popery in their countries; and hence she is said to “make all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication:” this is spiritual drunkenness and spiritual whoredom; and both of the devil, who is a foul spirit.

But these spiritual virgins were not defiled with these spiritual whores, nor with any open or scandalous sins. They protested against them and their uncleanness; they held the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, and persevered in the faith of Christ and in newness of life, and worshipped God in spirit and in truth; neither their mind nor their conscience were defiled.

Moreover, we must consider that the virginity of this heavenly company is mentioned in the present tense; they are virgins; which is expressive of what they are in Christ Jesus; and what they are is all of grace, not of nature; for all by nature and by sin are unclean things. All which shews their happy and blessed state in Christ. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God, Rev. xiv. 4, 5. All which expresses their being redeemed and cleansed from sin in the blood of Christ; the purity of their doctrine, and the sincerity of their hearts, being free from hypocrisy or guile; and of their standing first in Christ, who appears in the presence of God for them; and they are complete in him, and in him without fault before the throne of God.

Top Of This Page

Chapter 16.

The Royalist and the Rebel, or, the Son of Peace in Perpetual War.

“For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good

I find not," Rom. vii. 18

THIS chapter has been, and still is, a sad stumbling block in the way of some persons, who boast of ability to perform whatever the law of God requires; they talk, not only of a will which the apostle had, but of a power of their own, which is what he had not. The intention of the Holy Ghost in this chapter, is to encourage those who are partakers of the divine nature to go on in a perpetual war with the flesh without discouragement; and likewise it is intended to forestall the market of those boasters who have nothing to set forth but their own sufficiency, and to prove all to be carnal who pretend to any confidence in the flesh. To evade, therefore, the light and force of this chapter, some of these proud doers insist upon it that Paul is here speaking of what he himself was when in an unconverted state: but it is not likely that he should then "delight in the law of God after the inner man," when there was no such man in him; or that "the law in his members should war against the law of his mind," when he was alive without any law at all. Others conjecture that he is speaking in the person of some other man, who is in an unregenerate state: but, if this was the case, Paul could not call the man whom he personated himself, as he has done here: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." But these things need not be wondered at, since we read so much of hard hearts, seared consciences, and souls past feeling. Every soul that is engaged in this war has two natures in him, or else there can be no war at all; "he is a company of two armies," Song vi. 13, having a love to God and a spirit that lusts to envy; a fighting faith and the resistance of unbelief; a good principle and a bias to evil; the grace of patience and a natural peevishness. Where this war is not seen there is no light, and where this war is not felt there is no life. Flesh and blood must needs boast and triumph, because there is no grace to subdue it. "That king walks boldly against whom there is no rising up;" and that king is sin, which shews itself plain enough in pride, falsehood, and self-righteousness. And sure I am that a man need no worse sins than these to reign in his mortal body, for either of them is sufficient to exclude him from the kingdom of God. But the apostle advanced what he knew to be true; "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." This

Knowledge was not in theory, it was not head knowledge, nor did he learn it at the feet of Gamaliel; for in his natural state "he was alive without the law; and sin was dead," and lay still, and, as touching the righteousness of the law, he thought he was blameless; and he lived, after the most strict

sect of the Jewish religion, a pharisee of the pharisees. This was Paul's state of fleshly perfection; and this is all the fleshly perfection that is to be found in the world now. That which stripped Paul of this delusive covering, and expectation of life from the law of works, was the spiritual and powerful entrance of the law into his heart, "then his sin revived, and he died;" before this "he was alive, and sin was dead:" it was this which made that strange turn in affairs with Paul. Then, as soon as sin revived and he died, the Holy Spirit quickened his soul to a life of faith; and the grace of God waged war with Paul's reviving sin; and it carried that war on as long as Paul lived in this world. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Paul was illuminated, so that he could see the law of the Spirit, and the other law too; "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." It is a law that calls for obedience, it wants to be "obeyed in the lusts thereof;" it is a law that calls continually, more or less, for gratification; and it is not only a law that calls for obedience, but it is a law that has some power to enforce its commands; "it brings me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." I not only see it, but I am quickened to feel it. "We that have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves; groan, being burdened." He not only saw it, and felt it, but his soul was influenced to hate it. "What hate that do I." Yea, he viewed it as the source of all his misery. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank my God through Jesus Christ."

But what are we to understand by the word flesh in my text? Not this body strictly so called, for there were many good things in that. He loved God; and "he that loveth dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him." He lived; "yet not he, but Christ lived in him: his body was the temple of the Holy Ghost." He had the first fruits of the Spirit; yea, "the life also of Jesus as manifest in his mortal flesh," 2 Cor. iv. 11. He had the mysteries of God in him; yea, the fullness of the blessings of the gospel of peace, the greatest gifts, and every needful grace, dwelt richly in him. He had "all this glorious treasure in his earthen vessel, that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of him." He had a new heart, and the law of God written upon the fleshly tables of it. He had the fear of God planted in him, and the strength of God was made perfect in his weakness; therefore by flesh he cannot mean this human body.

Moreover, the body often shares in the joys of the spirit; and the very

countenance of the body will proclaim the health of the soul. If the soul is lively, happy, and joyful, the eye watches Providence, the ear hears the gospel with pleasure, the feet go cheerfully to the house of God, and the hands are willing to work, and ready to communicate: yea, “the members of the body” (which in a state of nature “were instruments of righteousness unto sin”), through grace, “are yielded as instruments of righteousness unto God,” Rom. vi. 13. But, “when the soul is chastened for sin, the beauty of the body consumes like a moth” under the rod; and, when it is in a starving condition, the body feels it, and complains, “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God,” Psalm lxxxiv. 2. Besides, “the Lord is the saviour of the body” as well as the soul; therefore this body cannot be what the apostle calls flesh in my text. James makes a distinction between the members of the body and sin that works in them. “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence i;½ even of your lusts, that war in your members?” James, iv. 1.

This evil principle goes by various names in scripture. It is called the evil imagination. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,” Gen. vi. 5. Peter calls it “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” James calls it lusts which war in the members. But Christ calls it, as our apostle doth, flesh; “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” John, iii. 6. By which the Lord doth not mean that every person who is born into this world is nothing but flesh, for that is not the truth: a man is born with a spirit as well as a body; he comes into this world with a reasonable soul as well as a body of flesh; nor doth he mean that every one who is born again is nothing but spirit, for that is not matter of fact; because a man who is born again still retains a body of flesh and blood, and even that very body itself is called “the temple of the Holy Ghost who dwells in him.”

And it should be remarked that the Lord, in the above passage, is not speaking of a person, but of a thing; not of a man, strictly considered, but of a principle in man; of the effect of a natural birth, and of the effect of a spiritual birth; and it is clear that the words are not spoken in the masculine gender, but in the neuter. He doth not say he or him; but that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. To be short, the Saviour shews that all the elect, as well as others, come into this world with nothing in them, either in body or in soul, but

sin; “that nothing clean can come out of an unclean thing;” and therefore that all who see the kingdom of God must be born again; and, when they are born again, that a new principle of grace is produced in them, under the operations of the Holy Ghost; and that even then both these principles which I have been speaking of, that of the flesh which is flesh, and that of the Spirit, which is spirit, will be found and remain in that very renewed man as long as he is in this world. Now for a man to refuse to gratify that which is born of the flesh, Christ calls “a denying of himself;” and to bear the opposition and war between the flesh and the spirit, “is taking up his cross daily;” which war is the worst part of the cross, for we have that when we have no other; and all others would sit easy, were we free from that. To be led by the Spirit, and influenced by his grace, the Lord calls a coming after him. “He that will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me; and where I am there shall also my servant be.”

Paul calls this fleshly principle a law in his members, the other the law of his mind: the former the old man, the latter the new man. Peter calls the former fleshly lusts, the latter “the hidden man of the heart.” James calls the one “lusts in the members,” the other “the wisdom that is from above, which is peaceable, pure, easy to be entreated, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” But, when Paul would make the matter quite plain, he calls the one sin and the other grace. “Sin shall not have dominion over you; Grace shall reign:” and then he shews us at large both the one and the other. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings,” Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. This is what Paul calls the flesh, and the works of it, in all which “dwells no good thing.” The new man is that which is born of the Spirit, and is described as the fruit of him thus: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” Gal. v. 22, 23. And then follows what the Lord calls a denying self, and taking up the cross; “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections (passions) and lusts.” Here the apostle calls the above evil works flesh again, as he doth in my text; and, by virtue of an union with Christ, and the sharp exercise of a daily cross, the flesh, with its lusts and passions, are crucified; and by the blessed Spirit they are mortified; “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Thus, and thus only, it is that “the old man is put off;” but not finally, so as for us to be perfect in the flesh, or perfectly free from him: no; only with respect to our not appearing in him, living in

him, walking in him, or gratifying of him. "Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man," Eph. iv. 22. "In times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Eph. ii. 2, 3. This, saith Paul, was our former conversation; but now put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk in him; yea, put on the new man, and "put off, as concerning the former conversation, the old man with his deeds; which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." But it is one thing to deny self daily, and another thing to destroy self utterly, by free-will and human power; which indeed are the principal parts of self, and are commanded to be put off and denied; for it was free-will that cast Jonah into the sea, and it was human power that brought poor Peter to burst forth into cursing and swearing. It is one thing to put off the old man, and another thing to cast him out of the heart for good and all; but to dress him up and make him perfect must be the master-piece of all human performances; which wretched work is all labour in vain; "for flesh and blood," as before described, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption;" for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and will never be better; and "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and will ever continue the same. Now for Paul's will.

"For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." But how came Paul to be so willing to do good? Why, "the Lord hath made him willing in the day of his power." But what power was that? the power of his wrath, or the power of his arm? I answer, that which captivates the will above all other power is the power of God's love displayed in the death of Christ for us; and then the love of Christ in condescending to lay down his life for us: this dying love, operating upon the miserable soul of an awakened sinner, leads him at once to a godly sorrow, and true repentance, which makes him sincerely, yea thankfully, willing to yield the obedience of faith. Son, go work to-day in my vineyard; but he answered and said, "I will not; but afterwards he repented and went, and did the will of his Father." Thus God influences the poor sinner's will; and he must not only give him inclination, but motion also, or else he will never go. "God works in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure;" for, when he has made a poor sinner willing to choose the better part, that helpless sinner stands stock-still till a fresh power be

communicated, for he can go no further (and he knows it) until God is pleased to influence him to act: both these, the will and the power, are of God; and sometimes we can find the one when we cannot feel the other.

David sets his heart upon building a house for God, and is determined to do it; and the prophet tells him to do it, for God as with him. Here was David's will, and he did well that it as in his heart; and God promised to build him a sure house, yet God works not in him to do, "but says he shall not build it, but his son shall." David drew the plan of it, and made provision for the building of it; then bid his son to do it, and told the elders of Israel to assist him in it; and this was doing all that David could or might do.

Abraham's will was to kill Isaac, and the will passed for the deed. The poor widow too, she was willing to enrich the treasury; but, having only two mites, it went but a little way in supporting the service of God and the priesthood. Some are willing to entertain a poor brother in the faith; but, when all comes to all, they can afford no more than a cup of cold water towards it; and such shall in no wise lose their reward; "for, if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." Where nothing can be had the king must lose his right.

Mary was determined in her heart to perfume and to anoint the Lord's body after his death; but, being fearful that she should not be able to perform it, she came to him before he was dead and did it. The Lord said, "She hath done what she could, she is come beforehand," not after my death, "to anoint me to the burial;" not after, as a funeral rite. And it was well taken. "Why trouble ye the woman? She hath wrought a good work upon me." And, if the apostles had known the inward workings of her mind, and the melting love of her soul, they would not have worried the poor creature as they did about the waste or cost of the ointment. What can be wasted upon the Heir of all things? Or what is three hundred pence, or three hundred thousand million pounds, when compared to the dying love of Christ in the heart?

The apostles were willing to go with Christ both to prison and to death; "and they all said they would do it," Mark, xiv. 31; but the Lord did not work in them to do, and therefore they all forsook him and fled; and they were willing to watch with him, but could not; and they were so vexed with

themselves, and so ashamed on account of it, when he asked them, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" that "they wist not what to answer him," Mark, xiv. 40. "Their spirit was willing, but their flesh was weak." Thus to will was present with Paul. "I would do good; but, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

"And how to perform that which is good I find not." Paul could not do except "God worked in him to do." Paul felt his need of divine strength; "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Paul's performances were not the works of the flesh, nor dead works; "I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was in me." His were "the works of faith" and he wanted faith in exercise. He calls his labours "the labours of love," and tells us that "the love of Christ constrained him." His was "service in the newness of the Spirit," and he wanted the Spirit's assistance, influence, and operations. How could he speak without a door of utterance given to him? How could he pray unless the Spirit helped his infirmities? How could his ministry prosper if God did not give testimony to the word of his grace? And these things he did not always find powerfully with him. Paul knew that the excellency of the power was of God, and not of him. This wind blows when and where it listeth; and, unless it doth blow, the spices cannot flow out. The Spirit bestows his various gifts severally as he will, and works them in all who have them; and then he works in and upon them when he pleaseth. Paul went sometimes bound in the Spirit, and at other times he had no rest because he found not Titus; at Rome he wanted a door of utterance; and again, his preaching was in much fear and trembling; so that how to perform that which was good he found not, because evil was present with him. His will was for good, and he with his mind served the law of God; and, after the inner man, he delighted in it: but in his flesh he found nothing good, it hindered him; "The good I would I do not;" but the contrary, the "evil I hate, that do I:" yea, I am often straitened by this adversary, and held like a prisoner, contrary to my will; "the law in my members wars against the law of my mind, and brings me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." But, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me; which never shall be imputed to me, it having been imputed to Christ; for my old man was crucified with him, therefore I thank my God through Jesus Christ.

This old man, or the flesh, or this body of death, hath occasioned spots in some of the brightest characters, and blots in the escutcheons of many

who have borne celestial crowns in their arms. It is impossible to assert all the gratifications that this old man calls for, or to set forth the various branches of obedience that this law in the members requires. He works at different times, in every member of the body, and in every faculty of the soul; and is sure, if not put off, to work by every appetite and desire that is common to human nature, so as to allure, draw away, and entice, the poor soul beyond the bounds that God hath prescribed.

In Noah excess of wine was the deception by which the devil and this base old man overcame him, who had but just before overcome and condemned the world, and become heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

It was this old man that worked distrust in the mind of the father of us all, which put him upon denying his wife. It was this old man that influenced Isaac's inordinate affection to love the cunning hunter more than the plain man who dwelt in the tent, even to bestow the blessing contrary to the revealed will of God; he being biassed thereunto, not by the love of God, but by a love "to savoury meat made of venison." This old man is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and these lusts war against the soul.

When "this wayfaring man came unto David" for an entertainment, there was not one ewe in all the Lord's fold that David had the rule over; not one in all his own house, nor one in all the house of "Saul his master, for God had given them all unto David," 2 Sam. xii. 8. No, not one in a virgin state that was disengaged, in all his realm, which was sufficient "to dress for this wayfaring man that was come unto him;" nothing would do for this old man but "the poor man's ewe lamb, which was all that he had, and which ate of his meat, drank of his cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter: this must be dressed for the wayfaring man that was come unto David," 2 Sam. xii. 4.

O how was the king of Israel enraged at this man! "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." And this prophecy is true in the best sense; for David's old man, as well as ours, was crucified with David's son, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; yea, and David himself died in his covenant head; for "Christ was crucified for the transgressions that were under the first testament," as well as for them "who are called to receive the eternal

inheritance," under the new. We are crucified with Christ.

The man that hath done this thing shall restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. Ah David; But "thou art the man;" And thou must restore ten-fold. "Behold! I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house; and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun," 2 Sam. xii. 11. "And the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward." Thus the king restored the lamb tenfold, besides the violence offered to his daughter Tamer, which in all made it "good measure, pressed down, shook together, and running over; for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

This old man hath for many years been a potent and tyrannical monarch. "Sin hath reigned unto death," Rom. v. 21. "But better is a poor and wise child, than this old and foolish king, who knoweth not to be admonished; for out of prison he cometh to reign: whereas, also, he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor," Eccles. iv. 13, 14. There is no "poor and wise child" in this world but what is plagued with "this old and foolish king; for, though he was condemned in Christ's flesh, yea crucified, dead and buried; yet, so sure as "Christ was taken from prison and from judgment," even so sure "this old king comes out of his prison to reign;" and that not only over all the human race, the elect not excluded, while in a state of nature, but even after he is subdued, and in a great measure confined by all conquering grace; yet, as Paul allows, he seems at times to break loose. "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members: O wretched man that I am!" But our blessing and happiness lie in his imprisonment: he is not at liberty, but a prisoner in every real believer; so that it is out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor. The poor and wise child, that is born again, born an heir of God's kingdom, who is made a king and a priest unto God, "becometh poor;" poor in soul, a dependant upon the divine bounty of heaven; and blessed are such. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God."

Chapter 17.

Gospel Zion, and her Eternal Glory

“The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God,” Isaiah, xxxv. 2.

THE prophet in the 33d chapter gives a glorious account of Zion, and of “the Lord’s filling her with judgment and righteousness.” He treats of that wisdom and knowledge which shall be her stability in the times of the gospel, and calls them “the strength of her salvation.” He sets forth the energy and fervour of Zion’s messengers, calling them “valiant ones,” who shall be valiant for truth, and ambassadors of peace; dispatched from the court of heaven by the King of kings, to erect his standard, display his banner, and make proclamations of pardon, peace, and reconciliation; and that they shall “weep bitterly,” be earnest and importunate with God in prayer for success, going forth weeping and bearing precious seed. This is expressive of their meekness, humility, contrition, and brokenness of heart, as opposed to the whole-hearted, the hardened, the bold, daring, and presumptuous, who run unscathed of God.

Next the prophet calls to sensible sinners, to look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; and promises to all her lovers that they shall see her quietude and her stability; that she shall never be taken down, nor have one of her cords loosed. And, as a navigable river is an ornament and a great blessing to a capital city, on the account of trade and commerce, and which is what local Jerusalem never had, the Lord himself promises to be to this mystic city, a place of broad rivers and streams, in which heavenly merchants may trade and traffic in the different branches of godliness; in which there is great gain; yet he will never be a river to any foreign invader of this city; “for there shall go no galley with oars, nor gallant ships; all the tacklings of such shall be loosed, they shall neither strengthen the mast, spread the sail, nor take the prey.” And we have often seen these vessels of wrath, who have rigged and armed themselves to besiege Zion’s walls and bulwarks, sadly tossed, and wrecked, and at last drowned by the storms of divine vengeance; and no wonder, “for the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.”

The 24th chapter is filled chiefly with a description of Zion’s enemies, the threatenings of God against them, and his judgments upon them; and in the 35th chapter the prophet returns from his digression to his former subject, and proceeds to further illustrations of Zion’s glory.

“The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them.” The wilderness means the gentile world, and the rude, wild, barren, and uncultivated state of those souls which are in it, on account of their being destitute of the truth, grace, and Spirit of God; solitary, by reason of their being without hope, without, Saviour, and without any inward peace, joy, happiness, or comfort. “These shall be glad for them;” that is, they shall be glad for the ambassadors of peace, and for the good tidings of salvation. And “the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose;” ver. 1. This desert implies such souls as are destitute of the tillage of heaven, and have not been taken in hand by the Divine Husbandman, and thereby not properly “God’s husbandry;” being neither dug nor ploughed up by spiritual convictions, nor dunged or manured by special grace: and yet these shall “rejoice and blossom,” but not until divine love operates upon them, and enlarges their hearts; and then “it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing,” ver. 2. And this shews how the souls of poor sinners, shut up in ignorance, blindness, bondage, and unbelief, should be enlarged, and brought forth from the strong holds of Satan, and the joy and melody that should be found in their souls at the time of their jail delivery, when brought forth into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And then comes in the words of my text.

“The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.” I will,

1. Offer my thoughts on Lebanon.
2. On the glory of Lebanon.
3. On Carmel.
4. On the excellency of it.
5. On Sharon, and its excellency.
6. On the believer’s sight. They shall see.
7. On the glory of the Lord, which is to be seen. And,
8. On the excellency of our God.

For the first of these, as to Lebanon. This mountain stands at the extremity of the holy land. The lands of Asher, Naphtali, and the half tribe of Manasseh, are all joined to Antilibanus. It is a very lofty and extensive mountain, and allowed to be four miles in height, above the plain of Damascus; on which account it contains a prodigious quantity of snow, its top ascending so high into the upper regions, which serves as a reservoir to water the valleys and all the country below it, when the sun melts it; from whence arises this question, "Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon, which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters, which come from another place, be forsaken?" Jer. xviii. 14.

The top of this mountain is famous for cedars, which take their name of distinction from it, called "Cedars of Lebanon," which were excellent, as you read. "His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars," Song v. 15.

The foot of this mountain was once noted for producing fine grapes, which afforded the best of wine; and hence it is that we read, "They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon," Hosea, xiv. 7. At the side of this mountain, as historians relate, issues a famous fountain or spring of water; which falls down the rocks, and makes a most wonderful cascade; and then runs through the city of Damascus. Near this mountain Solomon built an armoury, called the house of the forest, and with the wood of it he built his chariot, Song iii. 9. And it was this mountain that Moses so much longed to see, Deut. iii. 25. But then what glory doth the gentile church receive from this mountain, or from any thing about or belonging to it? I answer, none at all; therefore "the glory of Lebanon," in my text, hath another meaning.

