GOOD NEWS From a Far Country

IN SEVEN

DISCOURSES

From 1 Tim. I. 15.

Delivered at the Presbyterian Church in Newbury:

And now published at the Defire of many of the Hearers and Others..

By JONATHAN PARSONS, A. M.

And Minister of the Gospel there.

or is 2. For I determined not to know any thing among you,

Gal. 11. 20. I am crucified with Christ: Newertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live a the Pesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and sive himself, for me.

Rom v. 8. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet finners, Christ died for us.

Luke xix. 10. For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.

PORTSMOUTH, in New-Hampshire:

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PREFACE.

anism were never propagated with more openness and resolution, nor with less opposition, in our land, than at this day. Men of figure are bold enough to deride and banter the sacred doctrines of christianity, and despise our orthodox confessions of faith; and some (even at the expence of truth) have endeavor'd to drive the puritanical doctrines of religion out of the pulpit.

But the inquisitive reader will be apt to ask the reason of this great evil among us? To such it may be replied, that as all men are born into the world under the covenant of works and partake of the spirit of that covenant; so, is there not reason to fear that the oversight of many churches is committed to men, before

before they are cut off from the old stock of the first Adam, and grafted into Christ? And if it be so that teachers are tainted with this poison themselves, no wonder if they endeavor to strengthen themselves in their own corrupt schemes, by preferring others to public offices that are men of the same taste.--This is an artful method of introducing the most destructive errors, and of making the propagators of them bolder and bolder; and so, of driving bible-truth into a corner.--- Especially, if you confider, that there are few, besides properly independent churches, and those are destitute of any settled rules of dealing with offenders. I say properly independent; for the method of making INQUISITION, in the third way of communion, is laid aside; and that with good reason: for "men will be ready " to prefer the power of visitation in a " single eminent Bishop, to that of eve-"ry private Pastor that shall please to " set

"fet up himself."--- And now, being destitute of any fix'd rules of proceeding, any man, high or low, may run off from the form of sound words with impunity; or to hinder an impeachment of himself, he may be encourag'd to impeach the orthodox of holding strange doctrines.

Seeing these things are so, and seeing truth is of greater consequence than a man's reputation, I have some years ago ventur'd my name abroad in the world, against some of the growing corruptions of the times; not because I tho't my self so fit for the undertaking as some others; but considering the diligence and triumphs of those that teach another gospel, and the importance of the truths oppos'd, I look't upon it my duty to take up the saw of controversy and handle it as well as I could, tho' otherwise I should have chosen to be excused. But

And considering the cause of truth is the most concerning matter, none should hang back that wish its prosperity, for fear of disturbing the peace of the church; because peace in the church at the expence of truth, is like the agreement of Herod and Pontius Pilate to deftroy Christ and his kingdom .--- Those reconcilers (as they call themselves) who would fain make up a union between Arminians and Calvinists, had as good strive to reconcile light and darkness, Christ and belial, as to reconcile a true Calvinist with Arminians. Indeed, I see no great difficulty in keeping up a visible union between those that are Calvinists in speculation only, and hearty Arminians (because I suppose they don't differ much in their inward experience) but one that is bro't off from arminian principles, and bro't over to true Calvinism by the efficacious grace of God, cannot, I suppose, be united with Arminians, unless he has forgot that he was washed

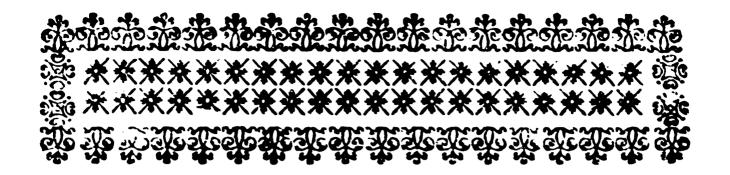
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washed from his old sins: for he knows that they are opposite schemes, and lead to opposite places at last. And I am perswaded that many of the miseries which the church groans under in this land, are mainly owing to those that speak partly the language of Ashdod, and partly the language of the Jews. I can't but think such are more dangerous to the cause of Christ, than open Arminians, who are true to their principles; for those that are open are easily discover'd; but those reconcilers (pardon the expression) betray the son of man with a kiss.

When I compos'd and preach'd the following discourses, I had no tho't of their being printed: they are plain truths and deliver'd in a plain dress, suited to the day and circumstances of my people. I hope this will be a sufficient apology with the candid reader, for repeating some things several times in different discourses. I was constrain'd to give a

copy for the press by the importunity of my friends; and was the more afraid to refule, because it appear'd that God remarkably bless'd them when they were deliver'd. Arminians and Arians need not wonder if they find themfelves oppos'd in the plainest gospel sermons; for I believe it would be difficult for an honest Calvinist to deliver a fingle discourse without, some way or other, crossing their corrupt principles. -- If God will, of his infinite mercy accept the offering, and bless it to the conviction and faving conversion of sinners and edification of faints, it is enough.

Jonathan Parsons.



THE

Nature and Necessity

O F

special Grace.

Discourse I.

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I. TIM. I. 15.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

HE wise king of Israel tells, that as cold water is to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. The glad tidings of the everlasting gospel, are sent from heaven, and are the best news that ever were spread among a perishing world of mankind: for when we feel the cause of all the

the miseries that befal us, or that we are liable to, here we have the remedy, the only suitable and sufficient remedy held up in the clearest

light, and freely offered.

Tis this gespel, with its effectual application and happy effects, St. Paul speaks of in the chapter wherein we have our text. And considering what he was before his conversion, viz. a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious; also considering what effects the gospel had upon him, and the great honor that he was presently vested with, he breaks out like one astonish'd, admiring the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which appear'd in his conversion. And from hence he thought, there was reason enough to encourage the chief of sinners to hope for mercy, and look out in good earnest after it. And therefore he recommended the same gospel to their acceptation, which had been made the power of God to his salvation.

This is a faithful saying. Upon speaking of his own conversion, and the abundant grace of God appearing therein, he breaks out in this manner; thereby intimating, that, fince he had obtained mercy, there was sufficient incouragment for any poor sin-burdened soul to seek after it. The account he had given of himself was credible, and what he was about to affirm was so too. 'Tis the faying of the God of truth and faithfulness, and therefore it ought to be

And is worthy of all acceptation. How astonishing soever the news of the redemption and salvation of sinners is, yet it is as true as it is astonishing. 'Tis worthy to be embrac'd by all: yea, it demands the present acceptation of every one that hears it. It is the saying of the faithful God, by his inspired Apostle; and therefore one moment's discredit is inexcusable. If God has said what follows, it must be worthy of the instant, chearful, and hearty acceptation of all men.

Thus St. Paul introduces the joyful message he had to deliver; the sum of the gospel, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sunners: i. e. he was manifest in the flesh for that end: he came to seek and to save that which was lost, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.---Yea, the chief of sinners: q. d. He who came to fave fuch a blasphemer and persecutor as I have been; he that came to save one that breathed out threatnings and slaughter against the disciples; that went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Demascus to the synagogues, to bring all, whether men or women, bound unto Jerusalem; he that came to fave fuch a finner, came to fave the chief of finners. Has God made me a monument of his special mercy in Christ Jesus? Surely, there is enough in Christ for any sinner; and therefore every one, sensible of his guilt and miscry (be he ever so vile) has encouragement

4 The NATURE and NECESSITY Difc. I. couragement to look unto Christ, that he may be saved.

These hints seem to take in the general sense of the text: and in surther discoursing upon them, I shall range my thoughts under two general observations; and, by divine grace, clear them up, and improve them in some measure suitable to the circumstances of my hearers.

Obs. I. God sometimes makes the chief of summers the subjects of his special grace.

Obl. II. That the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, the chief of sinners, is a saying which demands the present acceptation of all men.

Of these in their order---

Obs. I. God sometimes makes the chief of sometimes the subjects of his special grace.

UNDER this head I design to consider, what is to be understood by special grace, and the necessity of it, some evidences of the truth of the doctrine, and some reasons for it.

FIRST, I would consider what is to be understood by *special* grace, and the *necessity* of it.

AND I call it special grace, in the doctrine,

to distinguish it from that assistance and co-operation, which many speak and write of, as all the grace that is necessary for fallen man to expect or defire. Their opinion is generally founded upon a supposition that man, fallen from God and in a state of unrenew'd nature, has some ability to co-operate with the holy Spirit, even in the first grace given in regeneration. But, without medling with the person or the state of any man, we may fay that this is a very great mistake and a very dangerous principle. For every one, before regeneration, is without strength, and therefore altogether unable to afford the least assistance to the Spirit of all grace in that great work. Yea, man in an unregenerate state is an enemy to God; and not only an enemy, but his carnal mind is enmity it self; not only alienated from God, but in opposition to him, and is constantly opposite, directly or indirectly, to the operations of the holy Spirit. How abfurd is it therefore, to entertain a notion that an unrenewed foul affifts or co-operates with the Spirit in legeting a principle of spiritual life in it self? the strivings of a natural man and the strivings of the Spirit are as opposite in their nature as light and darkness, and as opposite in their interests and designs as Christ and Belial.

But the *special* grace, which we speak of, is the work of the Spirit, renewing the soul after the image of God, and enabling it to mortify and

and overcome sin, and live to God. Or (if that will give a clearer idea) it is grace wrought in the foul, by the mighty power of God, renewing the understanding, and changing the dispofition of the will, and from time to time strengthening the believer to live devoted to God. 'Tis not, in regeneration, a cherishing the weak and greatly decay'd image of God's holy nature, as some seem to understand it, but it is a creation work, or an implanting a nature that is entirely lost: an immediate work of the Spirit, by which the elect of God have a principle of spiritual life formed in them. Now, that such a work of the Spirit of God, and special grace, in this sense, are necessary, is very evident frem many considerations. Let us attend Particularly, to fome.