Lebanon signifies the temple of God at Jerusalem, which was first built by Solomon, of the wood of this mountain, 1 Kings, v. 14; on which account the temple bore the name of Lebanon, as it is written, "Open thy doors, O Lebanon! that the fire may devour thy cedars," Zech. xi. 1. The destruction of the temple is here foretold. The Lord Jesus Christ, whom they sought, was suddenly to come to his temple; and the prophet predicted their "selling him for thirty pieces of silver;" and that they should pierce him, and put him to death, and "look at him whom they had pierced;" that the poor of the flock should know that he was the incarnate word of the Lord, and that they should be fed by him: but, as to the others,

that he should not feed them, for that those which were to die should die, and the rest should eat every one the flesh of another. And that, after the sword had been awakened, and had smitten the man, God's fellow, then God would turn his hand upon the little ones, and by the blood of the covenant send forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water; and, after all this had taken place, that then should come on Jerusalem's destruction. All which was punctually fulfilled in and by Jesus Christ, for "he came to his temple," and preached in it; yea, he appeared to the daughters of Jerusalem as their "king, just, and having salvation, riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." He fed the poor of his flock that waited upon him, as their king and shepherd, with a sceptre and a crook; the one of which is called beauty, and the other bands, or binders. But his person and offices were despised and rejected, for they sold him, pierced him, and put him to death; and these he would not feed, but gave them up to judgment. "That which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another." The vail of the temple at his death was rent, and their house left unto them desolate; and soon afterwards the Roman army came, and desolations quickly followed. "Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars." All of which came to pass; for the doors of the temple, as Josephus relates, opened of their own accord, and the Roman soldiers then set fire to the temple, and to all the cedar work of it, notwithstanding all the attempts of Titus Vespasian to prevent it. Thus much of Lebanon. And now I shall proceed to speak,

Secondly, Of the glory of it. There was nothing in the temple but what was typical and significant, which the New Testament, or some parts of the Old, explain. The builders, both Solomon and Cyrus, represented CHRIST. The stones of it were typical of all believers, who are called by Peter "lively stones, built up a spiritual house." The beams of it represented strong established churches; "The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir." The "brazen sea" set forth the blood of Christ, which washes every believing soul; "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me." The "twelve oxen," on which the laver stood, prefigured the twelve apostles, who trod out the corn, and who were not to be muzzled, which is thus applied by Paul himself. The oxen, which bore up the "brazen sea," stood with their faces, three towards the east, three towards the west, three towards the north, and three towards the south; which set forth God's revealing of his dear Son in the twelve apostles, and by them making him known to all nations, to gather his elect "from the east, west, north, and south, to

sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.” The “golden table” prefigured “believing hearts,” called fleshly tables; and faith is called gold, because spiritual riches belong to believers. “God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith.” The shew-bread represented “Christ the bread of life” in all the saints, and the saints themselves with Christ in them. “We, being many, are one bread.” The incense represented prayer; the different spices of which it was composed were emblematical of the various graces of the blessed Spirit; the fire signified pure and divine love; the smoke represented those strong desires and holy longings which gracious souls breathe forth; and the golden altar upon which it was offered set forth Christ, upon whom, and through whom, spiritual prayers and praises ascend up unto God with acceptance. “Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will I accept upon my altar; and I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.” All these were in their spiritual signification glorious things. But these are not all the things that are contained in the “glory of Lebanon;” for the glory of Lebanon lay in the Shekinah, the divine Majesty that dwelt between the cherubim, the “mercy seat,” and the “seven lamps upon the golden candlestick.” The Shekinah represented the glory of God, the “mercy seat” the Lord Jesus Christ, and the “seven lamps” the Holy Ghost. This glory of Lebanon came to the Gentiles, as you read. “Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth: unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” Rev. i. 4, 5, 6. This was “the glory of Lebanon.” Father, Son, and Spirit, ONE GOD, was the glory and the SUN of the Jewish nation. But, alas! “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,” Joel, ii. 31. “And the stars shall withdraw their “shining,” Joel, iii. 15. The Lord God of Israel, their glorious sun, left them indeed, and then a dreadful darkness succeeded; and the Moon, their national church, was “turned into blood” by the Roman sword, which put a final end to their church state; and their doctors, who were the stars of that nation, “withdrew their shining,” for they said, “We see.” “Then, saith the Lord, Your sin remaineth; therefore for judgment I am come into this world, that they which see might be made blind.” And under that awful eclipse they are to this day, with the “veil upon their heart.”

But where is the glory of Lebanon now? Where is God the Father?

Answer, "Shining into every believer's heart, giving him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Where is the "sun of righteousness?" Why he is rising upon them that fear his name, "with healing in his beams." And where is the Holy Ghost; the "seven lamps," and "the seven spirits of God," in all his glorious perfections, and with all his seven-fold graces, gifts, and operations? He is now "poured out upon all flesh," namely, the Gentiles; yea, even "upon servants and handmaids," and they prophesy. "Separate me Barnabas and Paul (saith he) to the work whereunto I have called them;" which was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; and here that blessed Spirit now is with all his seven-fold gifts. "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith; to another prophecy; and to another gifts of healings, working of miracles, and discerning of spirits; all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," I Cor. xii. Those are his gifts, and his fruits are these, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," Gal. v. 22. Instead of the appearance of the moon, we now behold the church "clothed with the sun;" and the "seven stars," which gave light to the seven candlesticks, are still in the hand of the Master of our assemblies. And this concludes my description of Lebanon, and the glory of it, which is come unto us; and this brings me to speak,

Thirdly, of Carmel. "Mount Carmel appears to be in the land of Judah," Joshua, xv. 55, 63. "This mountain was near, to the Mediterranean sea," Jer. xlvi. 18, and was famous for many things. Here it was that David was stopped by Abigail from shedding of blood, which convinced him for ever that "vengeance belongeth unto God;" who soon after smote Nabal, and gave David not only what Nabal refused (I mean sustenance), but Abigail into the bargain. Judgment and mercy, providence and grace, all appeared here. To this mount the poor Shunamite came with the ass and cart to find Elisha, and obtained his assistance, and had her son raised from the dead. There were many pious souls who dwelt about this mountain, in whose behalf a prophecy was given out, and which was evidently fulfilled by Jesus Christ. "Feed thy people with thy God; the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitary in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan, and in Gilead, as in the days of old," Micah, vii. 14. And now I am brought to speak,

4thly, Of the excellency of Carmel. The miracle of miracles, which

excelled all the rest that ever were performed upon this mountain, was the miracle of "Elijah the prophet." To this mount he ordered Ahab to gather together all Israel, after a drought of three years and six months, 1 Kings. xvii. 19. Hither came "the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty; and the prophets of the grove, four hundred;" and thus the devil had his hundreds to God's one: but here it was that the devil and his servants were brought to the test, for they were all to sacrifices, and all were to pray; and the success which should attend their devotions was to shew who were true and who false, Satan's rabble or the Lord's prophet; and the criterion was to be, "that he which answered by fire was to be God."

The evil workers laboured long, and travailed hard, and brought forth nothing but wind; but the prophet prayed, and God soon answered him by fire: at which miracle those, who had long "halted between two opinions," were brought to be at a point "The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God;" and, being thus convinced of the truth, and of their having been so grossly duped by Satan's ministers, "they took them to the brook Kishon," and killed them all. This was the effect of an answer by fire; and the next miracle is an answer by water; for "he prayed again" (saith James),"and obtained an abundance of rain."

John, the Lord's forerunner, appeared in the "prophet Elijah; "for that" burning and shining light was to come in his Spirit and power." CHRIST was exhibited in the sacrifice, and a fiery answer was given to prayer through it; and by it the false prophets were discovered and slain, and poor doubting and halting souls brought to a good conclusion.

Christ crucified is now with gospel Zion, and God hears the prayers of his faithful servants, and gives the fiery answers of divine love to the hearts of poor miserable sinners, which makes their hearts burn within them, and by which he discovers and makes manifest the ministers of Satan, unto whom his word is "made a savour of death unto death," while poor halting souls are brought to the truth and to a glorious confession of it; yea, and God still gives the abundance of rain, for he "pours water on them that are thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; and this is the excellency of Carmel," read Rev. xi. 5, 6. And now I am brought to speak,

5thly, Of Sharon. This place was noted for fruitfulness; but it was sometimes made barren by reason of the abominable idolatry of Israel, of which the prophet complains. "Sharon is like a wilderness, and Bashan

and Carmel shake off their fruits,” Isaiah, xxxiii. 9. It was also famous for its roses, a kind which some say had no thorns, to which the Holy Ghost compares himself. “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley,” Song ii. 1. It is also remarkable for lying in the kingdom of “Sihon, king of Heshbon,” which was the first country that the Israelites took after their departure from Egypt, Deut. ii, and which “was given to the half tribe of Manasseh.” Here it was that God displayed his power; and here it was that the Israelites began to take courage, and to expect the promised land. Of this country the Hagarenes were in possession in the days of Saul; “but the Reubenites made war with them, prevailed over them, and dwelt in their tents in Gilead and Bashan, and in all the suburbs of Sharon; for the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, forty thousand, made war together with the Hagarites, and they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them, for they cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them, because they put their trust in him,” 1 Chron. lvi. 10, 20. It was likewise near this spot that God rebuked Laban when he was in pursuit of Jacob to strip him of all that he had. Mizpah and Mount Gilead were also close to it.

6thly. The excellency of Sharon is, that it is the spot where Israel obtained their first victory, had their first views of Canaan, and their best hopes of enjoying it; and it is this excellency of Sharon, or the power of God here displayed, that gives us the first victory over sin, Satan, and the world, and the first views of the heavenly country; at which time, and on which blessed spot, God sweetly appears to rebuke Laban and all our enemies, who were prefigured by him. Here it is that mount Gilead appears, or the whole cloud of witnesses, shewing themselves in our behalf. Mizpah too, our watch-tower, is here made manifest, or the Lord watching over us for good, and against them that hate us; for the enemies of God are here rebuked, and the Israel of God march off with faith gloriously encouraged. In short, the first victory obtained by faith, with a prospect of that; and which is very far off, the having our enemies rebuked and silenced, and our faith encouraged, with a crying unto God, and being heard and helped, attended with a deliverance from the Hagarites, or the children of the flesh, so as to obtain a complete victory over them and all the strivings and fruitless sons of regal workmongers, and a self-righteous spirit, is produced by the Lord Jesus Christ, our Rose of Sharon, who often in the days of old emitted his odours there, who now thus appears for us, and delivers us; and, after all the conflict is over, we find rest to our souls, for we can then lie down in peace, but not before, as it is written; “And

Sharon shall be a fold for flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me," Isaiah, lxx. 10. And thus I shall dismiss my description of Sharon, and the excellency of it, and in the next place proceed to the saint's light.

7thly, "They shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God." Various are the views that the children of men have had in this world. Cain saw his crime, his banishment from God's presence, his cursed state, and his just punishment, and that he deserved death at the hands of all who found him, and therefore his cry was, "Every one that finds me shall slay me." Esau saw the obedience, plainness, and blessing, of Jacob, and went from bad to worse. Pharaoh saw the miracles of Moses, the folly of the magicians, the judgments of God, and the wickedness of himself and his people, and yet hardened his heart the more.

The "elders of Israel" saw the glory of God, and the celestial pavement under his feet, as the body of heaven in its clearness; but all of them saw him not "as shining into their hearts, nor did they feel his power, for upon them he laid not his hand." It was one of these princes that brought the Midianitish woman into the camp, who was slain by Phineas in the matter of Peer.

"Balaam saw the visions of the Lord God Almighty," but never saw himself; he also saw the safety of Israel and the destruction of Amalek, and the affliction of Eber, or the sufferings of the Hebrews by the ships of Chittim or the Romans; and he likewise "saw the star that should arise out of Jacob," and the glorious death of the righteous; and he wished to die like them; and yet, after all, he never saw his sin, the plague of his own heart, nor of course his interest in God's favour.

Saul saw that God was with David, and that he was departed from him; he also saw that David would surely be king, and that the kingdom would be established in his hand; but he saw not his own pride and rebellion.

Jehu saw the prophecies that stood upon record against the house of Ahab, and the justice of God in executing vengeance upon him and all his family for idolatry and murder; and he could see his own zeal for God; but he could not see the treachery of his own heart, which soon led him to commit the same abominations.

Our Arians can see that Christ is man by the light of nature; but they cannot see his Eternal Power and Godhead, because that glorious Sun of Righteousness hath never, no never, risen upon, nor shined into them.

The Arminian too, he (as he says) can see the power of his own arm, and the perfection of his own nature; but he cannot see the glory of an imputed righteousness, nor his need of it.

Many there are who have a notional knowledge of God, but no knowledge of themselves; and there are multitudes of others who pretend to have great light in the scriptures, but who have never experienced the power and force of one truth contained therein. These can see themselves wiser than others; but they cannot see, much less “esteem, others better than themselves.” They have all light without, but none within; they can see a mote in another’s eye, but they cannot behold the beam in their own eye.

Now the light of God’s saints differs much from the light of all such; for, “when the darkness is past and the true light shineth,” they see themselves and the evils of their own hearts. “All things that are reprov’d are made manifest by the light which doth appear, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.” Such know, “and all the churches shall know, that Christ trieth the reins and the hearts;” he makes a man know what are his thoughts, and maketh manifest the councils of his heart.

They see the spirituality of the law, that it was ordained unto death, and never meant to give life; they see the wrath of God revealed in it, and flee from the wrath of it to the refuge and hope that God hath set before them; “they foresee the evil” (of the great day), and hide themselves till the calamity be overpast; “but the wicked pass on, and are punished.”

They see the awful state of the world, and the danger that they are in. “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, and the world lieth in wickedness.”

They “discern the judgments of God abroad in the earth, and see that every morning he bringeth them to light; but the unjust knoweth no shame.”

They have a clear view of the ignorance of all blind guides, and of the folly of damnable heretics; but those heretics cannot see them. “He that is

spiritual judgeth all things, but himself is judged of no man.”

“Unto them it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but others have it in parables, that seeing they might not see.”

They discover the leadings of divine providence, and exercise faith on it, in which they have a view of the goodness of God unto them, for he makes his goodness to pass before them, and by this their love is drawn forth towards him with gratitude and thankfulness, which abounds at every discovery. “He that will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.” They behold unsearchable riches, manifold wisdom, harmony, glory, beauty, and a most valuable treasure, in the scriptures of truth, “when the day dawn and day star arise in their hearts.”

Christ is revealed, manifested, and made known, to them, as the only way into the Holy of Holies; and they abide by him, and in him; they walk in the faith of him, and in love to him, and find “their path shine more and more to perfect day.”

The light that shines into them leads their faith and affections, their mind and understanding, to God, who accepts them in his beloved Son, and “gives them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” And herein the Lord’s promise is fulfilled; “He that believeth on me shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life;” even that light which accompanies everlasting life, or light to give them to see that they are quickened, and that their faith is genuine, that repentance unto life is granted to them, and that justification unto life hath passed on them, and that they themselves are passed from death unto life, and shall not come into condemnation. “This is the true light that now shineth,” and it is “the light of life;” for such are “light in the Lord,” by virtue of their being interested in his love and finished work, and by their being enlightened by him to see it; as it is written in my text, “they shall see.”

8thly, “The glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God.” These words discover what “the excellency of Carmel and Sharon” signifies; namely, the glory and excellency of the Lord our God, which hath been displayed on those hills and in those countries. The glory of the Lord is first seen by the poor sinner after he has been disciplined by the terrors of the law, and exercised with the chains of his own transgressions; with the being

shut up in unbelief, sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death. "He that maketh the seven stars and Orion turneth also the shadow of death into the morning," when the first dawns of eternal day dart through the dark veil upon the sinner's heart. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." But before this blessed period arrives the poor sinner is shut up and kept as a prisoner in the dark; and what the Lord is about to do with him he knoweth not, yet he is to know hereafter. However he seldom dreams that the "Lord is washing his feet;" or that the "furnace is to purge his dross;" but when this glory shines into him "it maketh darkness light before him, and crooked things straight;" yea, it spreads a ray upon all the path that he hath come, and maketh all apparent contradictions to harmonize. All his false constructions, which were before put upon the work, are then taken off, and palmed upon his own ignorance and folly, and the ways of the Lord appear perfectly right; his erroneous conclusions are discovered to be the effects of infidelity and carnal reason, which convinces him "that God's thoughts are not his thoughts." He sees that the way wherein he hath come is the right way, and thanks his God for leading him into it, and keeping him there; and loathes himself for his impatience and base rebellion under the kind hand of his heavenly Father, and would not have been led in any other path, no not for a thousand worlds, because he is fully persuaded it is the way that "leads to a city of habitation," even the way to Zion, the city of the great King.

2dly. The glory of the Lord appears in the glorious scheme of salvation by Christ crucified; for there the poor sinner is led to look, and see that by the dear Redeemer's obedience the condemned criminal is freely justified; that by his enduring the curse, and making satisfaction unto God the Father, is the only way wherein God and man are, or can be reconciled, and sin, death, and devils, vanquished and overcome; and that it is in this way alone that sinners are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. "He sees the sufferings of Christ and the glory that follows."

3dly. The influence of grace upon his own soul appears glorious; and he sees and feels that the opposition of the flesh, the old man, and Satan, are against it; and that they unitedly work in the members of the body, and war continually against this divine work of the great Potter; and how it is that the living principle, the "grain of mustard seed," stands and withstands every shock, is surprising to him, especially when at times he himself hath even lost sight of it, yea, and even nothing but corruption hath appeared in

him; but yet there are times when that cursed friend of the devil hides his head, and keepeth silence, and then the blessed work of God appears again in full view, and that with clear evidence; and the saint of God sees, feels, and enjoys it, and then his soul triumphs and glories under the pleasing sensations of it; and in such a season he is often afraid of losing this blessed opposer of Satan's reign, and this blessed destroyer of Satan's works, or that it should be overpowered by his own corruptions; so that he charges them all "not to stir nor awake his beloved till he please." But, as the cloudy pillar abode upon the tabernacle by day, and a fire by night, to protect and defend all the secret emblems of grace that were in it, even so surely will God protect and defend this work of his own hands, from which alone he receives his revenues. "For the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence," Isaiah, iv. 5.

4thly. The operations, illuminations, consolations, revelations, and heavenly fellowship, of the ever blessed God the Holy Ghost, are wonderful to him, and can never be described by him. The sweet intelligence that he brings; the distant views that he gives; the meditations that he leads the mind into; the enlargements that he produces; the fortitude, strength, and courage, that he equips the soul with; the love and zeal that he pours into the heart; the quick thoughts, "witty inventions," nervous arguments, conclusive sentences, and elegant expressions, which he brings to the mind and memory, astonish the believer, and make him a wonder to himself; and with amazement he is ready to inquire how it is that he, the blessed and eternal Comforter, can indulge such a poor creature with that freedom and familiarity that he doth, by communing and holding fellowship with such; in helping their infirmities and making intercession for them; in searching the deep things of God, and letting them know the things that are freely given unto them of God; in bearing his witness to their sonship, and enabling them to claim it; in sealing their souls with a comfortable assurance, and operating as the earnest of the future inheritance; together with the unexpected aid and assistance that he gives to withstand and resist an opposer or a gainsayer; at which time of need he will furnish the heart, and fill the mouth, with such arguments that the poor soul never thought of, and he begins to wonder where they came from, not knowing that such treasures were in his heart. "If you are persecuted for Christ's sake, happy are ye, for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you."

5thly. This glory of the Lord upon his saints spreads such a radiance that it casts a lustre abroad, and all around us, insomuch that it often reflects secret reproofs and convictions upon beholders, at which some start and draw back, being “ensnared in holes, and under falsehood hide themselves” to shun the rays. Others by it are stirred up to anger, on account of the disquietude raised in them by conscience, which is roused up: “these hate the light, and rebel against it;” and by words, looks, and actions, discover their implacable enmity; all which indicate the convictions they have received, for it is honest conscience cursing of them that is the cause of their opening their mouths to curse us. And others are so charmed with the sight of this glory, that they are allured into a profession without any possession, being embalmed, but never seasoned with salt; varnished, but never renewed; reformed, but not converted; joyful, but never sad; enlightened, but never quickened; pleased but never plagued. However, in behalf of God’s saints the promise is hereby fulfilled. “But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee,” Isaiah, lx. 2. And again, “All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.” For “the elect, which cry day and night unto their Father secretly, shall be rewarded openly;” because he will shew to his servants tokens for good, that those who hate them may see it and be ashamed.

6thly. The views of such souls increase, widen and extend, as they go on, until not even the ancient settlements of the eternal Three, or the secret council and private thoughts of their Maker, escape their sight; “for the secret of the Lord is with the righteous, who rejoice that their names are written in heaven,” and know that the “thoughts of God towards them are thoughts of good and not of evil, to give them an expected end.” And they know, by what they feel that the “thoughts of his heart stand fast to a thousand generations;” for they find that their thoughts are admitted into the Holy of Holies, having them brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and their hope so attracted as to enter “within the veil” as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast; “their affections, too, are allowed to find admittance and acceptance at the right hand of God,” where Christ sitteth, and “their mind to be stayed upon him, and kept in perfect peace;” for to be heavenly minded is life and peace. And thus it is that their heart is where their treasure is. Their being thus raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, is attended with wonderful enlargement, having their souls transformed, renewed, and so divinely influenced, they look at the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, “until they are changed

into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of our God.” And now to conclude as to my observation on the excellency of our God.