The representations made in scripture, of regenerating grace, lead us to conclude that it is by an immediate operation of the holy Spirit upon the soul. 'Tis called a creation work, Eph. ii. 10. The regenerate soul is called a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15. so the scriptures tell us that, in this work, God takes away the heart of stone, and gives an heart of stoff; that the man is born not of blood, nor of the will of the slift, nor of the will of man, but of God; that he is created after the image of God; is a partaker of the divine nature; brought cut of darkness into marvellous light, &c. Well, in the name of reason, what can the plain import of these

world.

there and many other scriptures be, if 'tis only affistance or co-operation of the holy Spirit that is necessary to regenerate a soul? How shall we consture them, without putting a force upon the words, unless we allow of a special, immediate work of the Spirit in regeneration? Can all these things signify no more than presenting truths to the understanding, in a clear and advantageous light? Is there nothing taught us of the Spirit's work, beside his assisting a man, and co-operating with his endeavours in the use of means? Why is it, that the work of the holy Spirit is so much magnified in the Bible, unless the glory of it is correspondent to those his expressions? If there is any meaning in words, I suppose, the scriptures referred to plainly teach us, that there is the same power put forth in regenerating a foul, as there was in creating a world; with this difference, that in regenerating a foul, God works against and takes away resistance, whereas there was nothing to resist or withstand him in his creating the

AGAIN; if we consider the case of infants, it will afford some light to this truth. Indeed, some tell us, that man came to be sinners only by imitation. But St. Paul, under divine inspiration, thought quite otherwise; for he tells us, Eph. ii. 3. that we are by NATURE the children of wrath: not only by custom and contracted habits of evil; but by nature. And if it were

as some think, only by imitation, why don't they tell us what those inclinations in little children are, which dispose them to follow had

examples?

BUT I shall take it for granted, at present, that Adam was the covenant-head and representative of all his natural seed; and therefore that all infants are born into the world finners, void of the meral image of God and under his wrath and curie. Now, if they are bern finners, they must be renewed or they cannot be faved. Where there is no real change of nature, there is no relative change: and where there is no relative change, persons are in a state of death: the Lord has made no provision for them; no mediator, no pardon, no special benefit by Christ. And Christ has expresly declared in the gospel, that except they are born again, born of the Spirit, pour'd out like water, purifying and quickning their fouls, they can in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. They are not only unworthy, but unfit for the enjoyments and the employments of heaven; and consequently they must be excluded, unless they are renewed by the holy Spirit. Now, though there is no promise that can be produc'd from scripture to prove that all those who die in their infancy are faved, yet we are fure from the scripture that all such are not danned, but some shall go to heaven, and if stey are faved they must be regenerated, because they are utterly disqualified for the state of bleilidness among the faints while they are unhoiv.--But what could these infants do to help the Spirit of God in regenerating their fouls? Are they co-workers with God in restoring his holy image, or is it the work of God alone? Doubtlets it will be acknowledged, that the whole is a work of the God of all grace, by his immediate or phylical influence. And is it reasonable to imagine that he should do all in an immediate way for little children, and take in adult perions as co-partners with him in the work? Who can suppose, without doing violence to reason, that these who have improved their first bad inclinations in the course of a vicious life; those who have walk'd and liv'd after the flesh; who by customary sinning have inur'd themselves to wicked practices, should not stand in need of the same omnipotent and efficacious power to renew and fanctify them, that little children do? 'Tis true indeed, adult persons are come to the use and exercise of that realon which the author of their beings has given them; but they can no more exercise it in a spiritual manner without sanctifying grace, than an infant of a day old can exercise his reason about natural things. And then the principles of fin and their aversation to God and the less are more deeply rooted in them then in fants; and therefore it is most unrea-Smable or any to imagine that they should affold any better help towards their regeneration than infants can towards theirs.

AGAIN; if we consider the different juccess of the gospel, it will afford some further evidence to the truth of what we insist upon. an observation of early date, that the same divine truths dispensed with equal plainness and fidelity have vastly different effects, at the same time, upon persons, that to all appearance, are equally prejudic'd against them. Some are pricked at the heart with indignation against themselves, and others with indignation against the preacher. Some receive the word of life gladly; the message of pardon, life and blessedness takes deep root in their minds, and they feel the energy of a living principle of grace; while others continue perversly, walking contrary to God and man. Sometimes those of the same family, the same education and advantages, are distinguished from each other: one, and perhaps he the most obstinate and unlikely of all the house, is made a subject of special grace, and others are left to perish in their fins. Yea, some are taken, as Paul was, contrary to their intentions, while they are thirsting for the blood of Christ's disciples, indulging themselves in their provocations, and in the very fury of lust: God has come and stopt them in their way, turn'd them quite about in the temper and disposition of their hearts, and made them zealous followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes

Sometimes again, the ministers of Christ are reduc'd to great difficulties without any visi-ble success: they toil all the long night of desertion and take nothing: they divide the word of truth skilfully, and are very industrious in their work, but Ifrael will not be gathered; they loose their labour in all the pains they are at. After they have wearied themselves in their work, all out-standing sinners remain easy, under condemning guilt, and in the filthiness of all their sins. The gospel is a burden to them, and a very little pittance is given to the dispen-sers of it. At other times, in the day of Christ's power, the same truths, deliver'd in much the same manner, awaken the secure, engage the attention of multitudes, draw many souls to Christ, and edify saints in their most holy faith. The hearts and houses of people are open to the ambassadors of Christ; and many of the people to their power, and some beyond their power, are willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the bounties of heaven from their hands .--- Well, how can all these things be accounted for any other way than upon the apostle's principle, as we find it written, I Cor. iii. 6. 7. I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase: even the apostles themselves, though under divine inspiration, could gain no

fouls to Christ without the efficiency of God. And why should the gospel of Christ run and be glorified at one time, and at another time people relule to hearken to the voice of the chaimer, charming never so wisely? --- If the external means of grace had any efficiency in them, why are they not equally fuccessful at all times and in all places? Why do any that stand ent and indulge impetuous lust for a course of years, fuddenly turn about and become the devoted friends of Christ? Does not the event plainly verify that scripture, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.? (For the exceptors of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the fulling down of firong kolds) cofting down imaginations, and every kigh thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ: Indwelling fin, that enemy of all righteousness, and satan the strong man arm'd, will keep possession, until the Lord Jesus Christrides forth triumphantly in the chariot of the everlasting gofpel conquering and to conquer. But when he girds his sword upon his thigh, as an entign of royal authority, and an inftrument of war; when the word comes out of his mouth and he rides for victory, then his arrows are sharp in the heart of his enemies, and they are oblig'd to fall under him. *

^{* &#}x27;Tis str nously afforted, in opposition to our dectries, it that in divine revelation, it is sorever taken for granted,

Hence you may fee, that great glery redunds to Christ in the Jalvation of sinners. All the works

"that we have a filf-determining tenter---" and again, "that we could not understand each other, nor ourselves, with"out the idea of a power both of choling and acting va"nously, or indifferently, within a certain sphere, under the same given circumitances." And unless all this is true, it is concluded "that God has exactly mocked and in"suited man in offering them deliverance from the wrath to come, and eternal life upon impracticable conditions."

Upon which observe,

1. THE alfandity of the phrase, Alf-determining pewer, when applied to the will. We as readily allow that man has a power of willing as the arminisms do, though we dare not amule our people with a detail of his moral excellencies, as they generally do. We also affirm that man acts voluntarily in alteraining upon this or that .-- but if man is a rational creature, (as all Calvinists fay he is,) then that determination must spring from some cause or motive. But according to the faif-distermining power that armivlans write of, all the reason or cause of chasing and determining upon one thing rather than another, is leasufe the man well; he chuses because he chuses, and determines because he determines, and acts because he acts. Or he determines upon something RECAUSE he had determined upon I mething before, and he determined upon iomething hefore, BECAUSE he had determined upon femething alfe, &c. &c. This is wonderful talk; SELF-DETERMINING POW-ER! according to the wonderful notion of jelf-determining priver, a man chuses and resules with out any cause or reason of his to doing,

2. This granted, we believe and teach, that it is merally impossible for man, in his fallen state, to get those virtues himself, or to do that upon which God has obliged himself to give him those virtues which exalify for heaven, and with-

out which he will certainly perilli. Yet

works of God praise him. All nature sprung into being at his command. When we look upon

3. We justly deny that God has cruelly mock'd and infulted his creatures, in requiring those things of them, which, in their fallen state, it is morally impossible for them to do; and in infilling upon those qualifications which it is equally impossible for them to have, unless they are wrought in them by the special influences of the holy Spirit. infitt upon it, that the carnal mind is enmity against God; that all, by nature, are children of wrath; dead in trespasses and fins; " very far gone from original righteousnels;" that all who go to heaven must be born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. We say that those, and things of the like nature taught us in our bibles, invincibly prove an efficacious, unfruitrable work of the Spirit of God, in restoring the divine image in fouls and preparing them for glory .--- But what is all this to the purpose of our adversaries? Does it sollow from hence that God has cruelly mock'd and infulted his creatures in offering them deliverance from the wrath to come? How does this doctrine involve in it an imputation of cruelty in God, and so cast a blemish upon his moral perfections? Has God cruelly mock'd and infulted his creatures because he requires that of them, which he made them capable of complying with? whether these questions will be -esteem'd worthy of a thought by our adversaries I know not; but sure I am, that my flesh trembles when I see how they infult the divine Being in some of their writings! Must the GREAT LORD of all beings loose his right of requiring and commanding, because poor, mean, sinful hell-monsters have thrown away their power of obeying; and because they chuse to live in rebellion? By what reason should God's command, invitation and reproof infer a power in us to comply with the gospel proposals, when we have destroy'd ourfelves, and set up against our sovereign? 'Tis true, commands, invitations and reproofs represent our duty and God's

upon the visible heavens over our heads, and this earth on which we stand, we see something of what God has made out of things that were

God's right over us; but then these commands, &c. consider us as creatures, and not so much, as having rebell'd and fallen from God: Though invitations seem to imply our rebellion, yet these with commands and reproofs are principally to teach us the importance and necessity of having the moral image of God restored in our souls; to convince us of sin and mifery, and to direct us to God, who alone can effect a saving change in us .--- The head and representative of mankind, the first Adam, had power to keep the command; but having lost that power, by what rule is God oblig'd to restore it? If God is under no moral obligation to put Alam's feed into the state wherein they were created, why is he charg'd with a cruel infult upon men, for demanding nothing but his due? Or why is he call'd cruel and unjust for punishing those that chuse death rather than life? "The conditions, it seems, are imprasticable," and therefore the demand is unjust, and the invitation is mockery. But I enquire, how come these conditions to be impracticable! Are they made so by any act of God, or from the moral inability of man: i. e. from his own will? If it be from himself, why is God charg'd with mockery because he has mercifully offer'd grace and invited them to receive it? May God require nothing in his revealed will, which he is not determined to effect! If not, . what must we say of those scriptures, Ezek. xviii. 31, 32. Hof. vi. 4. Luk. xix. 42. acts xiii. 48. belides many others.

But I have exceeded my first design in a note: I will only add, at present, that 'tis truly associating to see how some arminians treat the sovereign Lord of the universe. The God in whose hand their breath is, and whose are all their ways, have they not gloristed: but are disputing against God, as though he had no right to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour.—They seem more solicitous to bring him down to their terms, than to maintain the honour of his

moral government and rectoral holiness,

not. The beautiful order and harmony of the whole creation; the admirable laws given to the inanimate as well as the animate world, and the invariable exactness of their operations to correspond with the end of their being, are a display of the adorable wildem, power and goodnels of that God who gives being, and governs all things according to the counsel of his will.---But faving one foul from the guilt and dominion of the; implanting and maintaining a principle of spiritual life in one soul, is a greater and more admirable work than any other of the works of God: for itis a producing and supporting of divine life against the utmost efforts of vitiated nature, and therefore, though the divine perfections thine forth in other works, yet they are much more illustrated in faving fouls: fo that when we reflect upon this wonderful work of God, we may well break out and fay with the apostle, Rom. xi. 34. with kath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been his comfeller? who hath directed the . Spirit of God in these divine effects of infinite power and wildem? --- Indeed, the creation of heaven and earth; the prefervation and government of the vast svitcm of the universe, we all acknowledge to be diplays of the divine persections: but these are the work of his fingers, while regeneration and fanctification are the work of his throng arm, and that against an army of enemies, making their utmost resistance azaii.A

against him. He observes all the subtil devices of indwelling tin; displays his wisdom in disappointing its designs; his power in pulling down its strong holds, in casting out the strong man armed, and setting up his throne in the heart where Satan's seat was. Yea, this is not only a wonderful display of divine power, but of divine mercy too; for there is nothing in man, or done by him, that could possibly recommend him to fuch favour. The scriptures tell us plainly, (what every man must know that has the knowledge of himself) that all are born in fin; that there is none righteous, no not one; that all are gone out of the way, and are altogether filthy: and confider'd as finners, all are hateful to an holy God, and justly deserve his everlatting ditpleature. And yet God, who is rich in mercy as well as glorious in power, works a principle of spiritual life in those who were dead in trespasses and fins. He passes by some, and leaves them to perish in their sins as they justly deserve, while, against hell-deservings, he looks upon others and saves them alive. O how much indebted are all true believers to the glorious author of this salvation! 'Tis highly becoming the subjects of this special mercy, to maintain a deep and abiding sense of their indebtedness to God, and to express the same in praise, gratitude, and all holy obedience.

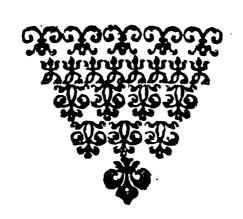
And particularly; let such put on bowels of mercy, bemosn the state of the careless, and

send up strong cries to God, that he would make his grace effectual for the conversion of awaken'd sinners. You're sensible, fellow-christians, that many among us, are under the enlightening and convincing work of God's Spirit. The manifest impressions upon their minds and hearts; the present check to vanity; crowded assemblies, in season and out of season; the apparent diligence and affection in hearing the word, and the frequency of that concerning question, what must I do to be saved? Those and some other things are tokens for good. But, O! tis to be fear'd, when they get a little respite, the reigning principle of sin in their hearts will deceive and turn them aside. Convictions don't make their state secure; nor reformations render them acceptable to God. They are still under the guilt of all their sins, and are daily adding new guilt to old, by refusing the *only* remedy provided for the help of sinners. And, by and by, an idle companion, or the allurement of a new pleasure, may so enchant, as to turn them with the dog to his vemit, or with the few that was washed to her wallowing in the mire, unless God makes them the subjects of his special grace. That assistance and moral suasion, which some think is all that is necessary, will never regenc-rate souls, nor draw them to Christ. Though the holy Spirit makes use of moral arguments; yet the most refined person in the world, under the best external advantages, with the inward **Arivings**

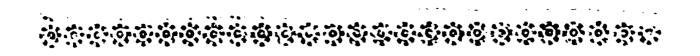
strivings of the Spirit added, will never embrace Christ as he is offered in the gospel to finners, unless he is drawn to Christ by the invincible power of special grace. --- Many, you see, are distressed, and very inquisitive about their Safety; but they are daily and hourly conceiving fin in their hearts, and contenting to rejeet the Lord Jetus Christ. O how much is the special grace of God needed among us at this day! While we are called to express our gratitude to the God of all grace for convictions, methinks common humanity, and much more the principles of faving grace, should excite us to call after Christ, as he is patting by, to turn aside, look upon and restore the discased of this congregation. Olet us beg in earnest and with importunity, that this time may be the time of his love! O that the power of divine grace may be for gloriously display'd among us, that hell itielf cannot counter-work it! O that the love of God may be communicated to the hearts of the many awakened, and may abide in them forever! They will die in their fins, and be fent down to dwell with devils and damned fouls in hell, unless the Lord Jesus Christ puts forth his omnipotent arm and takes them in .---If therefore we love their fouls; if we defire they should escape the wrath to come, and be happy in the favour of God; and if we would express our love for them in a proper manner, besides doing other things in a way of means for their conversion, let us be much in prayer to God for the effectual working of his grace. And let the confideration of the divine efficiency in our conversion, excite holy servency in our prayers to God for them. We know something of the sweetness of pardoning mercy, and of fanctifying and comforting grace: and should not this animate our defires, and excite our importunate requests to God, that he, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, would thine into their fouls; that he would take away the wicked disposition of resisting him; remove the vail that is upon their hearts and take away their armor, and give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let me add, before I dismis you, that I de-sire your prayers for me also; that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, without partiality and without hypocrify. And pray that the special grace of God may attend the ministry of the word, into every heart, and cause it to become spiritual health to their souls. For the gospel of Christ, tho' ever so truly dispensed, will never prove salvation to any but fuch as have it apply'd to them by the holy Spi-We may preach the doctrines of free grace, regeneration, faith in Christ, the love of God and holy obedience, in the greatest plainness;

we may urge the motives thereto with the fullest evidence and importunity; but our labour will prove in vain, unless the gospel comes in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance upon the hearts of the people. If therefore you would hear and receive the messages of grace, and if you desire poor sinners should be made the subjects of special grace while they enjoy a preached gospel, beg earnestly and daily, not only that Christ would enliven his Ministers, but that he would also apply the gospel to the souls of the people; that he would cast in the fire of holy love into their hearts, and make them leave their water-pots and follow him.



Disc.



DISCOURSE II.

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I. Tim. I. 15.

This is a faithful faying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save suners; of whom I am chief.

※※※E have, in the first discourse, consider'd what is to be understood by special grace; and then offered several plain arguments as evidence of its necessity.

And may the spirit of all grace silence the prejudices of men's hearts against the important truth, subdue their obstinacy, and convince their consciences, that the doctrines we carnestly contend for, are not matters of empty speculation, as our adversaries too commonly represent them to be. We come now

SECONDLY, to give fome evidence of the truth afferted, viz. that God sometimes makes the chief

Disc. II. the Subject of special Grace. 23

chief of finners the subjects of his special grace. He may, and, no doubt, often does leave men of a fair character in the worki to perith in their sins. Men may wear the velage of christianity,

externally moral, of a good outward behaviour and zealous in many things, and yet dye without mercy. The devil and indwelling in, fometimes attain their deilructive aims, by perfueding men to fet their duties as a ballance against their sins, or to place them in the room of Christ.—But though ever so many that have made a fair shew in the sleth should miss of salvation, yet we have good evidence that God makes fome of the chief of sinners the subjects of his special grace, and will glorify severeign mercy in their salvation.

The invitations of the gospel make this affertion very probable. If you read the scriptures with due attention, you can't but see that God sometimes reckons up a very black catalogue of crimes which people have been guilty of, to whom he presently offers pardon and salvation. In this light I take the words of the prophet, Isai. i. 2--6, 13, 18. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath speken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ex knowed his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ab sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a feed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they

have forfaken the Lord, they have provoked the bely One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why skould ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is fick, and the whole beart faint. From the fole of the foot even unto the head, there is no seundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying fores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with eintment. Bring no more vain oblation, inconfe is an abemination unto me, the new-moons and faebachs, the calling of affemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as fearlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimfon, they skall be as wool. God speaks, in these verses, as if the Israelites were as senseless as the inanimate world; as stupid as the brute beafts; as if they were to incorrigible and corrupt that there was no human prospect of their recovery: He tells them that their iacrifices and solemn feasts, were infinitely offensive to his holy Majesty, as they were accompanied with gross hypocrify and wickedness; and yet he invites them to accept of mercy and pardon upon reasonable terms. And so he calls them who had exceedingly revolted, to repent and return to him, Chap. xxxi. 6. Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply rewolted. They had neglected and fortook him; this was their revolt: they did it contrary to his express

express command, with deep dissimulation and a public profession of cleaving to God; this was the aggravation of their fin; and yet God invites them to repentance and a fincere return unto him. And again, If you confider the Idolatry of Judah, which appears to be worse than that of Ifrael, one would expect nothing but destruction, and yet God stood ready to be reconciled, Jer. iii. 1---5. They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall be return unto her again? jha'l not that land be greatly polluted? but thou bast played the barlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with: in the ways bast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness, and thou hast pelluted the land with thy whoredoms, and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withhelden, and there bath been no latter rain, and thou hadit a whore's forehead, thou refusedit to be askamed. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my father, thou art the guide of my youth? Though Judah had gone a whoring after other lovers, and provok'd the Lord to reject them forever, yet he appear'd carnest for a reconciliation, and therefore invited them to return.