8thly, and lastly. “They shall see the excellency of our God.” His excellency is seen in various things, and in a variety of instances. In creation. “The things of God from the creation of the world may be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.” It may be seen in his government of the world, by putting down and setting up kings. “In his judgments which he executes upon the wicked,” by vindicating the cause of those who have been injured, wronged, or defrauded; and also by the terrible consciences and fearful ends of many, who have waded through a sea of blood after ill-gotten wealth or unjust gain. Those who observe these things will say, “Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” Again, his excellency is seen in his kind providence by sending “seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night; by giving food to all flesh,” and his protecting care ever all his works, even to a sparrow, yea, “to the very hairs of our head, for neither of these shall fall to the ground without the will of our heavenly Father.”

Again, it is further seen by the wisdom that he gives to rulers for the good of a nation, as David and Solomon to Israel; and by the various gifts of mechanical genius, of to Bezaleel for the work of the tabernacle; and also by the discretion which he bestows upon the husbandmen. “Doth the ploughman plough all the day to sow? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fetches: and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion. This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.”

Souls that are enlightened may see the wonderful things of God in the law, and under the former dispensation, and in his wonderful dealings with Israel by their deliverance from Egypt, to their dispersion by the Romans; but in neither of these is seen “the excellency of our God,” for in one work he hath excelled all these. The Patriarchs and Israelites had Christ in the promise in prophecy, in types, and in figures, and they had the shadows of him in sacrifice; but they had not seen him manifest in the flesh as we have: they longed to see and to hear him, but did not as incarnate. “God hath provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” Abraham cannot be the father of many nations, until

the nations receive his faith. All generations cannot be blessed in him, until his blessing comes upon them. Israel, especially the remnant among them, were a typical people, which cannot be made perfect without the anti-typical Israel of God. "God hath provided some better thing for us." Israel had the law and the glory of it; but the glorious gospel "is a glory that excelleth." They had their high priest, and other priests to minister; but "Christ hath obtained a more excellent ministry, which is not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." They received the law by the disposition of angels; "but unto the angels hath he not put in subjection" the gospel, which is what the Jews used to call "the world to come, whereof we speak;" for "the gospel began to be spoken by the Lord, who hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." And indeed the angels get their knowledge of the gospel from us, instead of preaching it to us, as it is written; "to the intent that now, under the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." The Jewish church was much under bondage to fear; but the "creatures, the Gentiles," are delivered from the bondage of corruption, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and to "walk in charity, which is the more excellent way."

In creation infinite wisdom and almighty power are displayed; in the law holiness, justice, and terrible majesty are seen; but in the eternal salvation of poor sinners, by free grace through faith in Christ Jesus, is discovered a more glorious display of every perfection of the Deity. The eternal council, mercy, and goodness of the eternal Three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are most wonderfully exhibited in this ever blessed plan, wherein life and immortality are brought to light, the manifold wisdom of God unfolded, and in which he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. This work excelleth all his works. To see by the eye of faith Christ crucified for us, and to see him risen and glorified; yea, in our own nature crowned with glory and honour, and ascended far above all heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us, is seeing the glory of the Lord with a witness; yea, this is such a sight as no Old Testament saint ever had under the former dispensation, and therefore "blessed are our eyes, for they see" these things, which are what the ancient saints longed to see, but saw them not. "But we see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God;" which excellency is the clear revelation of a trinity of persons in one nature, united in the one Jehovah, which by Christ himself is clearly revealed; and which eternal Three, in ineffable, incomprehensible, and eternal union, is the one Lord God of Israel, the ONE GOD "of Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob.”

This the Saviour, who lay in the bosom of the Father, hath revealed, and this is the great and glorious object of that faith which is peculiar to God's elect, all of whom “are to come to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ,” Colos. ii. 2. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,” Eph. iii. 9. And sure I am that a believing view and feeling sense of the eternal love of God the Father, a clear discovery of one's interest in the finished salvation of God the Son, with light to see, and life to feel, the hope and blessed renewing of God the Holy Ghost, “is seeing the excellency of our God.” This work of God excels all his works; and to the poor perishing broken hearted sinner this is God's most excellent appearance. “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with my reader now and for evermore.” Amen and Amen, says the worst of all sinners, and the greatest of all the monuments of sovereign mercy, the Coal Heaver.

Chapter 18.

The Passover Feast and the Proper Guests

“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day,” John, vi. 54.

AT this speech the Jews take very great offence; yea, and numbers of the Lord's nominal disciples kick at it, depart from him, and walk no more with him; nor doth it seem that the Lord's true disciples were altogether pleased, but rather disgusted; hence the Lord's inquiry, “Will ye also go away?” The words that the Lord spoke “were spirit, and they were life;” but the carnal Jews put carnal constructions upon all that he said, and took it for granted that all who thus fed upon Christ must be cannibals.

Bringing divine mysteries down to carnal reason, which can never reach their divine sublimity, is the sole cause of making Christ Jesus “a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence;” for by carnal reason they cannot comprehend them, therefore they take offence at, and reject them, and so “stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.” The poor woman of Samaria put her constructions upon Christ's “living water” as these do upon his “flesh and blood;” for she could not raise one thought above “Jacob's well,” nor can these raise one thought above eating real flesh, and drinking real blood.

That “depth of Satan,” called “transubstantiation,” took its rise from such scriptures as these, by which foolish notion the Saviour, who is the eternal banquet of poor perishing souls, is turned into a morsel for the bowels, which (with all other meats that perish) is cast out into the draught.

But one might think it strange that the Jews, who had been so long under the ceremonial law, and so long accustomed to offer sacrifices, should see no farther than the victim and the altar, when their law was so full of accounts about sin offerings, peace offerings, burnt offerings, and atonements; and, above all, the passover offerings, by which, and under the blood of which, Israel escaped the judgments of God in Egypt.

Moreover, under the law some of their sacrifices were variously distributed: one part was for God, which pointed out satisfaction for sins; another part went to the priests, another to the offerer, and another to those who were invited; and thus it is now, Christ our priest delighted in the redemption of our souls; “his meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work.” The “royal priesthood,” as Peter calls us, and all who are invited and effectually called to the heavenly feast, find nourishment and satisfaction in Christ for their souls.

Why should mystical food seem such a strange thing, when there is scarce a person living who doth not feed mystically upon something? The covetous are said to “swallow down riches, and to vomit them up again. God shall cast them out of his belly,” Job, xx. 15; as Judas did when he cast the thirty pieces of silver down in the temple, that is, when the wrath of God had made him sick. “The whore of Babylon” is said “to thirst for the blood of the saints, and to be made drunk with it.” The destruction of God’s people is a sweet entertainment to their revengeful souls. “The mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness,” Prov. xv. 15. “The prodigal would fain have filled his belly with husks,” that is, with a form of godliness without the power. The heretic “feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” Isaiah, xliv. 20. Of Ephraim it is said, when he went to idolatry, that he “feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind,” Hosea, xii. 1. Those that hate knowledge, and despise reproof, “eat the fruit of their own ways, and are filled with their own devices,” Prov. i. 31. “And the souls of transgressors eat violence.” Now all these feed in a

mystical way, and all of this is said to be “spending money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not;” which food is only to gratify the carnal mind, or the evil desires of the flesh, for it can never satisfy the desires of a soul conscious of guilt, and sensible of his lost estate. Nothing but heavenly food will do for such a distressed sinner, who is searching the scriptures earnestly, “in which he hopes to find eternal life; and they are they (saith the Saviour), that testify of me.” He finds himself, like the Ethiopian eunuch, too ignorant to come to their spiritual sense, except some one guides him. Now, as there are some, “who perish for lack of knowledge,” it follows that knowledge must be food for those who perish not. “My son, eat thou honey, because it is good, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul when thou hast found it; then there shall be a reward, and thine expectation shall not be cut off;” Prov. xxiv. 13, 14.

“Ezekiel eats the roll,” and “John the little book;” and, when they came “to learn, mark, and inwardly digest,” the things that were contained in them, they found them as “sweet as honey.” A knowledge of Christ crucified is heavenly food; and God hath promised “to send pastors after his own heart, that shall feed his people with knowledge and understanding.”

Again, the self-condemned soul, who knows that he hath broken every precept of God’s law, and stands condemned by it, being under a sense of God’s wrath, he hungers for righteousness, and Christ crucified is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes; and it is in this, and this only, that he can find peace in his conscience, or acceptance with God.

One who labours under the intolerable weight of sin, and hath nothing before his eyes but his own transgressions, with nothing but bitter reflections within, and expecting nothing but torment in the world to come; it is no wonder that such a soul, hearing that “the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin,” and that the dear Redeemer made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, I say it is no wonder that such a poor soul thirsts for the atonement. “My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” And so it is to those who feel their real need of them; for such a soul by the eye of faith sees Christ under all the sins of his people, bearing the weight of them in his own body on the tree, enduring the wrath of God and the curse of the law, which are due to such transgressors; and as their surety paying the dreadful debt, and delivering

them from going down to the pit by laying down his own life, the price of their ransom.

“The words that I speak unto you are spirit, and they are life.” They are not to be carnally or literally understood. I lay down my life a ransom for many, and I shall take it again, and ascend into heaven in that human nature, which I shall offer up a sacrifice for sin, and “the heavens will receive me till the restitution of all things,” and yet (as the omnipresent God) I am with you always to the end of the world; “and, though the world sees me no more, yet ye see me,” and I will manifest myself to them that the Father hath given me, “and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him,” and I will come with all the benefits of my cross, “and will sup with him and he with me;” and such shall know “that my word is spirit, and my word is life,” for I shall bring my reward with me. I will remove the vail of ignorance, and feed him with the knowledge of myself, and his interest in me; his guilty conscience shall be satisfied with a joyful sense of the remission of all sins; his dead soul shall have the abundance of life; his hard heart shall melt under my dying love to him; and he shall abound in hope toward me. I will satisfy his self-condemned soul with my everlasting righteousness; I will renew his mind and make it heavenly, and keep it in perfect peace stayed upon me, and I will fill him with love, and joy, and consolation: he shall see me as his all-sufficient Saviour, and shall trust in me as the faithful and true witness; and shall know his election, redemption, and reconciliation; justification, sanctification, and renovation; and have an assurance of his eternal glorification. I will live in him, and he shall live by the faith of me; for I will come to him, and will dwell in him, and he shall be replenished, filled, and infinitely satisfied with my fullness, and with my goodness; and shall see that all those things are procured to him by my sacrifice, and assured to him by the satisfaction I have made, and by the manifestation of myself to him; then shall he know that “my flesh is meat indeed,” when he sees me to be a sin-offering, and that I was made a curse to save him from eternal death. And he shall know that my blood is drink indeed, when it purges him from all his sins, redeems him from the wrath to come, and opens a way for him to eternal bliss; to such an one my word is spirit in the application of it to him, and by the experience, power, and accomplishment, of it in him; and my word is life where I thus quicken a soul, and save it from legal, spiritual, and eternal death. And I will raise him up at the last day.

The Heaven-Born Soul in his Highest Character

(considered as having put on the new man), deriving the whole of his pedigree from the sinless seed of God

“Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God,” John, iii. 9.

INFANT innocence, or freedom from the in-being of sin, or from every commission of it, cannot be intended in this text; “for, if we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar,” for he hath declared that we have all sinned.

Nor can the lying notion of sinless perfection be supported by it; “for, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” The apostle John is point blank against both these; nor can it mean that a soul born of God never commits sin, for, at the apprehension of Christ, “all the disciples forsook him and fled,” John as well as the rest; and that was contrary to what they had all avowed. And God says, Thou shalt pay thy vows. Peter declared, “Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee; likewise also said all the disciples,” Matt. xxvi. 35. This was sin, and a great sin too; moreover, the apostles were ignorant of the word of God, as well as others. “For as yet they knew not the scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead,” John, xx. 9. And we know that ignorance is sin. A sacrifice was appointed under the law for the sin of ignorance. Nor can we suppose that the apostle John never offended in his converted state; for James, the great pastor of the gospel church at Jerusalem, as personating all the apostles and disciples of Christ, affirms that “in many things we offend all, and that he that offendeth not in tongue is a perfect man,” &c. And, as it is here granted and confessed by one of the greatest of men that all offend, so also saith the wisdom of God that “there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.” I must confess that this text used often to stumble me; nor have I ever met with a preacher, or sermon by a preacher, nor private christian, nor commentator, that ever did, or could, remove this stumbling block out of my way; nor did the conduct of John himself remove it; for, when “he saw the Son of God in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, with his garment down to the foot, his golden girdle, with his hoary head and flaming eyes; his feet as burnished brass, and his voice as many waters; he at once drops at his feet as one dead, and rises no more till a divine arm is laid upon him, and his fears rebuked and removed

by the Lord himself;” Rev. i. 13, 14, 15, 16. All these things, this servile fear, this panic, this dropping dead, and fainting away, were so many indications of the fall of man, of human depravity, of the in-being of sin, and a sense of guilt from that in-being, and of dreadful fear, shame, and apprehensions of the divine anger, on the account of it; all which the Saviour rebuked, and encouraged him against; “Fear not, I am he that liveth, and was dead, and am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.” There was no cause to rebuke his fears, if they were not servile, nor to tell him he had the keys of hell and of death, if he had no sense of his “own comeliness turning into corruption,” as Daniel’s did at the same sight. And, when Christ said to him Fear not, it was to disperse his apprehensions of divine anger, to the which he yielded through fear; and, when he said, I am he that liveth, it was to inform him that he had an advocate, and an everliving intercessor with the Father; and, when he told him he had the keys of hell and of death, it was to deliver him from the fears and apprehensions of both. All which prove that John, though the beloved disciple, was not perfect in the flesh, or without sin; though he might be kept very near to God, very lively in his frames, and have uncommon light, knowledge, wisdom, and prudence; yet all this was from Christ’s fullness. His natural temper and humility might exceed others; and that he was a most affectionate lover and faithful follower of Christ, that Christ (as man) loved him with a most tender affection; and that he lived longer than all the rest of the apostles, and came to a natural end, which the others did not, and had the honour of finishing the canon of scripture; all this may be true of him, yet all gifts are from the God of nature and of grace. And yet, as a son of Adam, he was a sinner; and, as Christ came to save sinners, yea, and the chiefest of sinners, it shews that the Lord’s great condescension to John was to one that was a sinner; as all are both by birth and practice, for all have sinned, all are enemies to God (and this John owns, “not that we loved God”); all have come short of the glory of God: all have revolted from him (the judgment came upon all to condemnation), and all are children of wrath, the one as well as the other; and, instead of the Jews exceeding the heathen nations in righteousness, by their conduct, profaneness went from them into all lands, and the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them, for the Gentiles had no God, but idols. And Israel, who only had the true God, often fell to idolatry, which “was changing their glory into shame, and leaving the fountain of living waters for a cistern that could hold no water.”

If a man that is born of God never offends in thought, word, or deed,

the old man must not only be crucified, dead, and buried, with Christ, but entirely extinct with respect to us. "But with the flesh Paul served the law of sin," Rom. vii. 25. John himself cautions believers against sin, which shews the possibility of a heaven-born soul sinning; "These things write I unto you, that you sin not;" and yet guards the believer against despair, should this be the unhappy case; "And, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins."

Furthermore, he tells the standing believer how to act with a fallen one; "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask of God, and he shall give him life for him that sins not unto death; there is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it."

Nor do I believe that this great and holy apostle, however he might (like Paul) exercise himself day and night to have always a conscience void of offence; yet he did not always escape the bar of equity without some censure, reproof, accusation, or reproach; and this may be gathered from his own pen, for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. "For, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God," 1 John, iii. 20, 21. Hence it appears evident that John was not unacquainted with the censures of his own heart, and of appeals to God in such cases, and acknowledges the happy enjoyment of a good conscience; if our heart condemn us not, &c.

And he is thankful also for an advocate, and he knew the use and value of Christ in that office; "We have an advocate, with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." From all which we may conclude that sinless perfection, or perfection in the flesh, is neither advanced in this text, nor intended by it.

Some have been ready to conclude, from this portion of scripture, that believers, because "they would do good," and if possible, would gladly be free from all sins, yea, from the very in-being of sin, that their slips and falls are no sins, and because the man "is blessed to whom the Lord will not impute sin." But the confessions and groanings of all the saints contradict this notion; besides, they are called sins, though not imputed; that is, they are not imputed to the believer so as to be brought forth against him at the day of judgment, because Christ the surety has borne

them, and made satisfaction, and answered for them; nevertheless they are brought forth in the court of conscience, and procure many frowns, chastisements, desertions, reproofs, loss of comfort, deadness of soul, shame, and confusion of face, and for which they are often “detained before the Lord” in the court of equity, till the blood of sprinkling procures their enlargement and re-introduction to God’s presence.

Others have thought that this seed in my text is faith, because it is said that whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world; and “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” And some have concluded it must be the word of God, because that is called “incorruptible seed.” Some have thought that it is Christ formed in us, as he is called “a seed, the seed of David,” &c. And others call it the implantation of grace, which the Spirit plants in the soul, which is called a bed of spices, and under whose influence these various graces, “or spices, are made to flow out into exercise,” and emit their odours, so as to make the believer a sweet savour of Christ; which, for ought I know, is true.

When this great apostle treats of the saint’s spiritual birth, he says that “he is born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” God of his own will begets him by the word applied, and the Spirit, operating with it, quickens him; and, when begotten from a state of death and insensibility, and quickened to a feeling sense of his danger, wrath seizes him, and awakens all his fears about him, and against him, and the sense of wrath chains his heart down to meditate terror; his mind is chafed, vexed, grieved, agitated, and tormented, for fear hath torment. Wrath and guilt, meeting together, bring on the labour; love, meeting with our misery, and operating against it, produces the birth, and brings forth the soul. “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment; he that feareth is not made perfect in love, and he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.”

We know that God hath used many similitudes in condescension to human weakness. We read of the seed of man, which is man; and of the seed of beasts, which are beasts; and we read of Christ being called a seed, who is God and man in one person; and we read of “Christ’s seed,” which are partly flesh and partly Spirit; “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh,” &c. Now, as all seed has the likeness of those from whom it springs, and the same nature, this seed in my text, whatever it is, must have some resemblance to God; yea, and the nature of him too.

But then what is God John answers, "God is love;" and he that "loveth is born of God, and knoweth God;" and he that is thus begotten of God loves him that begets, and him that is begotten of him. Hence it appears that this seed is the distinguishing and everlasting love of God the Father shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us; for John always ascribes it to God the Father. We read of the love of the Father, and of the love of Christ, and of the love of the Spirit; of the fullness of Christ, and of all grace, which is produced by the Spirit, and distinctly called the fruit of the Spirit; and we read of the grace of Christ, and of him formed in the heart, &c. &c. But this seed is the everlasting love of God the Father, distinct from the love of Christ, and from the love of the Spirit; who promises "to circumcise our hearts to love him, and with loving-kindness to draw us." And, as God of his own will begets us, his seed is in those begotten of him; and Christ says, "The Father himself loveth you;" and it was love in God to send his Son; and this love is distinguished by John himself from the love of Christ and from the love of the Holy Spirit, which he calls the anointing.

It was brought with power and comfort to my soul that this is the seed; and no wonder, for John owns that this seed is of the Father, for "love is of God," 1 John, iv. 7; "and God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 John, iv. 16. This is the seed, this is the divine nature, this is the root of the matter; it is the more excellent way, and it is that charity that never faileth, and is the elder sister of the three, and the soul of all the rest; for "faith, patience, humility, meekness, temperance, and every other virtue, are ascribed to her," 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7. "Charity thinketh no evil," and is therefore "a seed that cannot sin. He that is born of God sinneth not." Paul delighted in the law of God after the inner-man; this is love. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," saith the Saviour; "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John doth not describe fully the old man, he only mentions the saint considered as a new creature that sinneth not, "and the seed that remains in him that cannot sin."