Again, if we consider our Saviour's conduct when he was personally upon earth, it will afford some light in this point. No sooner had

he set out on Lis public ministry, but he address'd himself to the tribe of Zehulun; a people that walked in darkness and dwelt in the land of the shadow of death. He becan his ministry among ignorant and vicious hihermen, who were then, and are now, effectively as abandon'd as any men in the world. Tis a common objervation that people on the fea-coaffs are mere debanch'd in their morals and generally more ignorant of the principles of true religion than men in other places. But our bletled Sevicus went first of all to such, and treated with them about the things of their everlasting peace, Mar. iv. 15---19, he made the offers of life and faivation to that rude and careless people. And while he neglected those that placid their religion in rites and forms, and thought themtelves better than their neighbours, his manner was to call these to repentance that had no pretence to merit; Mark ii. 17.--- Nay, he chele some of his attendants from the fifth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things. When he faw Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, bufied in their employment, he call'd them to attend him, and to become fifthers of men. --- At another time he went out of his way to convert a common profitute. The instance is that of the Samaritan woman, Joh. 4th chap. The special reason of his going through Samaria, was, I suppose, to meet with this woman, and some other Samaritans whom he brought

brought over to the christian faith. The woman liv'd in whoredom when Christ came to her at Jacob's well: when he found her there, he atked her to give him some water, but, not knowing who it was that spake, she refus'd it. Upon this occasion our blessed faviour shows his pity to this ignorunt and stupid sinner, that was insensible of the real necessity the shood in of living water: he wrought conviction upon her conscience, and at length manifested himself to her foul, until the was enamour'd with his difcourse, and convinc'd that he was the Christ, the fon of the living God.

Besides, We have many examples of special grace bestow'd on the chief of sinners. We may consider the first Adam as one. With him, as the representative and federal head of all mankind, God covenanted, that if he perfectly obe; d the law, and did not eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, they should never die, but be forever happy in a perfectagreement with God; but in case of his disobedience, they should be subject to temporal, spiritual, and eternal death. And notwithstanding the peculiar obligations laid upon him to obey, he violated the covenant, fel! from God and become the ring-leader of all the evils that have fallen upon his potterity. Nevertheless, God, having fix'd his love upon him, in due time made him the happy subject of his special Grace, and drew him to himself with his everlasting loving-kind-

ness. You may see the first promise in the bible is applied to Eve, and to Adam too, Gen. iii. 15 .--And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it skall bruise thy head, and thou skalt bruise his beel. And so it may be useful to observe, that although Manafich seduc'd the people, shed much innocent blood, built altars to idols, set up idolatry in the house of God, and worshiped the host of heaven in the temple; though he made a covenant with death and dealt with familiar spirits; though he continu'd obstinate in his sins long after he had been solemnly warned against them; yet God made him a subject of his special grace, 2 Chron. 33d chap.--- The like may be observ'd of Mary-Magdalene, out of whom Christ cast seven devils---But why should I mention any more? The time would fail me to tell of one in Herod's house, another in Akab's, and several of Nero's family, besides many of the idolatrous Ephefians and debauch'd Cerinthians, that have been hew'd for Christ's building, and became polish'd stones in it.--And thus God has clear'd off thickets, and cut down thornyhedges, to make the subjects of almighty vengeance the subjects of special mercy.

Bur, omitting many examples from the holy scriptures, it may be of use to give one from profane history. We find a credible account

deliver'd, of St. John; by a worthy writer. ‡ This apostle, after he had return'd from his banishment, in a very advanc'd age, came to Epbesius, partly to ordain bishops, and partly to let things in order; fix'd his eye upon a young man, beautiful in countenance and fervent in spirit; and then said to the chief bishop of that part of the church, " I commend this young man to thee, in the presence of Jesus Christ and his church, to educate for me and God's people." the bithop received the charge and promis'd fidelity; brought the young man home, instructed and baptiz'd him. And in a little time, through his care and diligence, he found him so good a proficient in christian doctrine and conduct, that he committed a congregation to his charge. But the young man having more liberty, his former vicious companions engag'd his heart and drew him to sumptuous and riotous banquets: and then entic'd him to theft and robbery, and afterwards to murder; from whence, by little and little, he was carried to the greatest outrage .--- Being past hope, and rejecting the doctrine of salvation, he car'd not what lengths he run; and therefore foon became the ring-leader of all villainy .--- In the mean time St. John was call'd again into those parts, and meeting with the foremention'd bishop, he

requir'd

[‡] Mr. Fox's history of the persecution; the delivery of this peice of history differ'd in some circumstances from what is here printed, though in no material point.

requir'd of him the pledge which, in the preience of Christ and the congregation, he had committed to him.---Amaz'd at the demand, he knew not what to answer, 'till St. John explain'd his meaning. But as foon as he understood the matter, with a loud and lamentable voice, he cried out the young man is dead. The apostle enquir'd by what death he died: the bishop replied he is dead to God; he is become a thief and a robber, and is now fled to the mour tains with a company of villains .--- Upon which St. John rent his garments, and, with great lamentation, hasted from the church in pursuit of him. When he came to the place he was taken by robbers; but, making no opposition, said he came on purpose to be deliver'd to their captain.---The captain met him all in his armour; but presently seeing who he was, by his countenance, was struck with confusion, and attempted to run away. But the apostle, forgetting his age and weakness, run and cried, my fon, why dost thou fly from thy father? an armed man from one naked; a young man "from an old man? Have pity on me, my on, and fear not, for there is hope of falvation. I will answer for thee unto Christ: " I will die for thee, if need be; as Christ hath " died for us, I will give my life for thee: believe me, Christ hath sent me."--- Astonish'd at these words, the young man stood still; his courage abated--- his weapons dropt--- his joints

trembled [

Disc. II. the Subjects of Special GRACE. 31 trembled—he flew to the old apostle and embrac'd him, and was baptiz'd afresh with his own tears, while he kept his right hand cover'd. The apostle, after he had promised him remission of sins through Christ, fell down upon his knees and pray'd, and kis'd his murdering right hand, which he durst not show for shame before. Then he brought him to the congregation, pray'd for him with continual prayer and daily fastings, comforted his heart with many sentences, restor'd him to the congregation, made him a great example of regeneration and a token of the visible resurrection.

OTHE tich mercy of God, and his great love wherewith he loves finners! How often does he fix the time to recover them, when they are going on full career in fin! O the furprizing love! that he should ever anticipate the intentions of their hearts, and meet them contrary to all their hopes and expectations! Surely, 'tis not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. And this leads me

THIRDLY, to consider of some reasons why God is pleas'd to make some of the chief of sinners the subjects of special grace. There is an infinite sitness in the thing's being done, or he would never do it. Mean and pernicious designs are bassled, and glorious designs are brought about hereby, or God would not do it. But what are the reasons?

Answ.

Answer 1. One reason may be that no flesh should glory in his presence. Men are as prone to set up themselves, and to declaim upon their own abilities, as the sparks are to sly upwards. Though we profess good principles, and say that no man in a natural state is pleas'd with Jesus Christ and the gospel way of salvation by him; and that no man can overcome his natural aversion to God and holiness, yet we are exceeding prone to facrifice to our net, and burn incense to our own drag. And all the unconverted practically say, that if they reform their lives and seek after salvation, God is obliged to bestow it upon them.

Now, God may chuse and call the chief of sinners, while many of the demurer are left to perish in their sins, to humble the pride, and confound the wisdom of the world. This tends to reproach the corrupt principles of haughty men, and to cut off boasting in their duties; to men, and to cut off boafting in their duties; to convince the world that polluted guilty creatures have no hand in a work of faving grace upon their fouls. It teaches us that God may withhold and deny the fecret converting energy of his word to formal professors, while he makes it mighty and faving in its influences upon some outrageous sinners. And what more tends to humble the pride of those that dare impudently charge God with insulting his creatures, than to see that the conscientious, self-righteous soul can no more get his heart chang'd than a viner can no more get his heart chang'd than a viper can ceafe

tease to be poison, while he observes another who has been a notorious sinner, effectually drawn to Christ? Though men acknowledge their dependance upon God, and that he has a right to do what he will with his own, yet they retain self-sufficient principles in their hearts, until they are bowed at the foot of God. Tis the natural turn of haughty, guilty, unrenewed man, to contest with God; and by use, he becomes more rooted and fix'd in his damning principles. Therefore God may, to convince the proud and self-righteous, leave many formal professors to die without mercy, while he calls and saves some of the chief of sinners, whom he has suffer'd to run great lengths in wickedness.

2. Another reason may be to illustrate the glory of the divine attributes in the talvation of sinners. The conversion of sinners is the most wonderful work of God, and discovers more of his glory than any other of his works. But men are very apt to look upon it as a small matter, unless they are made sensible of it by the effectual working of divine grace. Though mercy and truth, righteousness and peace harmonize in the divine plan of salvation, yet they do not suitably acknowledge the glory of God shining therein. And therefore, God may, to convince men of his glory, save some of the chief of sinners, while many of the harmless are rejected.