Furthermore, it is an habitual course of sinning that John strikes at, as appears from his own words, "The devil sinneth from the beginning," 1 John, iii. 6. He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous; but whosoever "doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." He that sinneth is of the devil, he that is born of God sinneth not (a course of sinning is what is meant). He then brings forth Cain and Abel as the patterns of these two sorts of persons, which he calls

“children of God, and children of the devil.” “Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother; and wherefore slew he him? because his own works were evil,” and nothing but evil, “and his brother’s works were righteous; and he that doth righteousness is of God.” A servant of sin, of whom Cain is the pattern, cannot perform works of righteousness; he is ignorant of the attribute of righteousness in God, and of the righteousness which the law requires; there is no faith in him, nor righteousness on him, and therefore “such a servant of sin is free from righteousness,” Rom, vi. 20. Nor can such ever serve the living God till their conscience is purged from dead works by the blood of Christ; nevertheless, such a servant of sin may have many external shews of righteousness, and all the forms of godliness, as Cain brings his offering, and as the pharisees appeared outwardly righteous before men, yet they cannot please God. The service of a pharisee is the rankest hypocrisy. Wicked men may perform many acts, speak, pray, sacrifice, and do external works of righteousness, in outward shew, and yet in heart, in soul, and in the sight of God, be nothing but the willing slaves of sin and Satan; and, on the other hand, a real saint may slip, fall, backslide, and be so carried away by the force of temptation and inbred corruption, like Samson, David, Peter, the incestuous person, &c. till they look like the servants of sin, and yet at the same time are in faith, in grace, in will, mind, heart, and affection, real lovers of God; and such as serve him in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter; serve him in the work of faith, in the labour of love, and in the patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ; which are the true and genuine principles of evangelical service, and without which it is impossible to please God. A real saint may put on the old man, as David did when he swore by God that he would cut off from the house of Nabal all that pisseth against the wall; and as Peter did when he denied the Lord, and swore to it. And, on the other hand, the vilest sinner may have the appearance of putting on the new man, as Esau when he wept, Ahab when he humbled himself, “and the way-side hearer” when he rejoiced in the word of truth: but, after all, you may call the former of these a real sheep in a goat’s skin, and the latter a real wolf in sheep’s clothing; the former a fallen saint, and the latter a varnished hypocrite; and hence the wise man’s saying is true. “There is a vanity which is done upon the earth, that there be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous; I said that this also is vanity,” Eccl. viii. 14. Here are two men described, the one is called just, a believer in Christ, and a just man that lives by his faith; the other is a wicked man dead in sin, and dead to God. The vanity of the former is,

that it happeneth to him (to do) according to the works of the wicked; this is vanity; and I may add, it is the vexation of his soul too: and the vanity of the other is, that it happeneth to him (to do) according to the works of the righteous; but, as he is a wicked man, his hypocritical works are called vanity. David, in his conduct with Bathsheba, and in making Uriah drunk, exhibited the former; and Ahithophel, in giving David “sweet counsel, and walking with him to the house of God in company,” did exhibit the latter. But David was a just man in Christ Jesus, notwithstanding his falls; and the other was a wicked man, notwithstanding all his high attainments. Saints are sometimes in appearance what they are not in heart, and so are sinners. The master and father of the saints has appeared ere now in disguise; for, though he was spotless, and perfectly holy, both in his divine and human nature, “yet God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,” Rom. viii. 3. So “the holy seed” have at times appeared disguised, by putting on the old man, which is corrupt. And so the master and father of sinners is “transformed into an angel of light,” which is his disguise; and his ministers and servants have been transformed into the likeness of the ministers of righteousness, which is the quintessence of infernal hypocrisy. But what of all this? “Christ is the Holy One,” and ever was; “and the devil is the wicked one,” and ever will be. Believers are the holy seed, notwithstanding all their imperfections and fleshly infirmities, and ever shall be “the seed which God hath blessed;” and all hypocrites are the children of Satan, who learn of him this their disguise, and ever shall be, notwithstanding all their pretensions and attainments. The prodigal did not lose his adoption through all his awful backsliding; nor did the elder son get the kid by all his long service. It is true, “a wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame; and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren,” Prov. xvii. 2. This is often seen. Absalom was a wise servant, who stole away the hearts of Israel from his father, and for a time ruled over him, who at that time “was a son that had caused shame.” And a wise servant is often seen in a pulpit; and may reprove, rebuke, and sometimes, with the rest of the church, exclude or excommunicate, “a son that causeth shame,” and himself be no more than a bond-servant. And, though it is said that such a wise servant “shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren,” yet it is only a gift, not grace; such a part as Judas had, “who took part of this ministry with us.” The gifts that the Prince of Peace gives to his sons are theirs for ever; but, if he “give a gift to one of his servants (not evangelical servants, but bond-servants), then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince,” Ezekiel, xlvi. 17. This year of liberty seems to be the time when the Lord will come to reckon with his servants, “and to

take away the talent from the slothful one, who had dug in the earth, and hid his lord's money."

Chapter 20.

The Saint's Daily Labour, and Present Pay.

"At his day thou shall gave him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee,"

Deut. xxiv. 15.

IN this, as well as in ten thousand other instances, we may see the tender mercy of God over all his works, and his tender feelings for the poor and needy. How considerate doth he appear towards the poor distressed labourious ones, who get their bread by the sweat of their brow, whose mouths crave all that their hands bring in; and who, being thus poor, set their hearts upon their hire! and their kind God will not suffer them to go home without it, lest they be driven to run in score, and on that account have an advantage taken, or be imposed upon by those who give them credit.

This law is a display of God's anger at the sin of covetousness in the employer, who was not to keep the labourer's hire after he had earned it, nor was he to keep him waiting at his door, or standing about the gate until midnight; a time when every shop was likely to be shut up, and nothing to be bought. "Thou shalt pay him before the sun go down, or it shall be sin unto thee." However, the mercenary and the unrighteous paid but little regard to this law, for many of them, instead of paying their labourers before the sun went down, never paid them at all; and the excuse that some of those masters seem to have made in gospel days was, because some of the labourers were believers in Jesus of Nazareth: but in their trouble these poor defrauded souls cried to God, and obtained an answer too. "Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries, that shall come upon you; your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver is corrupted, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold! the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth," James, v. 1, 2, 3, 4.

My intention and business, in the present work, is to discover the gospel that is couched in this text. Every branch of the ceremonial law represented Christ; and thus the masters that hired these labourers prefigured the great Lord of the household of faith, who was master of all these masters in Israel: and, indeed, the three PERSONS in the GODHEAD are called masters, as it is written, "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd," Eccl. xii. 11. No masters, except these divine persons called watchers and holy ones (Dan. iv. 17), can give a piercing point to these goads, or clench these nails, that is, apply the word of truth to the salvation of souls; "for the excellency and the power is of God, and not of man." God hath given us a particular description of this hired servant. "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers, that are in thy land within thy gates," Deut. xxiv. 14. Wherein we find that the state of those servants is "poor and needy;" and where it is thus, whether the servant be "Jew or Gentile, his heart being set upon his hire, he is to be paid before the sun goes down." Now, as this master represented Christ, and as these poor and needy servants, some of whom were Israelites, and others strangers, set forth God's elect among Jews and Gentiles; and as Christ came to fulfil all righteousness, and to be the truth of all the types, and the substance of all the shadows, we must look for the accomplishment of this branch of the ceremonial law in the New Testament, and there we shall find it.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard," Matt. xx. 1. The Lord hath said "that he would once more shake not only the earth, but heaven;" which shaking signifieth the removing of the Mosaic dispensation, which, upon the coming of Christ, was shaken, waxed old, and vanished away, that the gospel dispensation might take place; which is never to be abolished, or succeeded by another dispensation, so long as the world stands, and which is what Christ here styles the kingdom of heaven. And thus Paul explains it, saying, "And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear," Heb xii. 27. 28. Now the preaching of the gospel, or publishing the glad tidings of the kingdom of heaven, and Christ going forth with his power in the ministry of the gospel, to make it effectual to

the calling and converting Jews and Gentiles, is like a

“Householder which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.” The householder is Christ, who is the king of Zion and master of the household of faith. He appeared at the end of the Jewish dispensation, at a time when it was very dark, both in the Jewish and Gentile world. At his appearing “day broke, and the shadows fled away;” and then it was “that the Day-spring from on high visited the world; for the Sun of righteousness shone forth with healing in his beams upon those that feared God’s name,” who were waiting in faith for the consolation of Israel, or looking for redemption in Jerusalem. These

“Labourers were hired.” There are two sorts of hired servants; the worst of which are those who “feed themselves, but feed not the flock;” such as the scribes and pharisees, who laboured, but it was after the mammon of unrighteousness, and not in seeking the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof; these toiled in devouring widows’ houses, but not to build up the household of faith; they compassed sea and land to make one proselyte to their own devices, and they laboured as hard to take away the key of knowledge; and those who were entering into the kingdom of God they laboured to hinder: these laboured hard in their own traditions, but not in the word and doctrine, for they omitted all the weighty matters of the law, such as judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God, for these they left undone: they worked hard to keep the vineyard for themselves, by killing the Son of God the heir of it, whom they cast out, and then seized his inheritance; yea, they stoned his servants, and sent them away shamefully handled, and others they killed; in which way they laboured hard, and “verily they had their reward.” These false husbandmen, vain scribes, and blind leaders, the Lord call hirelings; who, so far from caring for the flock, that they looked upon them as the offscouring of the earth, and as sheep for the slaughter; yea, they thought they did God service when they killed them.

But there is another and better sort of “hired labourers,” who are hired by the Lord himself, and by him sent into the vineyard; and these are they who seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of it, and the subjects of it, and who seek the honour of their great King, and not their own, and who receive the fruits before they labour; and these, and only these, are willing, after a godly sort, to spend and be spent in his service; which hired labourers “are worthy of their hire,” because they work for the Lord, and

with the Lord; “and the Lord works with them, and confirms his word by them with many signs.” But it may be asked

What is the labour of a true labourer? To which I answer, labourers of this sort are found to labour hard under a sight of sin, and a feeling sense of their own guilt; they labour against their own corruptions, and the temptations of Satan to evil, and under the fears of wrath, and dread of future torment; they labour between hope and fear, mercy, and judgment, goodness and severity, grace and corruption, and this world and heaven; which is attended with labour and soul travail, “being in pain to bring forth; for they labour and are heavy laden,” possessing an anxious, ardent, and godly desire of entering into the promised rest, and fearing dreadfully lest they should come short of it. They see their state and feel it, and they also see the suitableness and all-sufficiency of Jesus, “and labour hard to work out their salvation with fear and trembling;” that is, they struggle against sin, conscience, guilt, fear, wrath, torment, the law of God, and the fiery darts of Satan; and also against despair, infidelity, carnal enmity, rebellion, and the frowns of an angry God. Thus they labour to press through the crowd, “to lay hold of the hope, and to take shelter in the refuge that God hath set before them:” they also strive and labour hard “at the strait gate,” and at the door of the sheep-fold, to get into the experience of the just, into the liberty of God’s children, into union with the living vine, and into union with the living branches of that vine; and therefore their cry is like David’s; “Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people! O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen; that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance!” Psalm cvi. 4, 5.

And when they get into the vineyard, having overcome and obtained the promised blessing, by finding a union with the living vine and living branches, they then find plenty of labour to exercise them; for “if they are not made keepers of the vineyard,” they have work enough “to keep their own,” yea, and that is more than they can do; and (blessed be God for his goodness) it is more than they are left to do by themselves, for God works in them. However, their own corruptions will employ them on the watch-tower, and also with the pruning-hook of mortification, and that continually. And, besides, the “little foxes that spoil the vines” will cause them no small trouble, I mean such as hold damnable heresies; these often make them stink like themselves with their ill-savour; add to all which, there is self to deny, and a daily cross to bear, while others are found to

have their work of hard “labour in the word and doctrine.” In short, there is not one idle servant among them, for Christ hath no drone-bees in his hive, not one slothful one that he sends into his vineyard. He calls them labourers, not loiterers; and labour they must.

“And, when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard,” Matt. xx 2. Whatever this penny may be, the labourers, who, according to my text, “are poor and needy, set their heart upon it,” or lift up their souls unto it. The Roman penny amounts to seven-pence half-penny of our coin; but the spiritual labourers in the Lord’s vineyard, blessed be God, are paid with better specie than that of gold or silver. This penny, in our country, may appear to be but small wages, though it might be sufficient in the land of Canaan. I have been informed, if the report be true, that some of the labourers, who were employed in the building of St. Paul’s Church, had but a penny per day, and others two-pence. And it is also reported that at that time a person could buy half a sheep for ten-pence: if true, a penny would enable the labourer at that period to buy more mutton than twenty pence per day will now, in this day of unparalleled oppression. However, the present day of oppression is most certainly a prelude to the coming and kingdom of Christ, for it is a time “that people are oppressed every one by another, and every one by his neighbour;” Isaiah, iii. 5; which is sent to raise the cries of the poor and needy; and, in answer to the cries of the poor, “Christ’s first work will be to break in pieces the oppressor,” Psalm lxxii. 4.

We know that all temporal supplies are promised to those who seek the kingdom of God, yet I think that the temporal penny is not the proper wages of righteous labourers. If we follow the Saviour in his conduct, and observe the promised hire which he agreed to give to the first labourers he bargained with, we shall get at the meaning of this penny by the terms agreed upon between him and the labourers. “Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life,” Matt. xix. 27, 28, 29. This is the Lord’s promised reward to the first labourers that hired, and his answer to Peter seems to be the agreement

between the householder and the labourers; and this price the Lord calls a “penny per day.” Peter, as foreman and mouth for the others, asked what the dear Redeemer gave to his labourers, or what wages they should have for their labour; and the above sum is that which the householder promised to give; and that sum, according to my text, is what “the poor labourer’s heart is set upon, and which must be paid him before the sun goes down.”

But then the question of my reader may be, What is meant by “following of him in the regeneration?” I answer, It is to follow him in faith, and not in legal works; to follow him out of the law, into the gospel; out of bondage, into liberty; out of legal, into evangelical obedience; out of death, into life; out of wrath, into mercy; and out of fear, into love.

“These disciples were to sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel:” but these twelve thrones do not respect the general doom, for Christ is the only judge of quick and dead, as it is written, “For God is judge himself.” And, though it is true we shall judge angels, and the world, yet only by the testimony that we have borne, and as witnesses against them. These twelve thrones respect them as apostles in their ministerial capacity, and not as judges in the day of judgment. These thrones also point out their great authority, being kings and priests, and having the keys of the kingdom of heaven so as to admit all who believed their testimony into the household of David, and to keep out all those who did not; to discover what was lawful and what unlawful; to bind the one to the obedience of the gospel, and to loose the other by their testimony from the yoke of Jewish traditions and legal ceremonies; to pronounce the sentence of justification on all who believed in Jesus, and the sentence of damnation on all who believed not, according to their great commission and the word of Christ; “If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.”

Hence we may see that the twelve thrones shew their authority as kings and priests, and as apostles in their high office of the ministry, speaking by Christ’s Spirit, and personating him in their work, who is the judge of all men.

Christ, who in his “human nature is a glorious throne to his Father’s house, and a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” Isaiah, xxii. 21, 22, 23, was formed in all their hearts, and the empire of grace was set up and

reigned in them, and the sentence of life and death was committed unto them as the greatest part of their ministry; "Go preach the gospel to every creature; he that be and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned." Thus "life and death were in the power of their tongue," and "they were a sweet savour unto God in those that perished, and in those that were saved." And this, with their commission to go and preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, is what I understand by "their sitting upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," which is expressive of no pre-eminence above other common believers; for "he that overcometh (saith Christ) shall sit down with me upon my throne, even as I overcame and am sat down with my Father on his throne;" which is better than judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the Lord adds,

"He that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for my name's sake, shall receive in this life an hundred fold." One single principle of vital godliness in the heart comes up to all this, which is the love of Christ. "He that forsakes houses," is one who loves "the house that is from above" in preference to any other, that house "which is eternal in the heavens." Again, he that forsakes carnal brethren, is one who loves a brother in the faith far better. Further, he that forsakes sisters, is one who loves the heavenly family in sincerity. He also who leaves a father for Christ's sake, is one who loves God above an earthly parent; moreover, he who forsakes a mother, is one who loves the church more than she that bore him, if she is in a carnal state. He that forsakes a wife, is one who loves the wife of the Lamb and the gospel-supper better than that fool did who said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Again, he that in faith forsakes his children, when called to suffer for Christ's name, hath more regard for the honour of Christ Jesus the Lord, and for the establishment of the children of God, than he hath for his own family; and proves himself a true son of Abraham, who loved God before his own son, when called to be offered up as a sacrifice upon the service of the saints' faith; and he who forsakes lands for Christ's sake, is one that regards not the country from whence he came out, but seeks an heavenly one, confessing himself a stranger and pilgrim in this. And now it may be asked what can this penny be which is promised to the labourers? I answer,

It is the "love of Christ;" for who are those that follow him in the regeneration, but those heaven-born souls that love him? For he that loveth is born of God. And who are those that forsake all earthly friends,

with all the advantageous prospects, pleasures and amusements of this world? No one but those who sincerely love heavenly treasure, heavenly acquaintances, and heavenly pleasures. And who are those that shall inherit eternal life? "Not such as love the world, or the things of the world; for the love of God is not in them," as it is written, "A friend of the world is the enemy of God," James, iv. 4. Nor those that have gifts either; for a man may have all knowledge, and understand all mysteries, and yet be destitute of love, and be nothing but an instrument without life.

The labourer in my text is represented as being "poor and needy; he is poor," because he is by nature destitute of all true riches, and truly sensible of it, for he is conscious that he is not rich in faith, or rich towards God; that he is not an heir of the grace of life in the enjoyment of it, nor yet an heir of promise in the application of it; he cannot call God the portion of his soul, nor find his heart and affections in heaven, and therefore he cannot believe that his treasure is them.

And "he is needy," because he feels his need of all those things which I have described, and therefore "he sets his heart upon his hire." And what doth such a poor soul want above all things? Why, "he covets earnestly the best gift;" and what is that but "charity?" He doth all that he can to obtain a sense of Christ's love, and "would gladly give all the substance of his house for it." But it is not to be bought; Christ loves us freely. And what encourages and constrains the labourer to work? Why, it is "his hire," upon which "his heart is set." And what was it that constrained "Paul to labour more abundantly than they all," than all the rest of the apostles? He tells you himself "the love of Christ constraineth me." Every poor perishing sinner first labours hard to obtain a sense of Christ's love; and, when he hath received it, he then labours as hard to keep it, nor can all the current coin of heaven satisfy him if this penny be wanting.

These labourers are described and held forth as "standing idle in the market-place." They were idle, because, by their having no knowledge of Christ, they could not work for him; and, by their being discontented and distressed, like "David's regiment," they could not work cheerfully for Satan, and so could not "serve either God or mammon," and therefore they stand idle.

"And he said, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you; and they went their way," Matt. xx. 4. The word that sends

them makes them obedient at once, for “where the word of a king is there is power;” which we may clearly discover in the conduct of “the younger son, who at first declared that he would not go into the vineyard, but afterwards he repented and went;” which repentance unto life, and a godly sorrow, or sorrow after a godly sort, is produced by a discovery of the “dying love of Christ,” for it is that which “makes us look at him whom we have pierced, and mourn for him;” a sense of which produces repentance and obedience too. “Whatsoever is right that shall ye receive.” Christ so loved us as to lay down his life for us; and he calls all those who labour and are heavy laden to come unto him, and promises that they shall find rest to their souls, for his yoke is easy and his burden light. But who are they that shall come to him? “Jesus saith, if I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me;” but there is no drawing us to him but by love, and they must and shall find rest to their souls; but they cannot rest contented, though they may possess many gifts, without a sense of his love. And what is his easy yoke? “Why, faith that worketh by love.” And what will make the burden of a daily cross light? Not slavish fear, “but love that casts out fear.” And who is this promised to? Why, “to those who labour and are heavy laden.” And is this promised to such poor miserable labourers? Yes it is, and that by one who cannot lie. Then it is no more than right that they should have it, and so they shall, for so it is written, “Whatsoever is right that shall ye receive.”

Some of these labourers were hired early, others at the third hour, others at the sixth, and others at the eleventh hour; so that some were hired at five o'clock in the morning, others at nine, others at twelve, and others at five o'clock in the afternoon; which different times, I conceive, imply the various stages of life at which different persons are called by grace. Many persons, like Samuel, Jeroboam's son, and Timothy, are called early; and “such remember their Creator in their youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them,” Ecc. xii. 1. And others, like “the thief upon the cross,” are called at the eleventh hour; the first of which had a sense of Christ's love, and the last had the same; for “Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Which answer to the poor thief's prayer was such an one as was never received by any soul in such circumstances, either before Christ's day or since. It was as full and replete with free and sovereign clemency, both in the application and effects of it, as eternal love could make it.

It is common for money, which passes current in a nation, to bear the image of the sovereign ruler of the people; hence we read of “Caesar's

image and superscription” on the Roman penny which was brought to Christ. And surely there is nothing that makes a saint appear with so much of the image of Jesus as a sense of pardoning love; and, on the other hand, I believe that carnal enmity against God is the most striking and principal feature in the image of the “earthly Adam,” of Satan also, and of all his children. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.”

Now these labourers, being poor and needy, and having set their heart upon their hire, they are, saith my text, to be before the sun goes down; for “the sun shall not go down upon it:” conformable to which our great Householder acts; for, “when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first,” Matt. xx. 8.

This steward is a gospel minister, or the whole cloud of witnesses in one body, in union and in harmony together, both in faith and doctrine; who are called “stewards of the mysteries, and of the manifold grace of God.” But then it may be objected that it is not in their power to “give the love of Christ,” which I readily grant; yet they are said to “invite the people and to bid the guests,” and, having “freely received, freely they are to give;” and they are said to “bring forth the best robe, the shoes, and the ring, to put on the prodigal son;” that is, they are to preach Christ crucified, imputed righteousness, faith, and the love of Christ, to him; and, if they bring forth the ring, why not the hire? and, if they give to the household a “portion of meat in due season,” as to hungry souls, why not the “penny to the labourious” ones? I know that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of man; yet Christ will put an honour upon the ministry of his own word, and upon those ministers in whom he dwells, and out of whom he shines, and by whom he speaks; and I believe that most of God’s people will agree with me in this, that they have received the love of Christ into their souls through the instrumentality of the gospel ministry; for, where one receives it without that means, there are an hundred that receive it by that means, or by the instrumentality of private christians.

“The sun shall not go down upon the hire of these labourers.” By the sun going down two things are meant; the one is the awful departure of the glorious light of the gospel from a nation, or a people, who have been favoured with it. “When the sun goes down over the prophets, and the day is dark over them,” Micah, iii. 9. When there are no visions, and

people perish for lack of knowledge; for “where there is no vision the people perish,” Prov. xxix. 18. And this was the case with the Jews when their “sun was turned into darkness, and their moon into blood,” at the awful departure of the Messiah, and his gospel from them. And the other meaning is, when people come into a state of death; for that is “the night which cometh wherein no man can work;” and, when they are thus gone, “they have no more part for ever in any thing that is done under the sun;” for, though the sun is not gone from them, yet they are gone from it, like Israel into their state of captivity, compared to a valley of dead men and dry bones. “She that hath borne seven languisheth, she hath given up the ghost, her sun is gone down,” Jer. xv. 9.

This hire must be paid before the sun goes down. “The sun must not go down upon this hire, upon which the poor and needy set their hearts.” And this the lord of the household owns to be right, for he saith at their going into the vineyard, “Whatsoever is right that shall ye receive.” And what is to make a thing right or wrong, but some law? And the law says, “The sun shall not go down upon the hire of a servant that is poor and needy, because his heart is set upon it.” He must be paid; and therefore the householder calls his servants, and orders his steward to pay them, and that at six o'clock too; for he that was “hired at the eleventh hour,” or at five o'clock, had “wrought but one hour, and yet he was paid first.”

But why must they be paid before the sun goes down? Because God will have it so; and Christ came to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work; yea, he delighted in it. “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart:” and it became him to fulfil all righteousness.

Now the reasons assigned for this is not only the appointment of God the Father, but it is what God the Son undertook. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he hath sent me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, and to preach deliverance to captives.” But I know not of any good tidings to the meek but dying and redeeming love; nor do I know of any bandage that will swaddle a heart broken with the terrors of God but the love of Christ. And what can deliver a captive but that love which casteth out fear?

Again, himself declares that “except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;” but how can he be born again who never tastes of

divine love, seeing that it is he “and only he that loveth that is born of God, and knoweth God, for he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.”

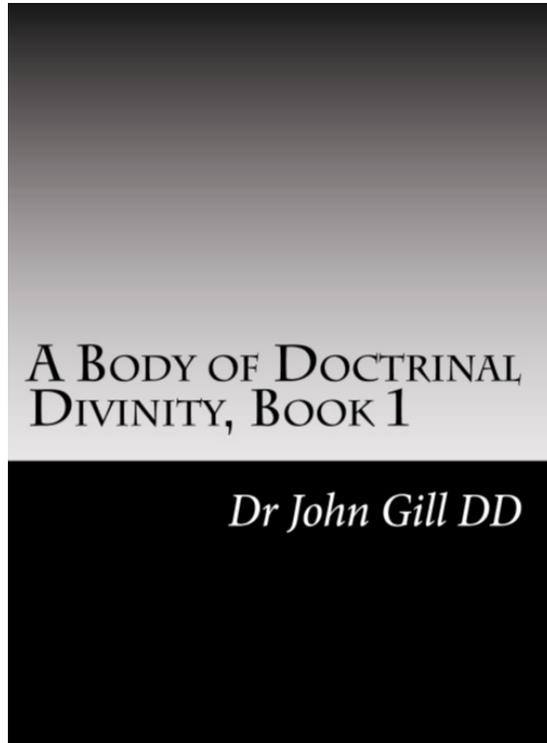
Once more, “Christ came to deliver those who, through the fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.” If he came on purpose to deliver such souls as these, no doubt but he will do it; but then what can deliver them from this bondage to the fear of death? I answer, “nothing but love can cast out torment.” By which it appears that the absolute will of the undertaking of Christ to perform his will, the necessity of spiritual birth in order to an admittance into the kingdom of God, which is impossible without it, and the mission and commission of Christ to preach deliverance to captives, and to deliver those who through the fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage; these things, I say, make it indispensably necessary to pay the penny to the labourers before the sun goes down, for “it is their hire, and they are poor and needy, and set their heart upon it;” nor can their souls ever be satisfied without it, for it is love and nothing else, that satisfies; and therefore “the Saviour bids them ask for it, that their joy might be full;” for what can fill the heart with joy but love? I answer, Nothing; for no man can be filled with joy but he that loves the thing enjoyed; there is no joy in any thing that a man hates, but rather grief.

This hire is a penny per day, which is expressive of the constant, immutable, and everlasting love of Christ to his people, which is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And without this penny to be enjoyed in the labour, there is no satisfaction. Let the saint have what displays of providence he may, let him have never so many distant views of the covenant, and let the preacher have never such great light and liberty in his subject, yet, if there is no sense of love, no penny per day, he is not satisfied, he will conclude that he is to be put off with portion in this life; or else he will take it for granted he has gift without grace, “and that he is to preach the gospel to others, and himself to be a cast-away at the last.” Nothing but doubts and fears, jealousies and suspicions, will work within; and, the more he sees others blessed under him, the more the vehement flame of jealousy will burn, for jealousy is cruel as the grave, and love is the root of it; for where there is no love there is no jealousy, except it be like that of Saul’s, who was jealous of human applause, and who wished Samuel to honour him before the people, in order to obtain it and keep it; but Saul was no saint.

But when these labourers were paid “they murmured against the good man of the house, because the last were paid first, and because all received a penny alike.” This is often seen by souls as are called at the eleventh hour, and die in their first love; and thus those who are called late are more indulged than those who have borne the heat and burden of the day. This penny, or this love, is not to be bought either with labour or all the substance of a man’s house; both these are utterly contemned when offered to be given for love, either for the displays of it or the enjoyment of it.

For this murmuring only a gentle reproof is given, for no householder can be offended at the envy and aim of his servants when they strive to be uppermost in his affections; nor is it likely that Christ, our dear Redeemer, who loved his spouse better than his own life, should be offended at her cordial affection for him, or jealousy over his love to her. The murmuring of these servants seems to spring from a legal spirit, conceiving that, as they had toiled under the heat and burden of the day, they merited more than others who had worked but one hour; against which spirit runs the whole current of the gospel; yea, even against the very name of it.

Furthermore, the servants by this spirit take upon them rather to command than obey, which ill becomes either a servant or a wife, who are ordered to be in subjection, the one to his master, and the other to her own husband; besides, this murmuring alters not the matter; the last are first, and the first last; he that humbles himself as a little child is the greatest in the empire of grace; he that takes the lowest room shall go up higher; he that thinks himself the last shall be first; and he that is the least in his own eyes shall be one of the heads of the tribes of Israel. God will dwell with the broken and contrite heart, and look at those for good, even with a loving heart and helping hand, who tremble at his word. I well know that all the scuffle and contention that arises among God’s real saints, now is, and ever hath been, which shall be the greatest, or which shall stand highest in the Lord’s favour. But God our Saviour is without partiality; he loves all his children alike; nor shall there be any difference between them in ultimate glory, though there are and may be many disputes about it in this world, in order to provoke the jealousy, and to stir up the diligence, of all to be ambitious in excelling.

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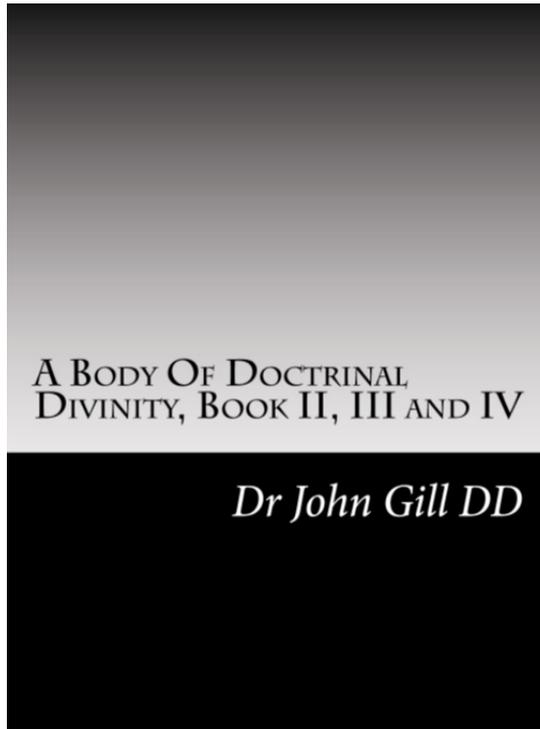
Chapters

1 Of The Being Of God

2 Of The Holy Scriptures

3 Of The Names Of God

- 4 Of The Nature Of God
- 5 Of The Attributes Of God In General, And Of His Immutability In Particular.
- 6 Of The Infinity Of God,
- 7 Of The Life Of God.
- 8 Of The Omnipotence Of God.
- 9 Of The Omniscience Of God.
- 10 Of The Wisdom Of God.
- 11 Of The Will Of God And The Sovereignty Of It
- 12 Of The Love Of God
- 13 Of The Grace Of God.
- 14 Of The Mercy Of God.
- 15 Of The Long suffering Of God.
- 16 Of The Goodness Of God.
- 17 Of The Anger And Wrath Of God.
- 18 Of The Hatred Of God.
- 19 Of The Joy Of God.
- 20 Of The Holiness Of God.
- 21 Of The Justice Or Righteousness Of God.
- 22 Of The Veracity Of God.
- 23 Of The Faithfulness Of God
- 24 Of The Sufficiency And Perfection Of God.
- 25 Of The Blessedness Of God.
- 26 Of The Unity Of God.
- 27 Of A Plurality In The Godhead, Or, A Trinity Of Persons In The Unity Of The
Divine Essence.
- 28 Of The Personal Relations; Or, Relative Properties, Which Distinguish The Three Divine Persons In The Deity.
- 29 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Father.
- 30 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Son.
- 31 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Holy Spirit.



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The contents of Book II treats the subject of Of The Acts and Works of God

Chapter I Of The Internal Acts And Works Of God; And Of His Decrees In General

Chapter II Of The Special Decrees Of God, Relating To Rational Creatures, Angels, And Men; And Particularly Of Election.

Chapter III Of The Decree Of Rejection, Of Some Angels, And Of Some Men.

Chapter IV Of The Eternal Union Of The Elect Of God Unto Him.

Chapter V Of Other Eternal And Immanent Acts In God, Particularly Adoption And Justification.

Chapter VI Of The Everlasting Council Between The Three Divine Persons, Concerning The Salvation Of Men.

Chapter VII Of The Everlasting Covenant Of Grace, Between The Father, And The Son, And The Holy Spirit.

Chapter VIII

Of The Part Which The Father Takes In The Covenant.

Chapter IX Of The Part The Son Of God, The Second Person, Has Taken In The Covenant.

Chapter X Of Christ, As The Covenant Head Of The Elect

Chapter XI Of Christ, The Mediator Of The Covenant

Chapter XII Of Christ, The Surety Of The Covenant.

Of Christ, The Testator Of The Covenant

Chapter XIV Of The Concern The Spirit Of God Has In The Covenant
Of Grace.

Chapter XV Of The Properties Of The Covenant Of Grace

Chapter XVI Of The Complacency And Delight God Had In Himself,
And The Divine Persons In Each Other, Before Any Creature Was Brought
Into Being.

Book III treats the subjects Of The External Works Of God.

Chapter 1 Of Creation In General

Chapter 2 Of The Creation Of Angels

Chapter 3 Of The Creation Of Man

Chapter 4 Of The Providence Of God

Chapter 5 Of The Confirmation Of The Elect Angels, And The Fall Of
The Non-Elect.

Chapter 6 Of The Honour And Happiness Of Man In A State Of
Innocency.

Chapter 7 Of The Law Given To Adam, And The Covenant Made With
Him In His State Of Innocence; In Which He Was The Federal Head And
Representative Of His Posterity.

Chapter 8 Of The Sin And Fall Of Our First Parents.

Chapter 9 Of The Nature, Aggravations, And Sad Effects Of The Sin Of
Man.

Chapter 10 Of The Imputation Of Adam's Sin To All His Posterity

Chapter 11 Of The Of The Corruption Of Human Nature.

Chapter 12 Of Actual Sins And Transgressions.

Chapter 13 Of The Punishment Of Sin

Contents Book IV.

Of The Acts Of The Grace Of God Towards And Upon His Elect In Time

Chapter 1 Of The Manifestation And Administration Of The Covenant
Of Grace

Chapter 2 Of The Exhibitions Of The Covenant Of Grace In The
Patriarchal State

Chapter 3 Of The Exhibitions Of The Covenant Of Grace Under The
Mosaic Dispensation

Chapter 4 Of The Covenant Of Grace, As Exhibited In The Times Of
David, And The Succeeding Prophets, To The Coming Of Christ

Chapter 5 Of The Abrogation Of The Old Covenant, Or First Administration Of It, And The Introduction Of The New, Or Second Administration Of It.

Chapter 6 Of The Law Of God

Chapter 7 Of The Gospel

Table of Contents Book V

Chapter 1 Of The Incarnation Of Christ

Chapter 2 Of Christ's State Of Humiliation

Chapter 3 Of The Active Obedience Of Christ In His State Of Humiliation

Chapter 4 Of The Passive Obedience Of Christ,
Or Of His Sufferings And Death

Chapter 5 Of The Burial Of Christ

Chapter 6 Of The Resurrection Of Christ
From The Dead.

Chapter 7 Of The Ascension Of Christ To Heaven

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Chapter 9 Of The Prophetic Office Of Christ

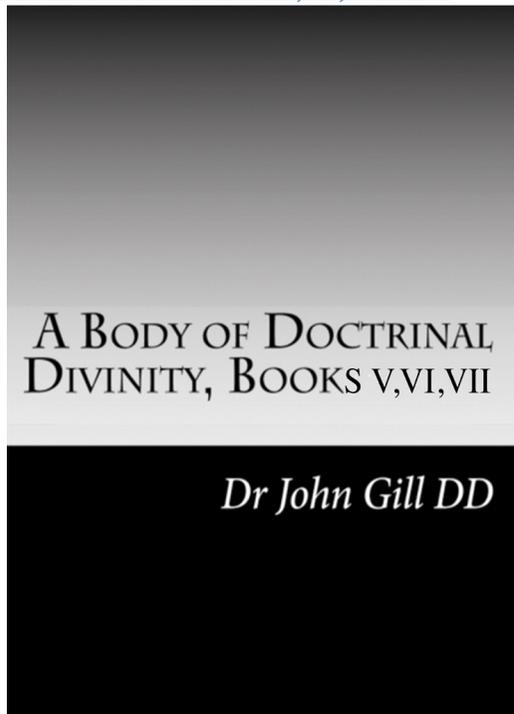
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Chapter 11 Of The Intercession Of Christ

Chapter 12 Of Christ's Blessing His People
As A Priest

Chapter 13 Of The Kingly Office Of Christ

Chapter 14 Of The Spiritual Reign Of Christ

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Of The Grace Of Christ In His State Of Humiliation And Exaltation,
And In The Offices Exercised By Him In Them.

Chapter 1 Of The Incarnation Of Christ

Chapter 2 Of Christ's State Of Humiliation

Chapter 3 Of The Active Obedience Of Christ In His State Of
Humiliation.

Chapter 4 Of The Passive Obedience Of Christ, Or Of His Sufferings
And Death.

Chapter 5 Of The Burial Of Christ.

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Chapter 10 Of The Priestly Office Of Christ.

Chapter 11 Of The Intercession Of Christ

Chapter 12 Of Christ's Blessing His People As A Priest

Chapter 13 Of The Kingly Office Of Christ

Chapter 14 Of The Spiritual Reign Of Christ

Book VI

Chapter 1 Of Redemption By Christ

Chapter 2 Of The Causes Of Redemption By Christ

Chapter 3 Of The Objects Of Redemption By Christ

Chapter 4 Of Those Texts Of Scripture Which Seem To Favour Universal Redemption

Chapter 5 Of The Satisfaction Of Christ

Chapter 6 Of Propitiation, Atonement, And Reconciliation, As Ascribed To Christ

Chapter 7 Of The Pardon Of Sin

Chapter 8 Of Justification

Chapter 9 Of Adoption

Chapter 10 Of The Liberty Of The Sons Of God

Chapter 11 Of Regeneration

Chapter 12 Of Effectual Calling

Chapter 13 Of Conversion

Chapter 14 Of Sanctification

Chapter 15 Of The Perseverance Of The Saints

Chapter 9 Of Adoption Of The Liberty Of The Sons Of God

Chapter 11 Of Regeneration

Chapter 12 Of Effectual Calling

Chapter 14 Of Sanctification

Chapter 15 of the perseverance of the saints

Book VII**Contents**

Chapter 1 Of The Death Of The Body

Chapter 2 Of The Immortality Of The Soul

Chapter 3 Of The Separate State Of The Soul Until The Resurrection, And Its Employment In That State

Chapter 4 Of The Resurrection Of The Body

Chapter 5 Of The Second Coming Of Christ, And His Personal Appearance

Chapter of Of The Conflagration Of The Universe

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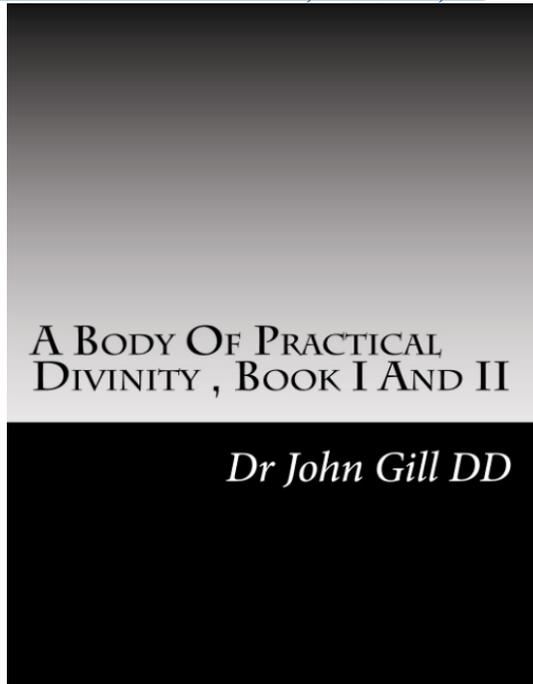
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Contents

Book I

Chapter I Of The Object Of Worship

Chapter 2 Of Internal Worship; And Of Godliness The Groundwork Of

It.

Chapter 3 Of The Knowledge Of God

Chapter 4 Of Repentance Towards God

Chapter 5 Of The Fear Of God

Chapter 6 Of Faith In God And In Christ

Chapter 7 Of Trust And Confidence In God

Chapter 8 Of The Grace Of Hope

Chapter 9 Of The Grace Of Love

Chapter 10 Of Spiritual Joy

Chapter 11 Of Peace And Tranquility Of Mind

Chapter 12 Of Contentment Of Mind

Chapter 13 Of Thankfulness To God

Chapter 14 Of Humility

Chapter 15 Of Self-Denial

Chapter 16 Of Resignation To The Will Of God

Chapter 17 Of Patience

Chapter 18 Of Christian Fortitude

Chapter 19 Of Zeal

Chapter 20 Of Wisdom Or Prudence

Chapter 21 Of Godly Sincerity

Chapter 22 Of Spiritual Mindedness

Chapter 23 Of A Good Conscience

Chapter 24 Of Communion With God

Book II Of External Worship, As Public

Chapter 1 Of The Nature Of A Gospel Church, The Seat Of Public
Worship

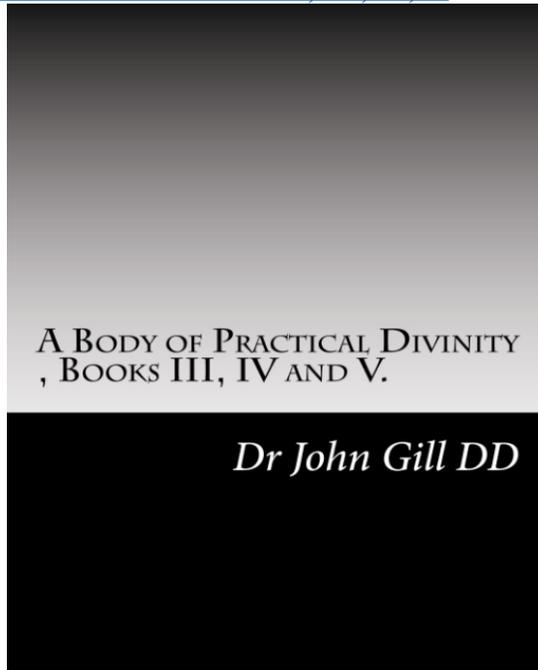
Chapter 2 Of The Duties Of The Member Of A Church To Each Other

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Chapter 4 Of The Duties Of Members Of Churches To Their Pastors

Chapter 5 Of The Office Of Deacons

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Book III

Of The Public Ordinances Of Divine Worship

Chapter 1 Of Baptism

Chapter 2 Of The Lord's Supper

Chapter 3 Of The Public Ministry Of The Word

Chapter 4 Of Public Hearing The Work

Chapter 5 Of Public Prayer

Chapter 6 Of The Lord's Prayer

Chapter 7 Of Singing Psalms, As A Part Of Public Worship

Chapter 8 Of The Circumstances Of Public Worship, As To Place And Time Of Private Worship, Or Various Duties, Domestic, Civil, And Moral

Book IV

Chapter 1 Of The Respective Duties Of Husband And Wife

Chapter 2 Of The Respective Duties Of Parents And Children

Chapter 3 Of The Respective Duties Of Masters And Servants.