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This is a wonderful display of his power. Indeed, the vast frame of nature, and its preservation in that order and beauty in which it appears, are displays of the power of God. The many strange occurrences that have lately happen'd in Europe, Africa, and America, in frequent and terrible earthquakes, tend to possess the human mind with a deep sense of the divine Majesty and power. We may now say as-Job ix. 3--6, 10. If he will contend with him, be cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in beart, and mighty in strength: who kath hardned himself against kim, and hath prospered? Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which skaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Which doth great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number. And with holy David, 1 Chron. xvi. 24, 25, 28. Declare his glory among the heathen: his marvellous works among all nations. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: be also is to be seared above all gods. Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. But the conversion of a sinner, especially the chief of sinners, is a more glorious display of divine power, than turning and ordering all the vast wheels of nature and providence, whither in an ordinary or an extraordinary manner. Hence 'tis cail'd a work of his strong arm; a work of the mighty power of God,

God, and the exceeding greatness of his power. The inanimate world makes no voluntary resistance to the divine management; but in regenerating souls, the power and policy of indwelling sin, and all the powers of hell rise up and withstand it. And if it is a greater display of God's power to regenerate and convert any one sinner, than 'tis to create and govern the natural world, 'tis still a further and higher display of God's power to convert the chief of sinners. Tis a greater display of power to conquer a great and strong army of enemies, than a less and weaker army. Tis a greater discovery of divine power to conquer the stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness, than to regenerate an infant, or even some adult persons. In converting the chief of sinners, there are great enemies to all evangelical goodness, turn'd to be the friends of God and holiness; the resolute vassals of satan, become the dutiful subjects of the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Tis a greater display of God's power to raise up souls unto spiritual life that have lain dead and in the graves of their sins twenty, thirty, or forty years, than to raise them: that are but new dead. The deeper and stronger sin has taken root in the heart, the more power is display'd in rooting of it out. 'Tis a miracle of divine power to turn a furious line into of divine power to turn a furious lion into a meek and gentle lamb; or a fierce leopard that flies upon the prey, into an humble and loving Christian.

AGAIN, 'Tis a wonderful display of the patience and forbearance of God. When we observe the most audacious and profane, and hear the dreadful imprecations that some wish to themselves and to their neighbours; when we see them stretching out their hands against God, and strengthening themselves against the Almighty; bidding defiance to his authority and power, and virtually challenging him to do his worst, we are ready to look, with trembling expectation, that his foul will foon be avenged of all fuch And indeed, many fuch are suddenly destroy'd, and that without remedy .--- But some are favingly converted: and O how long did God bear with them in their most provoking fins, that the might have a space to repent, when he was angry enough, and had power enough, to revenge all their infulting provocations! If any present are pluck'd as brands from the burning, they now admire that God did not make his sword drunk with their blood. may they with holy wonder say, "the Lord is " merciful and gracious, flow to anger, and plen-" teous in mercy. He hash not dealt with us " after our fins: nor rewarded us according to " our iniquities. For as the heavens are high " above the earth: so great is his patience in " not executing his hot displeasure upon us."---God, by suffering the chief of sinners to arrive to the height of wickedness, and then recovering and making them the subjects of his special grace, difcovers

discovers wonderful patience. It agrees with his conduct to Ifrael of old, after they had abufed his mercy by disobedience and ingratitude, Hof.xi.7--9. And my people are bent to backfliding from me: tho they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt bim. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, I fracl? how sha'l I makethee as Admah? bow shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. &c---If God was not a Being of infinite patience as well as power, he could not bear with obstinate offenders as he does. No man, nor angel cou'd bear the indignities of one day, whichGod bears from many stubborn sinners for years together. There is not one fin before conversion but what proclaims the long-suffering of God; and the greater and more aggravated men's fins are, so much the clearer and fuller are the evidences of his forbearance. For this end God bore with Paul in his greatest rage against the church, that he might shew forth his patience, and then bring him over to embrace the same religion he had persecuted, 1 Tim. i. 16. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first fesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. When God converts a great sinner, and one that has lived long in perverteness, he discovers his infinite patience, and one main end of his fo doing is to proclaim the immeasurable lengths of it.

AGAIN, Tis a wonderful display of the wifdom of God. The conversion of one soul is a curious piece of divine skill, and a clear discovery of the wisdom of the artificer. God has laid the delign of the gospel in such a manner, as to provide for his own glory, and to make such contemptible, filthy creatures as fallen men, fit for the enjoyment of him. And in the Language of the prophet in another case, so we may lay respecting the conversion of a sinner; wis bath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counseller, bath taught him? With whem took he counsel? And who instructed bim in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and skewed bim the way of understanding? And it increases the wender, when those that have fed themselves in the filthy sties of their sensual lusts; have wallowed in the mud of filthines and the abominable pollutions of fin; have contrived mischief against the Lord's people, and wasted and spoiled his vineyard; I say, it increases the wender, when such as those are cleansed from their filthiness and endow'd with an holy and heavenly temper. The more vile sinners have been, the more divine wisdom shines in their recovery. The more desperate the disease, the brighter the skill of the phisician in working a cure. When Jesus Christ steps in and works a cure in some desperate case, upon some remarkable sinner, it tends to spread abroad the same of his skill in the most obstinate cases. Such

an instance makes us break out in the pious language of scripture, "Thine, O Lord, is the great-" ness, and the glory, and the victory, and the "majesty: thine is the kingdom, and thou art "exalted as head above all." Or, with the four and twenty elders, when they fall down before the Lamb, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy " is the Lamb to receive riches, and wisdom, " and honor, and glory, and bleffing, in the "highest degree that creatures can give them."
O the wisdom of God, in picking up such overgrown sinners, that can find no room for boasting! He might have converted them much sooner, or restrained them from the prodigious lengths which they have run in wickedness; but he suffer'd them to take their full swing, and when all considerate persons look'd for God to come and strike the fatal blow, they met with an happy disappointment, and satan was utterly defeated. The chief of sinners become eminent faints, and great enemies to the cross of Christ become his zealous friends: and having received the grace of God, out of the abundance that is in their hearts, they testify that Jesus is the Christ, while all that know and hear them are amazed.

AGAIN, 'Tis a wonderful display of divine mercy. 'Tis an infinite mercy in God to give any succour to those that have brought themselves into misery, and to grant pardon to any that have offended. And hence God has given

this description of himself; "the Lord, the " Lord God merciful and gracious; abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for "thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and in." And the conversion of great sinners is such a display of the attribute of mercy as makes heaven ring with praises, and hell with rage and sury. It sets saints and angels a wondering to see the sensual, prosane wretches and blasphemers, that sat their mouth against the heavens; to see the covetous that made the world their god, seiz'd in the midst of their wickedness and idolatry, and led to partake of the great salvation. Hereby it is made manifest that there is more mercy in God's heart, than that there is more mercy in God's heart, than there is vileness in men's fins. When they have spent all their living in riots or other hateful lusts, there are stores of mercy equal to all their wants. . By how much the greater their fins have been, by so much the greater the superabundant mercy of God in their salvation appears. The grace of God rises higher than sins, and bears all down before it. Paul had reproach'd the name, vilified the character, and blasphemed the person of our Lord Jesus Christ; he had persecuted the disciples, and breath'd out threatnings and slaughter against them. Well might he, and well may other great sinners that are renew'd and saved, join with him and say, the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus: For in justi-العاد أسلط المنافيون

fying, and sanctifying such unholy creatures, the grace of God abounds beyond all measure or possibility of expression. He thereby spreads abroad the exceeding riches of his mercy and grace, and shows us that the stores of his mercy are inexhaustible, and that he can save what sinners he pleases. Though men's sins are more in number than can be reckon'd up, and heavier in number than can be reckon'd up, and heavier in number than can be reckon'd up, and heavier than the sand upon the sea-shore, yet his mercy surpasses them all. As he says of his mercy in returning the captivity of his people, so and much more may be said of his mercy in the conversion of such sinners. Fer. xxxiii. 8, 9. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the rood that I do unto them: which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the presperity that I procure unto it. God works such a wonder in their conversion, and gives such an evidence of the riches of his mercy, that others can't but behold and admire it.—Yea, the independercy of divine mercy is clearly display'd herein. When God comes and faves the chief of sinners, while some others are let alone to die in their sins, it is a strong evidence that there is no motive out of himself to bestow this salvation. 'Tis enough to con-

vince

vince the whole world, that God is no more oblig'd to the negatively blameless, nor to them that are of a civil behaviour, than he is to them that fin with a high hand. Such conversions are an excellent comment upon what St. Paul says, Rom. ix. 15, 16. For ke saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of kim that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. If he shews mercy to some of the chief of sinners, and leaves others to perish, he can't be accused of injustice: Nothing moves him to convert any, but his own gracious inclination; and who those should be, depends upon his arbitrary pleasure: 'tis not from the foresight of the good inclinations or actions of any, that some are taken while others are left. When God was press'd down with the sins of Israel, and every one might expect their destruction, he sent them a pardon. Isai. xliii. 22---25. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt-offerings, neither hast thou boneured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou kast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I am be that E

that blotteth sut thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. The same mercy which they have abused and despised, is gloristed in their salvation. Exek. xxxvi. 21, 25. But I had pity for mine boly name, which the ksuse of Israel had profuned among the heathen whicher they went. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your suit sincs, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.

3. Another reason may be to illustrate the sufficiency and excellency of Christ's sacrifice. The sacrifice of Christ is of sufficient value to purchase all the grace of the new covenant and bring souls to glory. The dignity of his person rendered his sufferings more than an equivalent, to secure the dignity of the supreme governor, to expiate the fins of men, and procure the great salvation offer'd in the gospel. He gave his life a ransom, and paid a most satisfactory price, to redeem sinners from the curse of the law, and make them happy in the divine savour sorever. When man was without strength, utterly ruin'd and helples; when none eye pitied, then the arm of the Lord brought salvation, and Jesus Christ kindly interposed. \(\| \| \--- \) Now, when the chief of sinners are converted, God gives us a clear manifestation of this truth, that there is

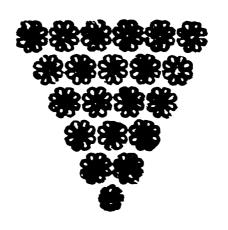
Rom. iii. 24—26. Chap. iv. 25. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Rom. v. 6. Job xxxiv. 24.

enough in Christ to answer all the revealed ends of his death. Men under conviction, when they are sensible of their crimson sins, are ready to suspect, that the payment Christ made was not sufficient for such great sinners as they see themselves to be: but when they consider that Adam, Manasseb, Mary-Magdakur and others were converted; when they see some outragious and boisterous sinners are converted, it is a glorious evidence that there is enough in the facrifice and atonement of Christ for all. Notwithstanding the reigning and raging lusts of some men, drive them to a prodigious pitch of wickedness, and render them most abeminable in the sight of God, yet he sets an invisible guard upon them, preserves their natural lives in the midst of dangers, prevents their finning the fin unto death, and, in his own time, subdues them to himself and restores his moral image in their souls. Now all this is founded upon the facrifice and atonement of Christ: these blessings are the purchase of his blood; the fruit of his meritorious death and righteousness. And his continuing, now and then, to convert the chief of sin-ners, shows us that the treasure of his merit is inexhaustible, and brings to mind what St. Paul says, Heb. vii. 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing be ever liveth to make intercession for them. We may see that the virtue of his blood is not spent, though so much has been drawn

out for the healing of the nations. The fruits of his facrifice are as valuable in the fight of Godand as prevalent as ever.