Chapter 4 Of The Respective Duties Of Magistrates And Subjects

Chapter 5 Of Good Works In General

Chapter 6 A Compendium Or Summary Of The Decalogue Or Ten
Commands

Book V

A Dissertation Concerning The Baptism Of Jewish Proselytes.

Chapter 1

A Dissertation Concerning The Baptism Of Jewish Proselytes Of The
Various Sorts Of Proselytes Among The Jews

Chapter 2

The Occasion Of This Dissertation

Chapter 3

The Proof Of The Baptism Of Jewish Proselytes Inquired Into;
Whether There Is Any Proof Of It Before, At, Or Quickly After The
Times Of John And Christ.

Chapter 4

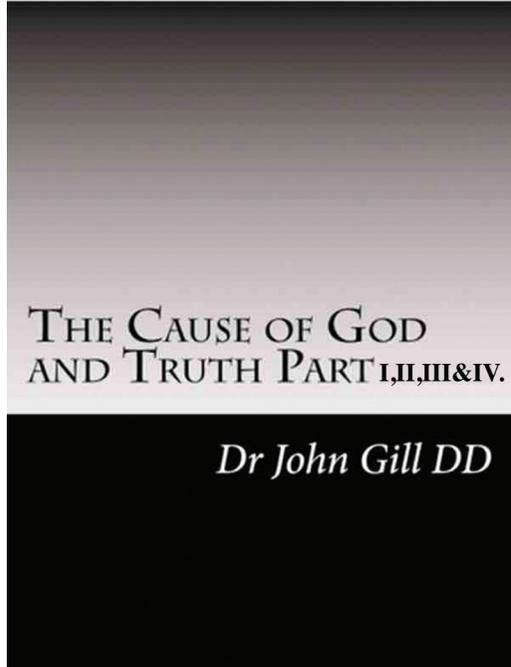
The Proof Of This Custom Only From The Talmuds And Talmudical

Writers

Chapter 5

The Reasons Why Christian Baptism Is Not Founded On And Taken
From, The Pretended Jewish Baptism Of Israelites And Proselytes

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Contents

Sections 1-60 Scriptural Passages

Genesis 4:7

Genesis 6:3.

Deuteronomy 5:29.

Deuteronomy 8:2.

Deuteronomy 30:19.

Deuteronomy 32:29.

Psalms 81:13, 14.

Psalms 125:3.

Psalms 145:9.

Proverbs 1:22-30.

Isaiah 1:16, 17.

Isaiah 1:18, 19.

Isaiah 5:4.

Isaiah 30:15.

Isaiah 55:1.

Isaiah 55:6.

Isaiah 55:7.
Jeremiah 4:4.
Ezekiel 18:24.
Ezekiel 18:30.
Ezekiel 18:31&32.
Ezekiel 24:13.
Matthew 5:13.
Matthew 11:21, 23.
Matthew 23:37.
Matthew 25:14-30.
Luke 19:41, 42.
John 1:7.
John 5:34.
John 5:40.
John 12:32.
Acts 3:19.
Acts 7:51.
Romans 5:18.
Romans 11:32.
Romans 14:15.
1 Corinthians 8:11.
1 Corinthians 10:12.
2 Corinthians 5:14,15.
2 Corinthians 5:19.
2 Corinthians 6:1.
2 Corinthians 11:2, 3.
Philippians 2:12.
1 Timothy 1:19, 20.
1 Timothy 2:4.
1 Timothy 4:19.
Titus 2:11, 12.
The Epistle to the Hebrews.
Hebrews 2:9.
Hebrews 6:4-6.
Hebrews 10:26-29.
Hebrews 10:38.
2 Peter 1:10.
2 Peter 2:1.
2 Peter 2:20-22.
2 Peter 3:9.

1 John 2:2.

Jude 1:21.

Revelation 2 and Revelation 3.

Revelation 3:20.

Part II

This is volume 2 of this 4 part series and it should be known that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work. In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture. The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

Contents

Chapter 1

OF REPROBATION

Proverbs 16:4.

John 12:39, 40.

1 Peter 2:8.

Jude 1:4.

Revelation 13:8.

Chapter 2

OF ELECTION

1 Peter 2:9.

Romans 9:10-13.

Colossians 3:12.

Ephesians 1:4.

Romans 8:28, 29.

John 6:37.

Acts 8:48.

Romans 8:29, 30.

2 Timothy 2:19.

Romans 5:19.

Chapter 3

OF REDEMPTION

Matthew 20:28.

John 10:15.

John 17:9.

Romans 8:34.

Romans 8:32.

Romans 5:10.

John 15:13.

Chapter 4

OF EFFICACIOUS GRACE

Ephesians 1:19, 20.

1 Corinthians 5:17.

John 3:5.

Ephesians 2:1.

1 Corinthians 2:14.

2 Corinthians 3:5.

John 15:5.

John 6:44.

Acts 11:18.

Acts 16:14.

Jeremiah 31:18.

Jeremiah 31:33.

Ezekiel 11:36:26.

Philippians 2:13.

1 Corinthians 4:7.

Ephesians 2:8, 9.

Chapter 5

OF THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE

John 14:4

Psalm 51:5.

Genesis 6:5.

John 3:6.

Romans 7:18, 19.

Romans 8:7, 8.

Chapter 6

OF PERSEVERANCE

John 13:1.

John 17:12.

Romans 11:29.

Matthew 24:24.

John 6:39, 40.

Romans 11:2.

Romans 8:38, 39.

Ephesians 1:13, 14.

1 Peter 1:5.

1 John 2:19.

1 John 3:9.

Isaiah 54:10.

Isaiah 59:21.

Hosea 2:19, 20.

Jeremiah 32:40.

John 14:16.

John 10:28.

1 Corinthians 1:8, 9.

Part III

This book contains John Gill's answers to Dr Whitby objections to The Doctrines of Grace under the following heads.

Chapter 1

OF REPROBATION

Proverbs 16:4.

John 12:39, 40.

1 Peter 2:8. 10

Jude 1:4. 1

Revelation 13:8. 1

Chapter 2

OF ELECTION

1 Peter 2:9. 16

Romans 9:10-13.

Colossians 3:12.

Ephesians 1:4.

Romans 8:28, 29.

John 6:37.

Acts 8:48.

Romans 8:29, 30.

2 Timothy 2:19.

Romans 5:19.

Chapter 3

OF REDEMPTION

Matthew 20:28.

John 10:15.

John 17:9.

Romans 8:34.

Romans 8:32.

Romans 5:10.

John 15:13.

Chapter 4

OF EFFICACIOUS GRACE

Ephesians 1:19, 20.

1 Corinthians 5:17.

John 3:5.

Ephesians 2:1.

1 Corinthians 2:14.

2 Corinthians 3:5.

John 15:5.

John 6:44.

Acts 11:18.

Acts 16:14.

Jeremiah 31:18.

Jeremiah 31:33.

Ezekiel 11:36:26.

Philippians 2:13.

1 Corinthians 4:7.

Ephesians 2:8, 9.

Chapter 5

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John 14:4

Psalms 51:5.

Genesis 6:5.

John 3:6.

Romans 7:18, 19.

Romans 8:7, 8.

Chapter 6

OF PERSEVERANCE

John 13:1.

John 17:12.

Romans 11:29.

Matthew 24:24.

John 6:39, 40.

Romans 11:2.

Romans 8:38, 39.

Ephesians 1:13, 14.

1 Peter 1:5.

1 John 2:19.

1 John 3:9. 87

Isaiah 54:10.

Isaiah 59:21.

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The Third Part was published in 1737, and is a confutation of the arguments from reason used by the Arminians, and particularly by Dr. Whitby, against the above doctrines ; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favour of them, in which it appears that they are no more disagreeable to right reason than to divine revelation ; to the latter of which the greatest deference should be paid, though the Rationalists of our age too much neglect it, and have almost quitted it ; but to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.

In this part of the work is considered the agreement of the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes and the Stoic philosophers with those of the Calvinists, in which the difference between them is observed, and the calumny removed ; to which is added, a Defence of the Objections to the Universal Scheme, taken from the prescience and the providence of God, and the case of the Heathens.

The Fourth Part was published in 1738, in which the sense of the ancient writers of the Christian Church, before the times of Austin, is given ; the

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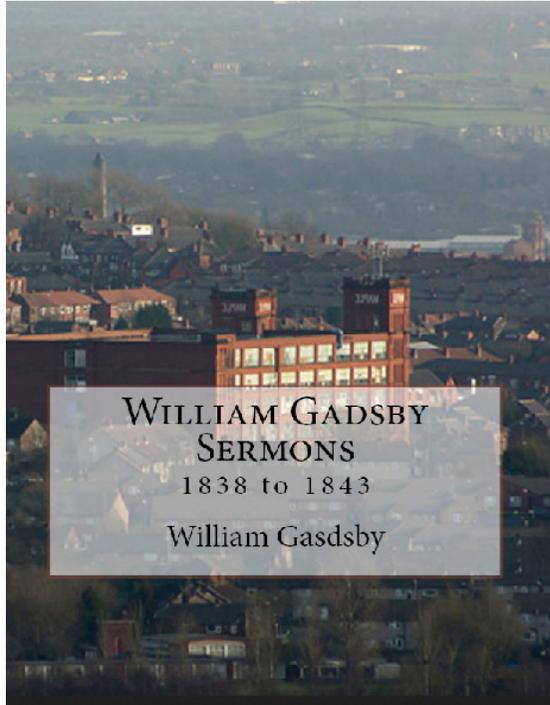
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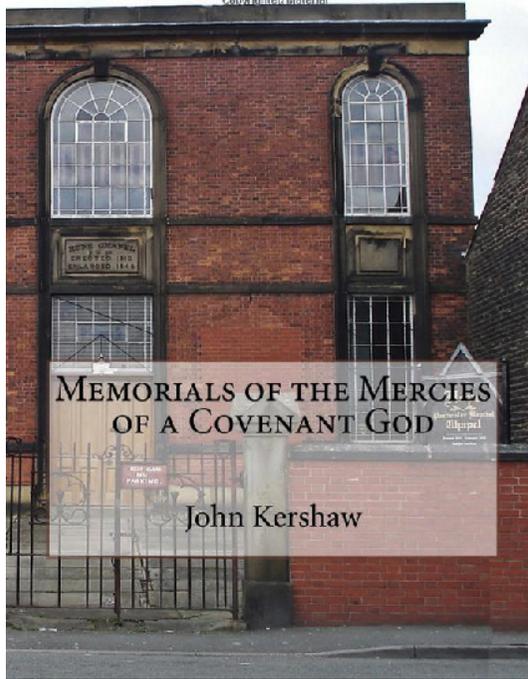
William Gadsby became a Particular Baptist minister in 1798 and went on to preach to many thousands of people. He later published Hymns, in a hymn books still used today by Particular Baptists.

He was born in Attleborough, Warwickshire in 1773. He had little or no education. In 1790, he went to see men hanged, and the horrid spectacle had such an effect on his mind that he was never afterward like the same youth. His memoirs tell of the lengths of folly into which he ran prior to this time and were often related by him in his ministry These memoirs were published

shortly after his death.

William Gadsby preached the distinguishing doctrines of grace that gave all the glory to the Lord Jesus Christ for his salvation.

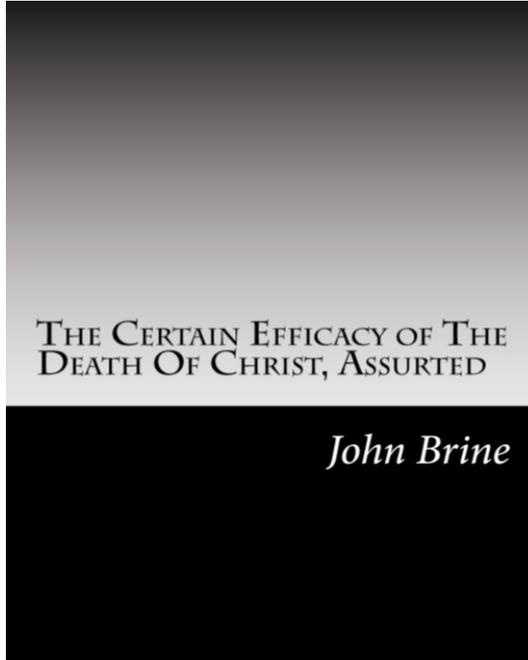
MEMORIALS OF A COVENANT GOD



John Kershaw (1792-1870)

Was a Particular Baptists pastor for fifty-two years of Hope Chapel, Rochdale. He exercised a powerful ministry among the church, and became an influential preacher across the country. Few ministers remain faithful to a single congregation for an extended period—Kershaw committed himself to the same church he attended as a boy. This autobiography “Memorials of the Mercies of a Covenant God while Traveling through the Wilderness”, is one of the best written of its genre. He preached and taught the doctrines of grace along with his contemporaries William Gadsby, John Warburton, J.C. Philpot. These men were all Calvinists maintaining the bible to be the word of God and giving all the praise and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation.

THE CERTAIN EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST,
ASSERTED



Authored by John Brine

List Price: \$7.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

114 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1973922254 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1973922258

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

This work declares the Glory of God in all his Perfections, the Honour of Christ, and the eternal Happiness of his People, all of which are intimately concerned in them. This is treated in four parts: In the First John Brine endeavours to prove the limited Extent of the Death of CHRIST, and the certain Salvation of all those for whom he died.

In the Second, the Objections which are usually urged by the Arminians, and others, will be answered.

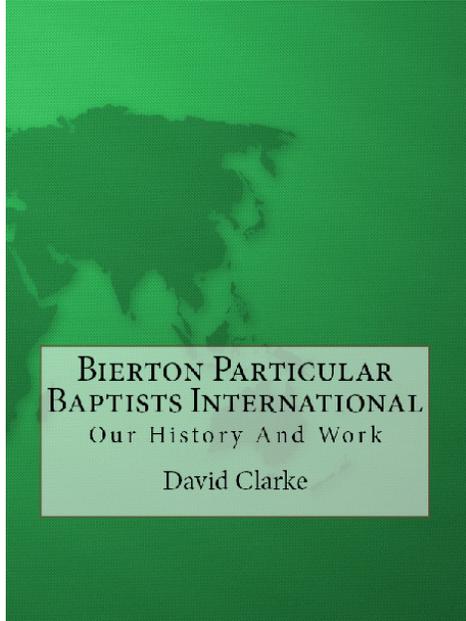
In the Third shall attempt to prove the Impossibility of the Salvation of the Non-Elect, upon the Supposition of no other than a conditional Provision of Salvation being made for them.

In the Fourth Part shall attend to what he delivers on the Subjects of the Imputation of original Sin to Men, the Charge of Sin on CHRIST, and the

Imputation of his Righteousness to his People.

This has been republished by Bierton Particular Baptists to further the cause of God and truth, it opposes Arminianism, Islam, and duty faith.

BIERTON PARTICULAR BAPTISTS INTERNATIONAL



Our History And Work

Authored by David Clarke

List Price: \$13.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Full Color on White paper

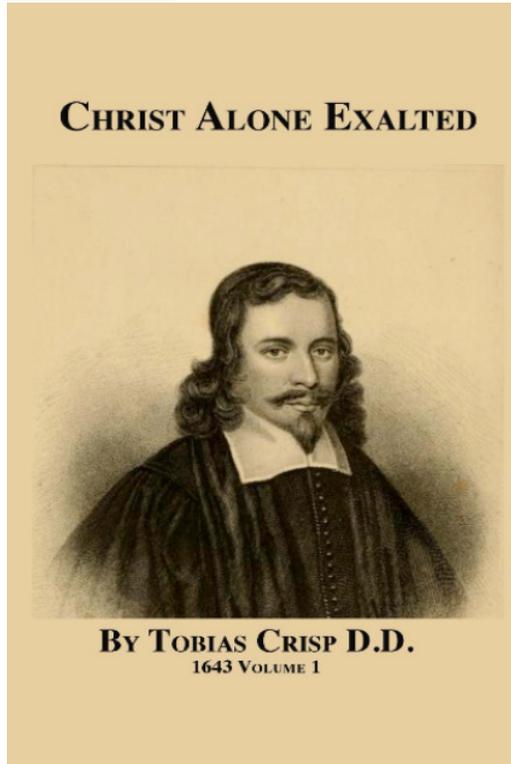
60 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1974670901

ISBN-10: 1974670902

BISAC: Religion / Christian Ministry / Evangelism

Bierton Particular Baptists were founded in England in 1831 and has now extended to Pakistan. The chapel belonging to Bierton Particular Baptists was closed for worship in December 2002 and David Clarke, the sole remaining member of the Bierton church, commissioned and appointed Anil Anwar and Anwar Shahid John as over seers, of Bierton Particular Baptist church, in Pakistan, in 2016. This book contains the articles of religion for Bierton Particular Baptists and the Bierton Particular Baptist College. Bierton Particular Baptists were a Gospel Standard listed cause 1981.

CHRIST ALONE EXALTED

Authored by Tobias Crisp D.D.,

List Price: \$10.10

5.5" x 8.5" (13.97 x 21.59 cm)

Black & White on White paper

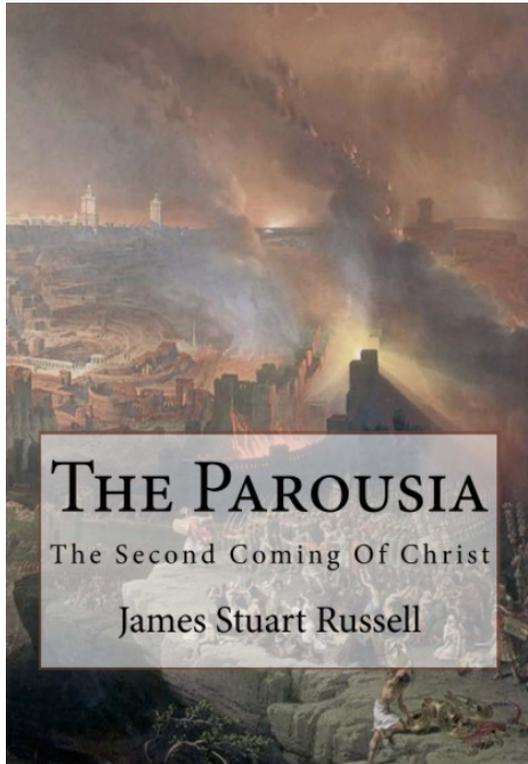
266 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1535296922

ISBN-10: 1535296925

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

Tobias Crisp was preacher of the gospel in England. He was born in 1600 and died in 1643 at which time these 13 sermons were first published. Within 3 years further sermons were published in further volumes this is the first. He lived at the time when The First London Baptist Confession of Faith 1644 was being prepared for publishing and it is clear from these sermons he taught Calvinistic truths. He preached the doctrines of grace and was charged with being an Antinomian and provoked opposition from various quarters. Dr John Gill in defence of Crisp republished these sermons along with his own notes showing that Tobias Crisp taught clearly the truths of the lord Jesus Christ

THE PAROUSIA 2ND EDITION

Authored by James Stuart Russell

Preface by Dr Don K Preston D.D.

List Price: \$17.85

7" x 10" (17.78 x 25.4 cm)

Black & White on White paper

404 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1519610942

ISBN-10: 1519610947

BISAC: Religion / Theology

A reformation – indeed – a revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new reformation. This “new” movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled.

The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research in the book, although he did not accept the

“final” conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ’s coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions.

This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell’s work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these “skeptical” authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions.

This is where Russell’s work is of such importance. While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of “the end,” he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that “the end” that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows

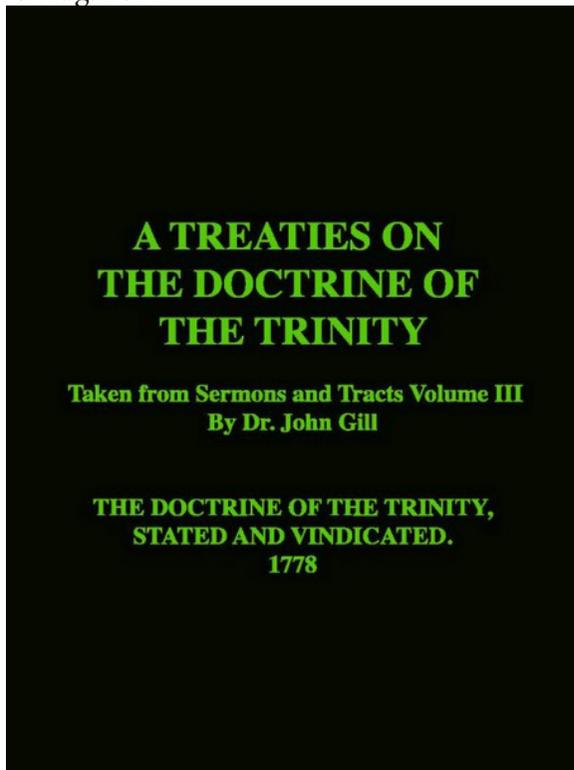
how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age.

Russell's work is a stunning rejection – and corrective -- of what the “Orthodox” historical “Creedal” church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the “divines” missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell's main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.

[A TREATIES ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY:](#)

The Doctrine Of The Trinity Stated and Vindicated

Paperback – 18 Aug. 2021



Dr, John Gill presents this work to defend the doctrine of the Trinity and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Historically speaking, there has always been disputes and divisions as to the person of Christ; who is He? Is He the eternal, only-begotten Son of God?. Such a division also took place in the 18 and 19th century between certain Strict and Particular Baptists, in the U.K. It was then that J.C. Philpot, the editor of the Gospel Standard magazine, in 1861, published his book declaring The Eternal Sonship of the

Lord Jesus Christ, which issued in further divisions not only among Strict and Particular Baptists but also Evangelicals and Presbyterians.

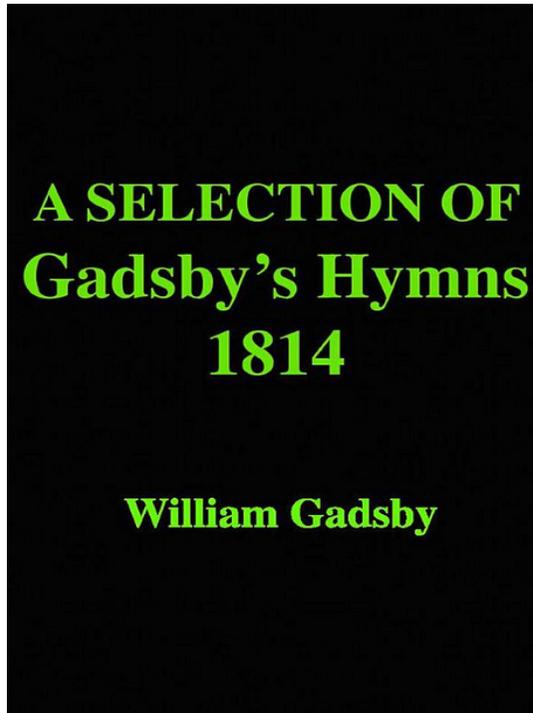
Gospel Standard baptists, holding to the Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, maintained that the gospel was to be preached to all people, declaring the complete and finished personal work of Christ, knowing that the atonement was definite and made for those chosen in Christ before the world, and not for all men. Those who believed would be saved. They denied the gospel was an offer of salvation to men. Whilst other Strict Baptists, Presbyterian and Evangelicals would offer salvation and the grace of God , to men upon the condition they believe, making little mention of the extent of atonement, leaving men to conclude the atonement was sufficient for the whole world, if the whole world would believe.

This work of Dr. John Gill will help the reader understand the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the work of The Holy Ghost in the salvation of the people of God.

Songs 2:9 My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.

A SELECTION OF GADSBY'S HYMNS 1814 PAPERBACK

15 July 2021



The occasion of this publication is brought about by the gradual change that has taken place among Christians and them seeking to worship God in a public way. It has been noted that many have forsaken the use of a hymn book and reverted to singing, in a public way, by reading from an overhead projector. Very often the projection of the words of the hymn are out of step with the timing of the singing of the song, which is very off putting. Also with the use of such projection only one verse at a time may be viewed and the worshippers cannot look ahead or return to a previously sung verse to reflect or anticipate the sense and meaning of the hymn.

It has also been noticed the many such songs have a copy write symbol restricting the use of such songs and very often the substance, sentiment and doctrinal content is often lacking, and in many case doctrinally unsound and so unfit for public worship.

It has often been the experience of the publisher that when any such attempt to worship publicly and any combination of some of those things just mention takes place, it become unacceptable and an internal groan is experienced and a sigh expressing, 'Why have Christians forsaken the us of well tried hymns and presented in a personal copy of an hymn book?'

A hymn book that can be used personally and privately at will. For this reason instead of moaning it was felt something could be done about this matter and so a small collection of well proven, doctrinally sound hymn in the form of hand held Hymn book has been produced.

Ephesians 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

CONVERTED ON LSD TRIP: 3RD EDITION

(David Clarke Series) Paperback – 3 Jun. 2020

Copyrighted Material

The Bucks Herald Second Edition

Not Weekly Sales - 23,542
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11, 1971 price 8d 32 pages

Established 1832

CONVERTED ON LSD TRIP

David Clarke who had a three-year career of undetected crime, experienced a "Christian conversion" whilst suffering from the effects of LSD, he told Aylesbury magistrates, on Tuesday. After wrestling with his conscience for a year, he confessed to 24 crimes, and gave information leading to the recovery of over £1000 worth of stolen property. In court

was enjoying himself. "I used to sell drugs to young people, and indulge in permissive sex" he declared.

Seeking Truth
"Religion to me was rubbish, and for silly people who could not stand on their own feet", he said.

result of taking the drug, and went on "I warn any young person who hears my testimony: "The effects of LSD are so bad, and I warn you to stay clear!" While in this condition he said he, "Called on the name of Jesus" and his torment went from him.

Voice Of Christ
"Jesus Christ spoke to me as clearly as I speak here today saying, "David, I am with you," he said. "What you have been going through is nothing compared to what hell is like"

Mr Murray, of Manor Crescent Wendover said he was habitually sceptical of sudden conversions, and preferred to put them to the test of time. The time, which had elapsed, since Clarke's profession of faith had convinced him that this young man would now be salt and light to society". "He is in truth, a new man, and had experienced what Christ called a second birth". Murray said Clarke now put himself out to be of assistance, read the bible intensely, always carried a New Testament, attended a wide circle of churches and would spend hours in discussion on spiritual things.

Difficulty
Clarke's difficulty during the months spent deciding how to make amends for his past had been the problem of accusing himself, without informing on others.

Continued inside:



David Could these boys do any real wrong? Michael

he pleaded guilty to charges of "Within my heart I was searching for truth, and a meaning to life". He had good prospects of getting on in life he went on but "I was not satisfied with what I had, I was greedy, selfish and boastful". Clarke had been using pep pills, and marijuana since he was 16 he told the court, but it was after taking LSD that he experienced, what he described as, "a major thing in my life". He described the experience as a

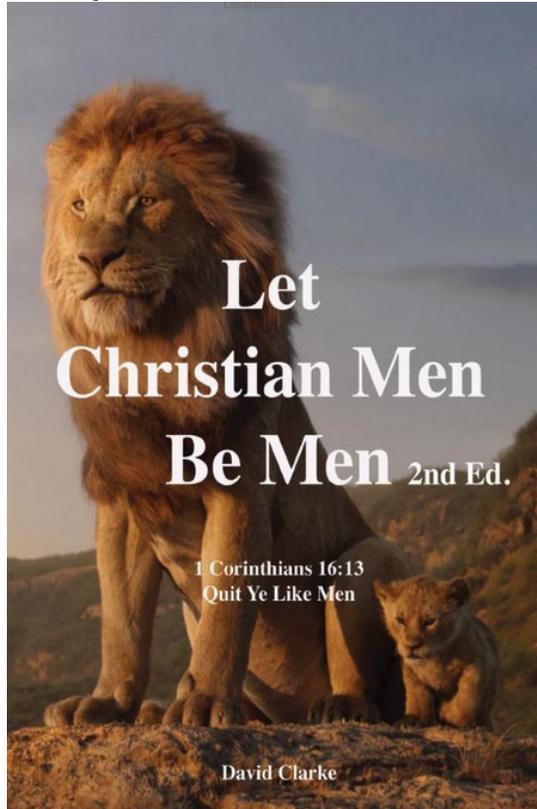
David Clarke

This third edition of, 'Converted on LSD Trip', is written to bring attention to the reality of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, in changing the lives of David Clarke, whilst on a bad trip on LSD, on 16th January 1970, and the life of his brother Michael Clarke, some 30 years later, when a prisoner, in the Philippines, and making them evangelist workers seeking to teach the gospel of Christ to men. It is intended to use this book as a tool for evangelism in order to encourage others in the work of preaching the gospel of Christ to men. This is also intended to draw attention to the work of Jesus Christ now in Baguio City, Philippines, by William O. Poloc

a former inmate of New Bilibid Prison. It is believed and stressed that it is important to teach the traditional Christian doctrines of grace, to combat the error of modern-day Godliness, unbelief, homosexuality, feminism, Islam and of the importance of teaching the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the infallibility of the word of God

LET CHRISTIAN MEN BE MEN, 2ND EDITION:

1 Corinthians 16:13 Quit Ye Like Men

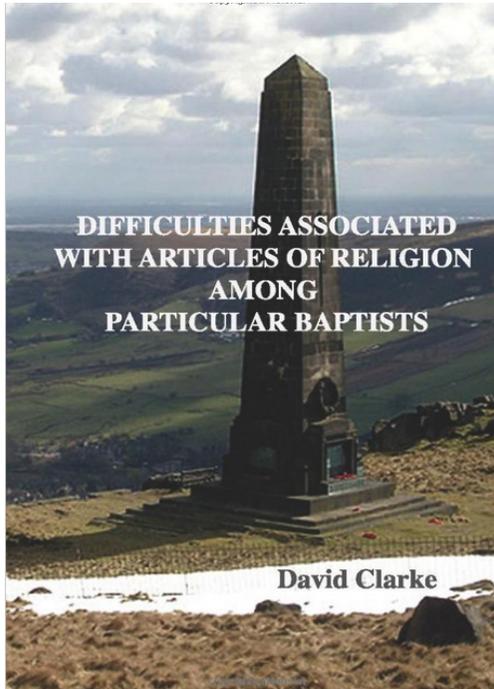


David Clarke

David Clarke tells of his Secession from the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church, in 1984 over matters of conscience. This Church was formed in 1831 and was a Calvinist Protestant dissenting society and became a Gospel Standard cause in 1981. Sadly the church fell into serious doctrinal error teaching general redemption this was just one of the reasons for his secession. David was called by the Lord and sent by the church the gospel in 1982 When acting as the secretary he had to deal with a range of serious issues that arose within the church. This book deals with all those doctrinal and practical issues that arose and how he responded to them. He deals with the reasons for his secession and clearly spells out the distinguishing doctrines

of grace treating the subjects of Particular Redemption, Gospel preaching the false notion of Duty Faith and Duty Repentance, the role of women in the church, Articles of Religion, and the relationship of the believer to the Law of Moses. He maintains the gospel is the believer's rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses. That there are no such things holy tables and the chapel building is not the house of God. David remains the sole member of the Church after all its former members died and that the church did not terminate his membership after his secession David continues his mission work and calling published a range of Christian books and has been engaged in gospel ministry in Pakistan and the Philippines.

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION
AMONG PARTICULAR BAPTISTS



David Clarke

Articles of religion or confessions of faith are used to inform others of what a person, a church, or society believes with respect to religious beliefs. Some churches restrict membership to those who will subscribe to their articles of religion. One of the problems that this brings is that there comes a time when a new believer cannot, in conscience, subscribe to a tenet of belief that they do not understand. It may be the article is badly worded or poorly written or may, in fact, be in error. In which case a new believer

could not in conscience subscribe to something they do not understand. Or it may be a member of the church who begins to realize their articles of religion are in error. This book seeks to inform of the difficulties that articles of religion among Particular Baptists have experienced since the first London Baptists 1646 2nd Edition was published and offers an alternative solution to this problem. This book contains the First Particular Baptists London Confession 1646 2nd Edition, The Second London Baptists Confession 1689, Bierton Particular Baptists 1831, The Gospel Standard articles of religion 1878 and Bierton Particular Baptists, Pakistan 2016 with observations of the difficulties that have proven difficult, in the past. Contents Introduction Articles of Religion Important Authors Testimony Bierton Particular Baptist Church A Difficulty Over Articles Of Religion Written From Experience Bierton Particular Baptists History 1 First London Particular Baptists Confession 1646, 2nd Edition The Development of Articles Of Religion Act of Toleration Additions That Are Wrong 2 London Baptist Confession 1689 Notes on The London Baptists Confession 1689 3 Bierton Particular Baptists Article of Religion, 1831 Difficulties Over Articles of Religion Notes on Bierton Particular Baptists 1831 4 The Gospel Standard Articles of Religion 1878 Observations of the Gospel Standard Articles Of religion Letter to Mr. Role's of Luton Added Articles My comments Article 32 The Difficulties Of these Articles Proved Serious Doctrinal Errors Held Recommendation for Serious Minded 5 Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan 2016 6 Added Articles of the Gospel Standard 1878 Gospel Standard 31 Articles

Contents

Introduction

Articles of Religion Important

Authors Testimony

Bierton Particular Baptist Church

A Difficulty Over Articles Of Religion

Written From Experience

Bierton Particular Baptists History

1 First London Particular Baptists Confession

1646, 2nd Edition

The Development of Articles Of Religion

Act of Toleration 14 Additions That Are Wrong

2 London Baptist Confession 1689 1

Notes on The London Baptists Confession

1689

3 Bierton Particular Baptists Articles

of Religion, 1831

Difficulties Over Articles of Religion

Notes on Bierton Particular Baptists 1831

4 The Gospel Standard Articles of Religion

1878

Observations of the Gospel Standard

Articles of religion

Letter to Mr Role's of Luton

Added Articles

My comments Article 32

The Difficulties Of these Articles Proved

Serious Doctrinal Errors Held

Recommendation for Serious Minded

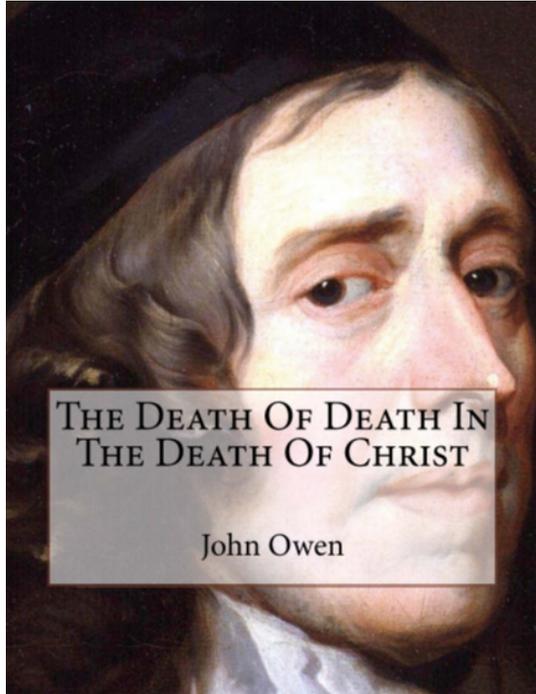
5 Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan

2016

6 Appendix 60

Gospel Standard 31 Articles

THE DEATH OF DEATH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST



John Owen

List Price: \$9.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

170 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1544793733

ISBN-10: 1544793731

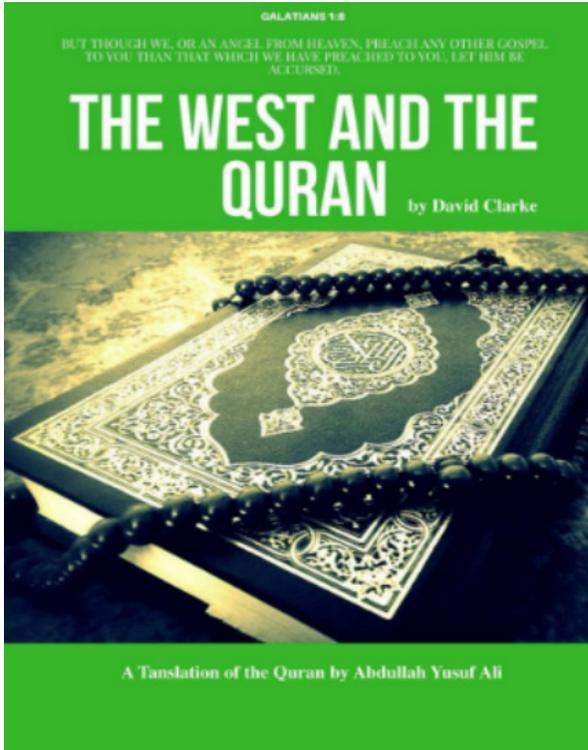
BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

The *Death of Death in the Death of Christ* is a polemical work, designed to show, among other things, that the doctrine of universal redemption is unscriptural and destructive of the gospel. There are many, therefore, to whom it is not likely to be of interest. Those who see no need for doctrinal exactness and have no time for theological debates which show up divisions between so-called Evangelicals may well regret its reappearance. Some may find the very sound of Owen's thesis so shocking that they will refuse to read his book at all; so passionate a thing is prejudice, and so proud are we of our theological shibboleths. But it is hoped that this reprint will find itself readers of a different spirit. There are signs today of a new upsurge of interest in the theology of the Bible: a new readiness to test traditions, to search the Scriptures and to think through the faith. It is to those who share this readiness that Owen's treatise is offered, in the belief that it will help us in one of the most urgent tasks facing Evangelical Christendom today—the recovery of the gospel.

This last remark may cause some raising of eyebrows, but it seems to be warranted by the facts. There is no doubt that Evangelicalism today is in a state of perplexity and unsettlement. In such matters as the practice of evangelism, the teaching of holiness, the building up of local church life, the pastor's dealing with souls and the exercise of discipline, there is evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with things as they are and of equally widespread uncertainty as to the road ahead. This is a complex phenomenon, to which many factors have contributed; but, if we go to the root of the matter, we shall find that these perplexities are all ultimately due to our having lost our grip on the biblical gospel. Without realising it, we have during the past century bartered that gospel for a substitute product which, though it looks similar enough in points of detail, is as a whole a decidedly different thing. Hence our troubles; for the substitute product does not answer the ends for which the authentic gospel has in past days proved itself so mighty. The new gospel conspicuously fails to produce deep reverence, deep repentance, deep humility, a spirit of worship, a concern for the church. Why? We would suggest that the reason lies in its own character and content. It fails to make men God-centred in their thoughts and God-fearing in their hearts because this is not primarily what it is trying to do. One way of stating the difference between it and the old gospel is to say that it is too exclusively concerned to be "helpful" to man—to bring peace, comfort, happiness, satisfaction—

and too little concerned to glorify God. The old gospel was “helpful,” too—more so, indeed, than is the new—but (so to speak) incidentally, for its first concern was always to give glory to God. It was always and essentially a proclamation of Divine sovereignty in mercy and judgment, a summons to bow down and worship the mighty Lord on whom man depends for all good, both in nature and in grace. Its centre of reference was unambiguously God. But in the new gospel the centre of reference is man. This is just to say that the old gospel was religious in a way that the new gospel is not. Whereas the chief aim of the old was to teach men to worship God, the concern of the new seems limited to making them feel better. The subject of the old gospel was God and His ways with men; the subject of the new is man and the help God gives him. There is a world of difference. The whole perspective and emphasis of gospel preaching has changed.

THE WEST AND THE QURAN



Translation of The Quran

Authored by David Clarke, Authored with Abdullah Yusuf Ali

List Price: \$9.99

8.5” x 11” (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

248 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1548914042

ISBN-10: 1548914045

BISAC: Religion / Biblical Criticism & Interpretation / General

This Publication treats the subject of the Quran and the reason for presenting this is due to a rise in Islamic terrorism which has caused great concern to many in the West. So with the current massive influx of Muslim's migrating from the various parts of the world into Europe, Great Britain and the USA, it seems reasonable to discover the roots of Islam in order to deal with the problems that have occurred. Our Politicians seem clueless on how to deal with this enemy and when they are questioned they appear to know relatively little about Muhammad and his teaching. One of our greatest Prime-ministers in Britain William Gladstone declared the Quran an "Accursed book" and once held a copy of Muhammad's Quran up in Parliament, declaring: "So long as there is this book there will be no peace in the world".

Winston Churchill was one of the greatest leaders of the 20th Century, who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during World War II and again from 1951 to 1955.

As an officer of the British Army in 1897 and 1898, he fought against a Pashtun tribe in the north west frontier of British India and also at the Battle of Omdurman in Sudan. In both of those conflicts, he had eye-opening encounters with Muslims. These incidents allowed his keen powers of observation and always-fluid pen to weigh in on the subject of Islamic society.

While these words were written when he was only 25-years-old (in 1899), they serve as a prophetic warning to Western civilisation today.

"How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism (Islam) lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy."

Churchill apparently witnessed the same phenomenon in several places he visited. "The effects are apparent in many countries: improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live."

He saw the temporal and the eternal tainted by their belief system. "A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement, the next of its dignity and sanctity," he wrote.

The second-class status of women also grated at the young officer. "The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his

absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men,” he noted.

“Individual Muslims may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world.”

Well before the birth of modern Israel, its terror tactics and drive for world domination were felt. “Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytising faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step, and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it (Islam) has vainly struggled, the civilisation of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilisation of ancient Rome.”

With the influx of Muslim people from the various parts of the continent along with their culture all of which is shaped by the teachings of Muhammad in the Quran.