From these things, methinks, awakened sin-ners, under discouraging temptations, shou'd be greatly encouraged to press after converting grace. The glory of the divine attributes, and the il-The glory of the divine attributes, and the illustration of the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, are great encouragements to the chief of sinners, that they may be effectually called, as well as others. Who can tell but the grace of God might seize upon and conquer you, though you were a thousand times more stubborn than you be; and the purifying virtue of Christ's blood be applied for your cleansing, though you were inexpressibly more defiled? All your stoutness is infinitely below the conquering power and grace of God; and all your defilement may be done away by the incomparable virtue of Christ's blood. Never a sinner went to hell that could truly say, there was not grace enough in God's truly say, there was not grace enough in God's heart to subdue him, or merit enough in Christ's blood to save him. Heaven itself, as glorious as it is, is a mansion full of millions that have been great sinners; and it was the infinite love of God, and the redeeming grace of Christ that followed after, overtook and subdu'd them. O but you may join with that blessed number, and sing as it is written, Rev. i. 5, 6 .--- And from

Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the surst 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 bath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.



Disc.

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DISCOURSE III.

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I. TIM. I. 15.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

A VING consider'd the nature and in the necessity of special grace, in the first discourse, and the evidences and reasons of the doctrine in the second; the way is open to a more particular Application than any we have yet made. And this I design for your present entertainment.

Therefore,

Use I. Let no man, from hence, venture to add to, or continue in his sins. Tis a common objection against our doctrine, that it tends to make men presume and sin on with a high hand:

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for if the chief of sinners are sometimes saved, while some that make a goodly appearance and are of a sober life perish, then (say they,) we stand as fair for heaven in our profane way of living as any: Therefore tis to no purpose to resorm and take pains for salvation. And so, according to their own hearts, they will continue

in fin that grace may abound.
But stop a little, presuming sinner, though our doctrine is a great encouragement to those who think their fins are too great to be forgiven, and their crimson stains too deep to be cleansed, as poor awakned finners are apt to imagine, yet it gives no encouragement to live in sin. For though the chief of sinners are sometimes made the subjects of God's grace, yet he saves none in their sins, nor will he by any means clear the guilty, or always keep filence. The defign of Christ in becoming a facrifice for men, was their sanctification. Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. But the way of fin inclines to death; and its footsteps to the dead: And God threatens the presumer, that continues in his wickedness, that a dart skall strike through his liver, and he shall be sent to everlasting Burnings. What grounds, then, for presumption, is there in our doctrine? When it is certain, not only from the nature of the truths afferted, but from the word of truth, that no person continuing in sin shall

shall be saved? they who are saved, are qualified, by the implantation of a new nature, for the promised salvation; and they shall be saved: but they who continue in a state of sin, will never find our doctrine any excuse to them. they'l never obtain salvation by virtue of Christ's merits, that don't obtain it upon gospel pro-

Tis a reflection upon the perfections of the divine nature, to expect falvation in a course of finning. The moral perfections of God harmoniously conspire together in the salvation of sinners: however distinct we ought to be in our conceptions of them, yet they are not divided in themselves, nor do they dissent from one another in our redemption by Jesus Christ. When he manifests the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared unto glory, it must be agreeable to justice and holiness. The holiness and justice of God shine forth in the gospel, as well as in the law, Pfal. lxxxv. 10. How vain is it therefore for you to hope for falvation, unless the image of God's holiness is renewed in your minds, your lusts and passions mortified, and your souls rais'd up to spiritual objects? for what concord can there be, between impure, unholy souls, and an infinitely holy God; or how could you be employ'd in the hely exercises of the heavenly world, without an holy nature? God indeed, will glorify the attribute of his mercy in the falvation

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vation of some great sinners; but he will glorify the attribute of his justice in your eternal damnation, unless you have an holy nature suited to the state and business of heaven. Therefore for you to expect happiness in a way that reflects upon the perfections of God is great madness. None are more likely to have the full vials of incensed justice pour'd out upon them, than such as encourage themselves and others in the vilest lusts, from the doctrine of the free grace of God, and benefits of Christ revealed in the gospel. Though Christ came into the world to save the chief of sumers, yet God never detign'd to give the least countenance to sin, but in this way to condemn it and to discover the infinite odiousness of it to his holy nature.

Surely, if these things are so, it argues the exceeding baseness of your heart, to continue in sin because the chief of sinners are made the subjects of special grace. Such astonishing grace deserves great respect and esteem: is the highest contempt and abuse to continue rejecting mercy, because God proclaims himself the Lord, the Lord God mercisul and gra-Why then, should any of you endanger the everlasting ruin of your immortal souls? If you fiy to Christ now under a due sense of your being finners by nature and practice, and under a sense of the excellency of his person and value of his facrifice, this would well become you. Dat it is most absurd to continue in sin because Icius

Jesus Christ is able to save, or because the power, mercy and wisdom of God may be display'd in your salvation, no doubt thousands are now roaring in hell for presuming upon the mercy of God in a way opposite to his justice; and if you should go on doing evil that good may come, your damnation will be just.

Use II. Let the confideration of Christ's fav-Use II. Let the confideration of Christ's faving the chief of sinners, encourage the awaken'd among us to look unto him for needed salvation. The Lord sends out his ambassadors on a treaty of peace; he offers peace by them, not because he stands in need of your friendship, but merely from his great love and grace in Christ Jesus. We come with the most astonishing news from heaven; and in the name of Christ, our blessed master, we offer you salvation upon the most honorable and easy terms. God might require perfect obedience to the whole law, and demand satisfaction of us for all the wrongs and injuries we have done his Justice; but as a minister of Christ I offer you peace and pardon, upon your Christ I offer you peace and pardon, upon your looking to Christ, and pleading the atonement of his blood. He has sent me this day, with a deep concern for your eternal welfare upon my spirit, to let you know what good will the God of heaven and earth bears to sinners, and how desirous he is to make them happy.---Though some of you have grey hairs upon you, and according to the course of nature, are upon the

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verge of the grave; yet if you will look unto Christ you shall be saved.—Or if you are in the bloom or vigor of life, and have been walking in the way of your own heart, and in the light of your own eyes, yet if you will now look unto Christ you shall be saved from sin and misery.

Now, for motive to quicken your pace, consider, that Jesus Christ is as able to destroy you in bell, as to bestow salvation upon you. He is not only the faviour, but the judge, the righteous judge; the judge that has all power in heaven and earth committed to him. Though he once came in the form of a servant, yet as a judge he will assume his own proper greatness, and appear in that state which is suitable to the dignity of his office. The heavens shall pass away like a icrowl, and the elements melt with fervent heat, while the earth shall tremble and quake, and the foundations of the hills shake, and be removed, because he is wroth.---To shew forth his power and warn a finful world of the danger of destruction, while they reject the invitations of the gospel, he has distress'd and terrified them by repeated Earthquakes--- These, in the hand of Christ, have, in different parts of the world, destroy'd multitudes in times past, and we have reason to expect greater destructions by them in time yet to come, if gospel sinners neglect the great salvation .--- If you would see the hastning and dreadful ruin of obstinate sinners, reslect upon the divine threatnings of this guilty land;

and confider the many thousands that have been lately destroy'd in Portugal, Spain, and on the coasts of Barbary, by this tremendous dispensetion of heaven. # Surely, he that, by inundations and earthquakes, has deftroy'd fuch multitudes in those places; is able to destroy us also, and is not the language of their ruin, unto us, what our bleffed Lord faid to the men of Jerusalem, Luk. xiii. 3. Except ve repent, ye skell ali likewise perish. How toon an obstinate refutal of Christ and his purchased salvation may fetch down almighty vengeance, who can tell? --- God has given us fair warning: he has come to our houses, and knocked and call'd at every door: he threatens to open the earth and take us in alive: he threatens to fend the water from its bowels and overwhelm us in a moment, as he has done with others. Perhaps, his delay for a little while emboldens you to think that he will not execute his treatnings. You refolv'd, in the time of your distress, to forsake all for Christ and cleave to him forever; but you have not fulfill'd your resolutions to this day, and this neglect provokes him to execute the threatned evil. But whither you are swallowed up by earthquakes or not, yet if you do not lock unto Christ, he will, in some way or other, soon sentence

^{† &#}x27;Tis suppos'd that about 3000 souls were destroy'd at St. Ubes; about 40,000 at Liston: 60,000 Mores and Jews on the coasts of Barbary, besides great destruction in other places last November.

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you to everlasting destruction from his presence

and the glory of his power.

But then consider further, that as Christ is able to destroy you in hell, so he is able also to Jave and bring you to keaven. He can not only arm himself with thunder, and fill the guilty with everlasting dispair, but is able to bestow inexpresible felicities in heaven, where there is no fin to defile ner grief to disturb forever. Under awakening and conviction, you are sometimes ready to imagine your fins are so great that they can never be forgiven you. But you ought to confider that Christ gives clear evidences of his ability to lave, in the actual falvation of the chief of finners. We have had notable instances of the conversion of such; and in that way have such wonderful discoveries of his ability as to leave no room justly to doubt of it.

YEA, Christ has lately wrought a work upon the body of a person before many credible witnesses, (of which you have doubtless heard,) that has a good tendency to remove your Jealouses respecting his ability. He put forth his saving power in suddenly restoring sight to one that was blind, speech to one that was speechless, and strength to rise up and walk to one that had been bed-rid for more than two years.*

Surely

^{*} The instance refer'd to is a young woman at Ipswid who had been confin'd to her bed two years and two months---had not been able to speak one loud word for about

Surely we may well say that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and therefore that there is no want of ability in him to save, even to the attermost. Why then, will you reject the saviour that is provided for sinners? the greatness of your sins is no sufficient plea: for you may go boldly unto God, in the name of Christ Jesus, and say, "pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." It will be no dishonour to God if he should forgive great sins, since there is such a great and able Saviour provided. I herefore cavil no longer against the invitations of the gos-

one year and eight months---had been speechless about sour weeks; and blind about three weeks. At her desire several ministers met, on December 15th 1755. in the room where the was confined, and join'd, with a number of private chilftians, in prayer for her. And in the time of one of the prayers, while her case was spreading before the Lord, she sprang up in the bed, opened her eyes and spake with a loud voice, expressing her great surprize at the power and grace of Christ Jesus; calling upon all to help her praise God, for the marvelious work he had wrought upon her foul and her body that day .--- Her fight and speech recovered gradually, till, in about an hour, they were both clear and distinct. The same day she was dress'd and walk'd several times across the room without leading; and with a little help went abroad .-- She has continu'd now, for several months, to gain ilrength; attends the public worship of God, and gives good evidence of her being a real christian .--- I suppress further particulars, expecting one of the ministers will give the publie a narrative of the whole .-- But what I then law and heard brought to mind our faviour's words to John, " the blind re-" ceive their light, the lame walk, and the tongue of the damb fing."

pel;

756 The IMPROVEMENT of Disc. III. pel; but now give honor to God, and trust in and love his Son Jesus.

Use III. Let no true christians dispair of the conversion of their friends from the consideration of their being great sinners. 'Tis probable that some of God's people, who have relatives and friends in a state of nature, are ready to give over all hope of their being converted. They have not only liv'd in a course of vanity or other wickedness; but, under peculiar visitations, when others are pressing into the kingdom of heaven, God's calls seem to take no good effect upon them. Notwithstanding they are called by the word and common providence, by extraordinary dispensations at home, and more shocking ones abroad, they still remain in their carnal security.

Is this the case with a kind husband or beloved wife; with a tender parent or a dear and promising child? Have you an old friend or acquaintance, a near neighbour or companion, that

appears to be harden'd in fin, under all the differentations? Is it an heart affecting confideration to you, that such an one by name seems fully set against God and an open despiser of the gospel-salvation?—— this indeed is a very painful tho't, and, I believe, many have their hearts made sad by such ressections at this day. Perhaps, you see your friends exalted in pride, with hearts full of scorn: they can bear no restraints upon their desires, no confinement to their closets, no abridg-

ment

ment of sensual delights; but are sonder than ever of all their idels. You pity their condition and mourn in Zion for their abounding wickedness in this day of visitation --- Yea, you begin to think that there is no hope, fince, instead of being awakened, they are entirely unaffected under the most alarming calls. --- But although their case looks exceeding dark, yet it is not desperate; and therefore you should not be discouraged from the diligent use of appointed means for their conversion. Perhaps, if you reflect upon your own past life, you may see that you have been as much hardened in sin, as proud boasters, as obstinately bent upon the way of your own hearts, and as great and haughty despisers of Jesus Christ and his salvation as any of them be. And yet you obtained mercy.---Were not Peter and Andrew, were not the Samaritan woman and Mary-Magdalene; yea, were not some of you full as unlikely to be converted as your particular friends and relatives, whose hardness and impenitence so deeply affect your hearts? Tho' fatan has so great power over them at present, as to keep the goods in peace; yet Christ Jesus is able to take away his armour and spoil him of his goods. If they are possess'd with seven devils, the power and grace of Christ is enough to open the door and conquer all these enemies; and there is ground of hope that he will do it for them so long as he continues them in a state of probation. USE

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Use IV. Our doctrine affords ground of fappert to those christians that are desponding under a sense of the greatness of their own fins. There are some gracious persons, who, when they redect upon their past sins and the several aggravations of them, are ready to thint and are brought almost into dispair. How many socie a sense of the divine forgiveness, tall into sin, complain of broken bones, have their souls fill a with trouble, and go as arraing all the day long without the sun. Indivelling an rages, and their spirits are overwhelmed within them.

But as matter of support let such consider.

The realized of God to belo his people under all their trials. "Tis very unreasonable that you Thould depart from the living God, through an evil heart of unbelief, you have had a fufficiency of grace applied to your fouls for you, effectual calling, when you could not to much as pray for it in a right manner. And will rost God make his grace fufficient for you now he has restored you to his favour and image? Did your heavenly Father embrace you in the arms of coverant merey, when you lay in the open field, call out to the leathing of your perions? and will he call you off now he has cover'd you with the colors of his fon's everiating rightcourners? furely God had recken'd up all the expence of grace and meric he muit be at for you, before he is to the hely Spirit to renew and fanctify your fauls: and therefore he not only took care

of your convertion; but determined that as he had begun a good work, to carry it on to the day of Christ Jeius. And you have a right, by grant, to apply to him, to plead his truth and hithfulnes, his promise and name, for your relief, though you had no right to do so before your convertion, Why did God dignity you fouls with new and divine qualities, if he never intended to afford you the needful succours of his grace? Has he given you his son Christ Jeius, that mercy of ail mercies; and will he not, with him, freely give you all things? the conclusion is just, and you may confidently rely upon it: that he that has given you the greatest blessing that ever heaven afforded, will not deny you the lesser blessings of his covenant.

And then, God is not only willing but able to devices of fatan. Christians find that the law of fin dwells to fecretly in the heart, that it is path finding out: when the defires of finning feem to be taken away, yet there is an unfearchable referve in a deceitful heart, where fin is waiting for a more suitable object, or a more vigorous temptation. By this fecret enemy they are often furprized and carried away captive; hurried along to the committion of fin, by which they dishenor God and break the peace of their own minds. Perhaps its the fears of being suddenly taken by this enemy that lies in ambuth, that new everwhelms your spirits. But, allow-

ing sin to be as intriguing and subtil as the old serpent; allowing also that all its remaining power and policy is employ'd against you, yet God is able to strengthen you against, and give you victory over it. Can a few broken ranks withstand him that has subdu'd legions of regular forces? Shall the morning dew abide the shining fun that has scatter'd the thickest clouds; or a few fands overcome the power that has brought down the lofty mountains, and fill'd up the deepest vallies? And has Christ Jesus overcome and subdued your stout heart when he found you in a state of sin, fully bent upon lust? Has he pursu'd, overtaken and overthrown the whole Ægyptian army in the red sea, when they hotly pursu'd you; why then should you suffect his ability or readiness to save and deliver from the remainder of your enemies?

Use V. Has grace abounded toward some of you, when you looked upon your selves the chief of sinters? O then endeavour to excell others in all gracious exercises. You, above all men in the world, should watch against slothfulness, and look upon yourselves call'd to holy servency of spirit in serving the Lord. Who has made you to differ from your old companions in sin? Who has distinguished you by spiritual excellencies, from those that are obtainately bent upon indulging the principles of sin, with all its affections? Was it not an almighty arm that drew

mankind:

drew you out of the belly of hell? While God has referved many millions of great finners, to glorify his vindictive justice upon them forever, he had his eye fixed upon you, with everlasting designs of glorifying free and sovereign mercy in your salvation. Hence he has rescu'd you from the jaws of the devouring lion, by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and sealed you with the evidence of his victories. You ought therefore to surrender up all to ries. You ought therefore to surrender up all to his will, and to be intirely devoted to his service and glory without intermission. Yea, that you should be made the subjects of special grace, after you had distinguished your selves by the most abominable works, is a peculiar obligation upon you to excell in all christian graces.

Particularly, you are hereby called to admire and praise the glorious author of this grace, in proportion to the contempt you have cast upon him. Has God exalted you from the state of sinning devils to the state of praising angels? Surely, you have need of an angel's tongue to shew forth the praises of him that has loved you, and washed you in his blood. It was the distinguishing grace of God in Christ Jesus to the disciples, that made one of them enquire, "How it was that Christ would manifest him-" felf unto them, and not unto the world. They could see no reason in themselves, why he should speak of any more special manifestation of his love to them, than to the rest of

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mankind: it was matter of admiration to them, that he should chuse to dignify them with his special favours, while he hid these things from the wife and prudent .--- Perhaps you have been the ring-leader in all mischief and villany, in the family or neighbourhood; and now you are singled out from them all to be an everlasting monument of sovereign grace, while they are left to perish in their sins; you are actually escaped from the condemnation, to which you were exposed; but as they were by nature subject and exposed to the wrath of God, so that wrath abideth on them. Many about you that had agreable natural tempers, and far outshin'd you in the civil life, are fit for nothing but the burning, while you are renew'd and qualified for the enjoyments and employments of the heavenly state. O how wonderful is that grace that has turn'd and subdu'd such a furious tinner as you was. Did it not fill your foul with aftonishment, when Christ sirst appear'd in his amiable characters to fave you? And have you not reason to admire and praise the author of this falvation now as much as ever? St. Paul seems to be as much astonished at distinguishing grace many years after his conversion, as at the time of his first effectual calling. " I thank Jesus Christ, says he, that hath counted me faithful, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecuter, and injurious: but I obtained mercy!"--- He set his sins and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

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one over against the other, to enhance the mercy of his conversion. And have you no reason to shy, "O wonderful grace! I, who was before a vain perion, an open despiler and a persecutor " of Christ, now have obtained mercy. I, a " vile labbath-breaker, a scotter at true religion; " a coretous worldling; but now have obtain-" ed mercy!--- O who would have thought " that such a monster of wickedness as I was, " thould ever have obtained mercy !--- I, whose " heart was an habitation of devils, and whose " life was a continued scene of flagrant impie-" ties of sensuality; but now have obtained " mercy." --- O who can withstand effectual grace, when once Christ comes to take them near to himself! Those whom the Father has given him, he will recover, and none of them shall be able to keep themselves out of his hands when the let time of their recovery is come. what cannot infinite, altonishing grace do for sinners.