Some objections and Observations are as follows:

Islam means submission

Islam does not mean peace

Multiculturalism is a failure.

Islam denies the natural rights of women

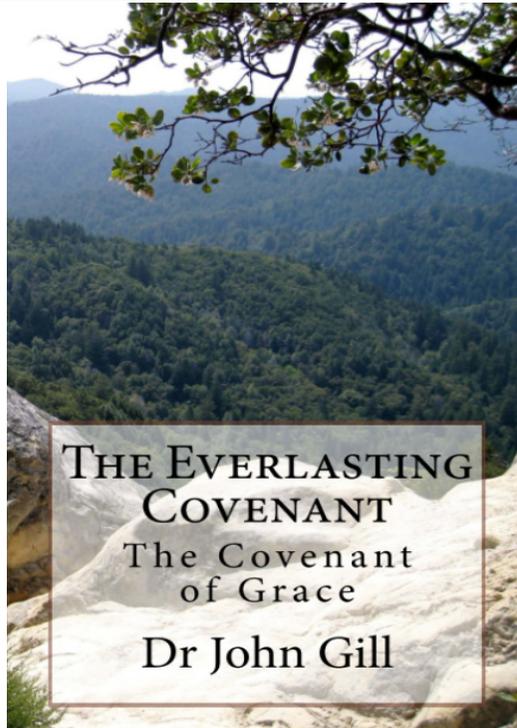
An Objection Halal Meat

An Objection To Shari-ah Law

Objects to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

An objection to Jihad which seeks over throw Western culture through education, Social activity, political activation and Law.

For this reason, this publication is made available for education purposes. With this prayer that God may grant us all wisdom as to how we may respond to the rise and threat of Islam.

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

Dr John Gill

List Price: \$9.98

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

188 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1535011020 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1535011025

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

This book treats the subject of the Everlasting Covenant of grace. A covenant made between the three Persons Father, Son and Holy Ghost, before the world began. That has been gradually revealed by means of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant as declared by the Lord Jesus and His Apostles. It is by this covenant the whole Israel of God are saved.

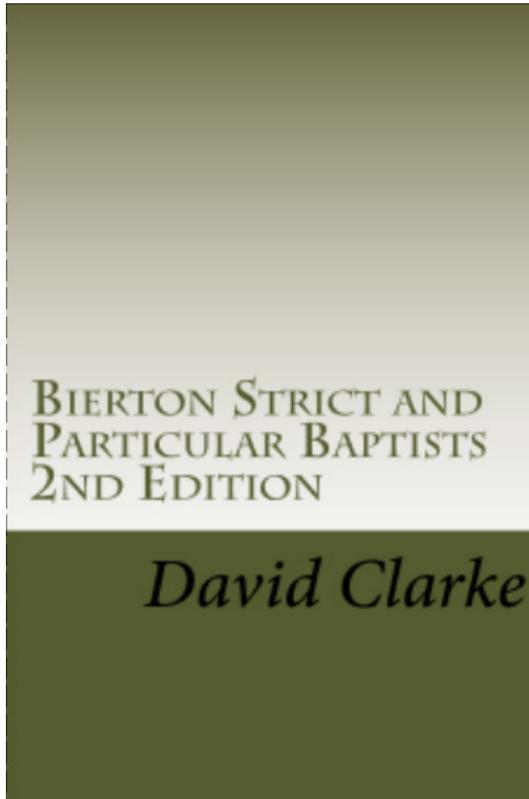
Dr. John Gill (23 November 1697 – 14 October 1771) was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life. He is the only person to

write a commentary on each very of the bible and after its completion wrote his Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity from which this subject The Everlasting Covenant is an extract.

This book has be republished by Bierton Particular Baptists with a view to promote the cause of God and truth and to encourage all to read and study the scriptures for themselves. A knowledge of this subject will enable one to be free from the pitfalls of Arminianism

BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS

2nd Edition



Mr David Clarke Cert.

List Price: \$13.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

356 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1519553287 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1519553285

BISAC: Biography & Autobiography / Religious

This book tells the story and life of David Clarke in the form of an

autobiography. It is no ordinary book in that David and his brother were both notorious criminals in the 60's, living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, where they were MODs and were both sent to prison for and malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license . They were however both converted from crime to Christ and turned their lives around.

This story tells of David's conversion to Christianity in 1970 and that of Michael's conversion, 1999 some 30 years later.

It tells of their time in HMP Canterbury Prison and David's time in HMP Wormwood Scrubs and Dover Borstal. It also tells of David's criminal activity and the crimes he committed before his miraculous conversion from crime to Christ, during a bad experience on LSD, in 1970.

It tells how he became a Christian over night and how he learned to read in order to come to a fuller knowledge of the gospel. He learned to read through reading the bible and classical Christian literature. David tells of the events that led to him making a confession to the police about 24 crimes he had committed since leaving Dover Borstal in 1968 and of the court case where he was not sentenced. It tells how David's educated himself and went on to Higher education, and graduated with a Certificate in Education and how he went on to teach Electronics, for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education.

It tells of his life as a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church, which was a Gospel Standard cause, and how he was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel. David tells of the various difficulties that he faced once he discovered the many doctrinal errors amongst the various Christian groups he met and of the opposition that he experience when he sought to correct them. David recorded his experience and finding in his book "The Bierton Crisis" 1984, written to help others.

David's tells how his brother Michael was untouched by his conversion in 1970 and continued his flamboyant lifestyle ending up doing a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996.

David tells how Michael too was converted to Christianity through reading C.S. Lewis's book, "Mere Christianity", and him being convinced that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God. David then tells of his mission to the Philippines, to bring help and assistance to Michael, in 2001 and of their joint venture in helping in the rehabilitation of many former convicted criminals, not only in New Bilibid Prison but other Jails in the Philippines.

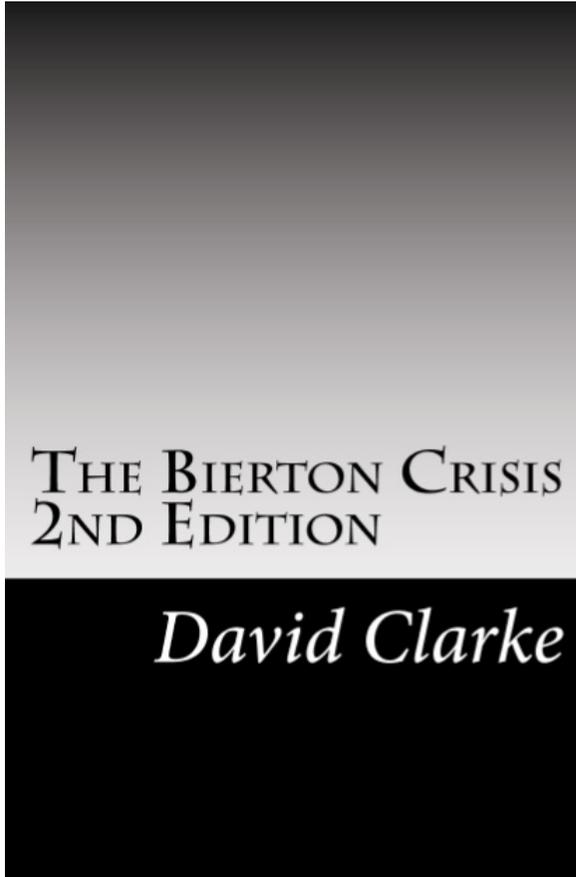
David tells how he felt compelled to write this story in his book , "Converted On LSD Trip". once he got news of his brothers arrest, in the Philippines, via ITN Television news broadcast, in 1995. This book was

published when he got news of his brothers conversion from crime to Christ in 1999, which was after serving 5 years of his 16 year sentence.

This story is told in their joint book, “Trojan Warriors”, that contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who too had turned there lives around, from crime to Christ, 22 of which testimonies are men on Death Row.

David say he believes his story could be of great help to any one seeking to follow the Lord Jesus Christ but sadly Michael died in New Bilibid Prison of tuberculosis, in 2005 before their vision of bringing help to many was realized.

[THE BIERTON CRISIS](#)



2nd Edition: A Testimony of David Clarke

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert.E

List Price: \$10.99

5.25” x 8” (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

244 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1534701717

ISBN-10: 1534701710

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

The Bierton Crisis is the personal story of David Clarke a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. He was also the church secretary and minister sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982.

The Bierton Church was formed in 1831 and was a Gospel Standard cause who's rules of membership are such that only the church can terminate ones membership.

This tells of a crisis that took place in the church in 1984, which led to some members withdrawing support. David, the author, was one of the members who withdrew but the church did not terminate his membership as they wished him return.

This story tells in detail about those errors in doctrine and practices that had crept into the Bierton church and of the lengths taken to put matters right. David maintained and taught Particular Redemption and that the gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses as some church members maintained.

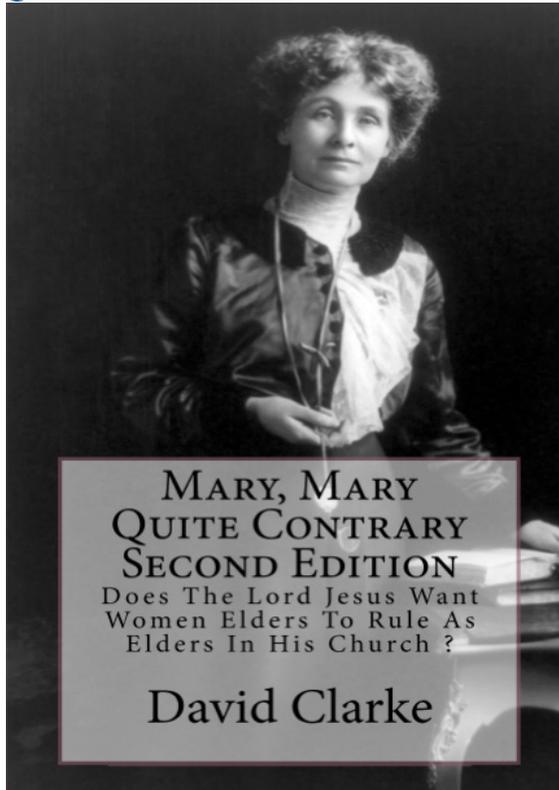
This story tells of the closure of the Bierton chapel when David was on mission work in the Philippines in December 2002 and when the remaining church members died. It tells how David was encouraged by the church overseer to return to Bierton and re-open the chapel.

On David's return to the UK he learned a newly unelected set of trustees had take over the responsibility for the chapel and were seeking to sell it. The story tells how he was refused permission to re open or use the chapel and they sold it as a domestic dwelling, in 2006.

These trustees held doctrinal views that opposed the Bierton church and they denied David's continued membership of the church in order to lay claim too and sell the chapel, using the money from the sale of the chapel for their own purposes.

David hopes that his testimony will promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out in the doctrines of grace, especially Particular Redemption and the rule of life for the believer being the gospel of Christ, the royal law of liberty, and not the law of Moses as some reformed Calvinists teach, will be realized by the reader.

His desire is that any who are called to preach the gospel should examine their own standing and ensure that they can derive from scripture the doctrines and practices they teach and advance and that they can derived the truths they teach from scripture alone and not from the traditions of men or their opinions however well they may be thought of.

MARY, MARY QUITE CONTRARY

Second Edition

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert E

List Price: \$8.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

154 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1514206812

ISBN-10: 1514206811

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / General

When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county.

The Suffragettes

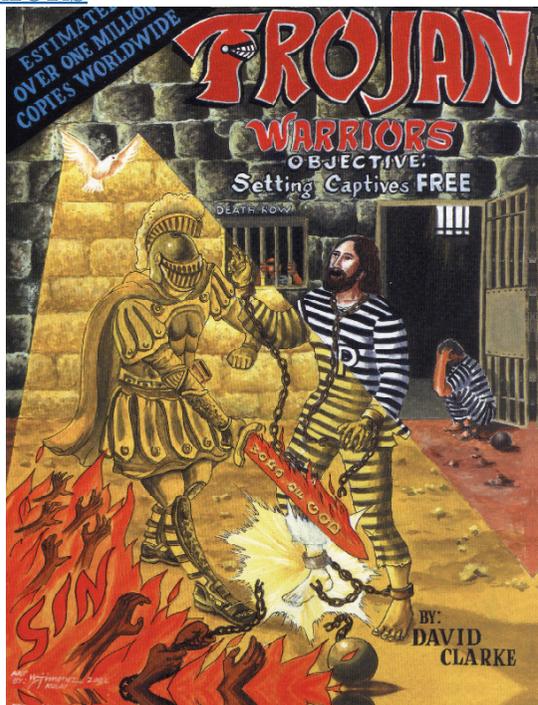
Emmeline Pankhurst 1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her

death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she.

In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness by the suffragettes and since then there have been legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with the development of the feminist movement and the appointment of persons from the LBGT community to responsible positions in the Church of England. All of this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong.

This book seeks to show what the bible has to say about the role of women in the church and family. Since these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should follow the word of God, this is our wisdom.

TROJAN WARRIORS



Setting Captives Free

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert Ed, Authored by Mr Michael J Clarke
List Price: \$15.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

446 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1508574989

ISBN-10: 1508574987

BISAC: Religion / Christian Life / General

Trojan Warriors is a true story of two brothers, Michael and David Clarke, who are brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. They became criminals in the 60's and were sent to prison for malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license, in 1967.

They both turned from their lives of crimes in remarkable ways but some 25 years apart, and then they worked together helping other prison inmates, on their own roads of reformation.

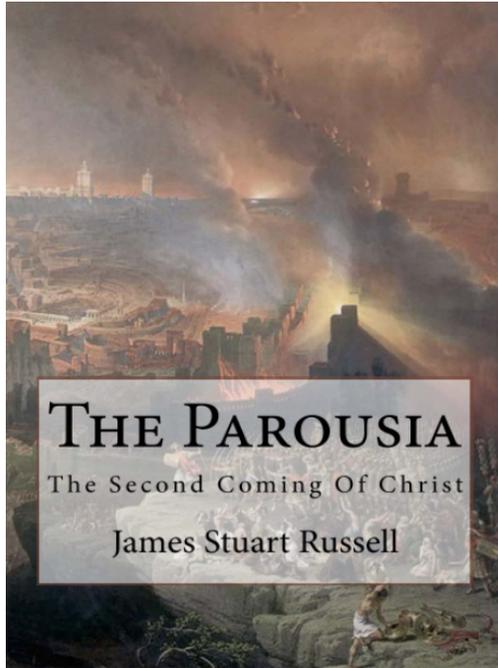
David the younger brother became a Christian, after a bad experience on LSD, in 1970, and then went on to educate himself and then on to Higher Education. He became a baptist minister and taught electronics for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. Michael however remained untouched and continued his flamboyant life style ending up serving a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died of tuberculosis in 2005.

When David heard the news of his brothers arrest on an ITN television news bulletin he felt compelled to write their story. And then when he heard of his own brothers conversion from crime to Christ, after serving 5 year of his sentence, he published their story in his book, "Converted on LS Trip", and directed a mission of help to the Philippines to assist his brother. This book tells the story of this mission.

They then worked together with many former notorious criminals, who were inmates in New Bilibid Prison, who too had become Christians and turned their lives around. This help was to train them to become preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ .

This book contains the 66 testimonies of some of these men who convicted former criminals, incarcerated in New Bilibid Prison. They are the, "Trojan Warriors", who had turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. Twenty two of these testimonies are men who are on Death Row scheduled to be executed by lethal injection.

Revelation 12 verse 11: And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.

THE PAROUSIA 2ND EDITION

The Second Coming Of Christ

Authored by James Stuart Russell, Preface by Mr David Clarke, Preface by Dr Don K Preston DD

List Price: \$17.85

7" x 10" (17.78 x 25.4 cm)

Black & White on White paper

404 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1519610942

ISBN-10: 1519610947

BISAC: Religion / Theology

A reformation – indeed – a revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new reformation. This “new” movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled.

The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research in the book, although he did not accept the “final” conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New

Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ's coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions.

This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell's work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these "skeptical" authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions.

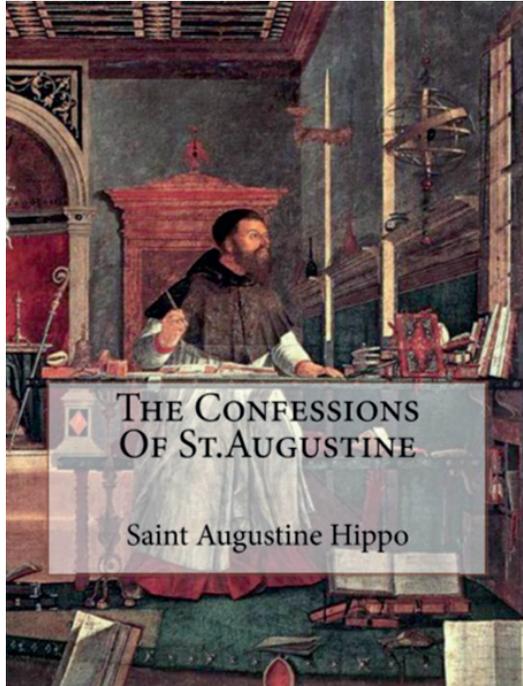
This is where Russell's work is of such importance. While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of "the end," he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that "the end" that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age.

Russell's work is a stunning rejection – and corrective -- of what the “Orthodox” historical “Creedal” church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the “divines” missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell's main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.

[THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE](#)



Authored by St. Augustine Of Hippo

List Price: \$9.99

8.5” x 11” (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

182 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1983680236

ISBN-10: 1983680230

BISAC: Biography & Autobiography / Religious

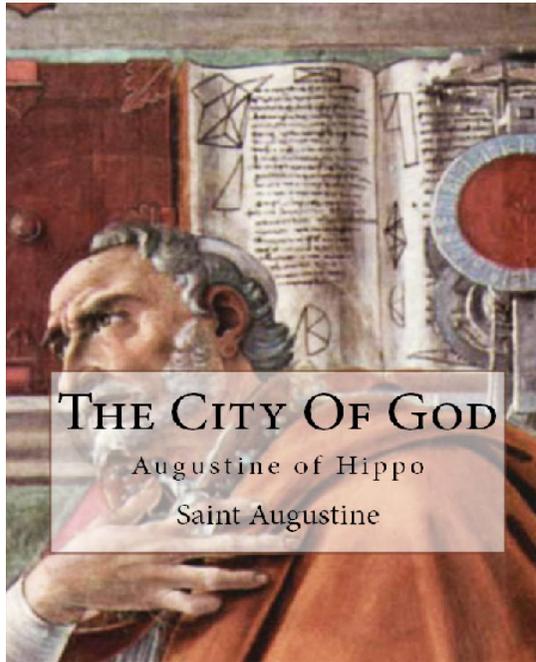
This is an autobiography, a work, consisting of 13 books, by Saint Augustine of Hippo, written in Latin between AD 397 and 400. The work outlines Saint Augustine's sinful youth and his conversion to Christianity. Its original title was Confessions in Thirteen Books, and it was composed to be read out loud with each book being a complete unit.

Confessions is generally considered one of Augustine's most important texts. It is widely seen as the first Western autobiography ever written, and was an influential model for Christian writers throughout the Middle Ages. Professor Henry Chadwick wrote that Confessions will "always rank among the great masterpieces of western literature".

Written after the legalization of Christianity, Confessions dated from an era where martyrdom was no longer a threat to most Christians as was the case two centuries earlier. Instead, a Christian's struggles were usually internal.

Confessions was written between AD 397–398, suggesting self-justification as a possible motivation for the work. With the words "I wish to act in truth, making my confession both in my heart before you and in this book before the many who will read it" in Book X Chapter 1 Augustine both confesses his sins and glorifies God through humility in His grace, the two meanings that define "confessions," in order to reconcile his imperfections not only to his critics but also to God.

Pelagius, a British monk, took exception to Augustines prayer "Grant what Thou commandest, and command what Thou dost desire." Pelagius recoiled in horror at the idea that a divine gift (grace) is necessary to perform what God commands. For Pelagius and his followers responsibility always implies ability. If man has the moral responsibility to obey the law of God, he must also have the moral ability to do it. Augustine took up the cause of God clearly demonstrating the the fall of man and the inability of man to do good and defended the truth of original sin.

THE CITY OF GOD

Augustine of Hippo

Authored by Saint Augustine, Authored by David Clarke

List Price: \$10.28

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

272 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1547278985 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1547278986

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

The City of God, is a book of Christian philosophy written in Latin by Augustine of Hippo in the early 5th century AD. The book was in response to allegations that Christianity brought about the decline of Rome and is considered one of Augustine's most important works.

The City of God is a cornerstone of Western thought, expounding on many profound questions of theology, such as the suffering of the righteous, the existence of evil, the conflict between free will and divine omniscience, and the doctrine of original sin.

Augustine is recognized as a saint in the Catholic Church, the Eastern Christian Church, and the Anglican Communion and as a preeminent Doctor of the Church.

Many Protestants, especially Calvinists and Lutherans, consider him to

be one of the theological fathers of the Protestant Reformation due to his teachings on salvation and divine grace. Lutherans, and Martin Luther in particular, have held Augustine in preeminence (after the Bible and St. Paul). Luther himself was a member of the Order of the Augustinian Eremites (1505–1521).