AGAIN, You are hereby called to abound in love to God and his fon Jefus. Has the grace of God abounded in your conversion and consolation? Then let your love to him increase and abound daily. O with what sacred love and surprize was you fill'd, when the light of the glorious gospel of Christ first broke in upon your soul? You then thought that you could be willing to do or suffer any thing for Christ. And now God expects you should call to remembrance

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membrance the former days, in which you could endure a great fight of afflictions. Then the glory of God, the honor of Christ, and the deformity of fin, appear'd great realities to you, and your fouls were fill'd with the love of God to the brim. After you had been rolling upon the boultrous teas through a dark night, you bid a welcome to the Son of rightcoulness that thone in upon your fouls, and brought a divine calm. And is not the mercy as great, and the giver as amiable now as heretozore? If to, why should your love be less? The remission of great sins, argues the great love of God, and therefore it should be improved as a powerful motive to the more orders love of him. powerful motive to the more ardent love of him, agreable to Isi. iv. 2. 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.

AGAIN, Let your *humility* be as low, as ever your vain imaginations have been lofty. It argues great pride in any, to think that falvation is, in part, owing to their own endeavours. Therefore, if God has made you the subjects of his special grace, watch against self-exaltation. What have you to boast of, after all that you have received? You had robbed God of his glory, violated his holy and righteous laws, you ow'd more than ten thousand talents, and had nothing to pay: you was exposed, not only to an arrest by death, but to the prison of eternal darkness.

God

God saw nothing in you, or done by you, to recommend you to his favour: and yet, he was pleased to magnify the riches of his free and sovereign mercy in your effectual calling. Surely, you have the more reason to lie in the dust, and say with the apostle, unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given! Might not St. Paul, who became obedient to the heavenly vision; and, upon the divine discovery made to him of the saviour, enquir'd into his will, and immediately followed him; might not that eminent preacher of Christ Jesus, who consounded the fews at Damaseus, and exposed himself to the greatest dif-Christ Jesus, who consounded the Jews at Da-mascus, and exposed himself to the greatest dis-ficulties and dangers for Christ and the gospel, and gave the brightest example of holiness; I say, might not this holy apostle set himself as high as other saints in general? No, less than the least; deserving the least esteem; not wor-thy of the name of a saint. And are not you as little of a saint as Paul was; as mean and un-worthy as he? You would have little reason to beast of your attainments or services, though you boast of your attainments or services, though you had puriu'd the reveal'd designs of Christ's mediatorial office, in destroying the works of the devil, without intermission.

AGAIN, Abbor all sin as much as ever you have cares'd it. At your first conversion, you faw that all indisposition to duty, all weariness in duty, all carnality and formality under duty, arose from your aversation to God; you saw that all rebellion

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rebellion against grace, all the positive actings of sin, its importunity and urgency, all its manifold particular successes were from enmity against God. And from this view, your sins were exceeding lothsome in your sight, agreeable to that, Exek. xxxvi. 29, 31. I will also able to that, Ezek. xxxvi. 29, 31. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses, and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no samine upon you. Then skall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and skall lothe your selves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Times of pardoning great fins, sanctifying the soul, and giving the spirit of adoption, are times of self-lothing. Every time God manifests himself in a covenant way to your souls, you will abhor the sin you lov'd, and deeply grieve at what you rejoye'd in: shame and forrow will follow upon the remembrance, though you were converted years ago. Every time you look, by faith, upon the dishonor you have done to God, the ruin you brought upon yourselves, and the injury done to your fellow men, you will tremble and abhor yourselves for your own madness. The clearer you see your adoption, and your The clearer you see your adoption, and your personal interest in Christ and the covenant of grace, the more deeply a sense of sin will touch

your heart with godly sorrow and mourning.

AGAIN, carefully avoid every thing that has a tendency to hinder any gracious exercises. If God withdraws divine influence in a sovereign

way, you ought to be submissive; but it becomes you to take heed that you do nothing that has a moral tendency to hinder the exercise of grace. Particularly, don't debauch your minds with carnal pleasures, and so render your selves unfit for duty. Avoid all manner of sin,

telves untit for duty. Avoid all manner of fin, as it tends to bring a cloud over the evidences of your effectual calling, and as it tends to grieve the spirit of God, and provoke him to withhold the witness of your being the children of God.

AGAIN, Maintain and strengthen your faith, by an entire reliance upon Christ, as the high priest of our profession. The consideration of your being effectually called may be a good means to excite and increase your faith. The conversion of great singers is a good credential from heaven, of the invaluable worth of Christ's blood in the account of God the Father. But blood in the account of God the Father. But if you stagger at his power and merit, after he has done so much for you, it is an affront offer'd him, and will expose you to the temptations of fatan, to look for help from some other quarter. Hearken to the counsel Christ gives his disciples. Joh. xiv. 11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works sake. Unbelief is not only a sinful reflection upon the person and works of Christ, but 'tis a vile reflection upon the sufficiency of his sacrifice, and a great injury to your own peace and soul-prosperity. When you get into an unbelieving frame, Christ may, with great propriety,

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propriety, say to you, as he once said to those disciples that could not cure the lunatick young man, O faithless and perverse generation, lower long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Has Christ put forth his power and skill, and applied the virtue of his blood in working so great a cure upon your souls? And will you not rely upon the fulness that is in him? O you ought to live the more confidently upon Christ, because he has bestow'd his purchased salvation upon the chief of sinners!--- And indeed, you can't live a life of holy communion with God, and truly christian obedience, unless you live by faith on the ion of God. Love to Christ and divine things, delight in duties, mourning for an abient God, and hatred of fin, will decay, unless you keep up the exercise of faith. But if the Lord increases your faith, and causes you to remember the love of your espousals, and the kindness of your youth, your hearts will burn within you, as a fire that has a vehement flame, and you will mount up heaven-ward, as upon the wings of eagles.



Disc.



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DISCOURSE IV.

I. Tim. I. 15.

This is a faithful faying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

the efficacy of divine grace in the control version of great sinners. And O that this grace may be bestow'd upon us all, that we may be dispos'd, and inclin'd to live to the giory of God, the giver of all grace!

Come we now, according to the method proposed, to consider the second doctrine, viz.

Obs. II. That the Lord Fesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, is a saying which demands the present acceptation of all men.

CHRIST came to feek and fave that which was lost: The end and measure of his love, was the falvation of his church; and he came to deliver it from this present evil world, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This is the good news of the gospel, that lays the sure foundation to build all our hopes of heaven upon. It is a truth which St. Paul found the benefit of, and frequently inculcated upon others. 'Tis a truth that he had such a deep and over-bearing fense of, as to constrain him to publish and inculcate the importance and excellency of it upon others. And it is a truth that, at this day, is well worth the present, ready and thankful acceptation of all men; which will appear from the consideration of the following things. viz.

it. God's word is expressive of the real meaning and intention of his heart. What ever he has declared, has been with the utmost sincerity, and will be accomplished with the utmost sidelity. Faithfulness is a name frequently given to God in the holy scriptures, and the contrary thereto is excluded from him. He is not a mar, that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent. His truth endureth to all generations; and though the heavens and earth shall pass away, yet his word endureth forever. God is faithful, says the apostle, by whom ye are called. Now,

Now, one revealed end of Christ's coming into the world, was to rescue the undone children of Acam from their fins; to be the great mediator and instructor of mankind; to discourage and expiate sin, and procure spiritual and eternal salvation. This God expressly declares in my text, and affures us that it is a faithful faying. And again, he says that Christ gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father. And Christ himself declares that this was one end of his coming, to give his life a ransom for many; to call sinners to repentance, to save that which is lost, &c. Herein he testified the greatness of his love, that he gave himself for his people; that he might sanctify them, and present then to himself, thining with an heavenly glory, and fully conformed to himself. Eph. v. 26, 27. Christ came to seek, and travelled, in the greatness of his strength, till he found his defire. His incarnation and fufferings respected the redemption and salvation of sinners, whom he freely loved, and for whose sake he offered himself a sacrifice to God.

Surely then, if God is the faithful and true witness, and if he has told us, in the holy scriptures, that the end of Christ's coming into the world, was to fave finners, even the chief of sinners; the inference is just, that this good news demands the present acceptation of all men. His testimony alone, is sufficient to persuade a reafonable. sonable creature, since he is a God that cannot lie; and therefore every one ought to yield a firm and unseigned assent to this important dostrine, and set to their seal that God is true. Men under a sense of sin, are apt to doubt of this truth: the news is too good, and the way of salvation too wonderful for them to credit: but great and glorious as it is, the scriptures speak of it with the greatest certainty, and give us the most solemn assurances to encourage our saith; and therefore it becomes all without delay to adventure their souls upon this divine warrant.

2. Who the Lord Jesus Christ is. If Christ is a person, and if he sustains those offices, that, according to the scriptures, deserve our attention; if he is the same, that was to come and save his people from their sins, then every one ought to give a present unseigned assent to this saying.

Now, 'tis evident that Jesus Christ is the very person that was to come: for he answers the characters which the antient prophets gave of the Messiah, with the greatest exactness.—Was the Messiah to come, spoken of as the great prophet of the church, like unto Moses; one that should teach his people the will of God, in his own person on earth? Well, Christ was the sight of the world; a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. He came into the world furnish'd to be an instructor

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of mankind in every important truth.--- Was the Meffiab to have the charlifement of our peace laid upon him; to make his faul an effering for fin, that he might ice his feed, and the pleature of the Lord might protper in his hands? And did not Jetus Christ give HEMSELF a facrifice to God, of a sweet smelling savor? He is expressly said (Heb. ix. 11.) to become an high priest of goal things to come; to be an high priest over the home of God, and to put away fin, by the facrifice of himself. Was the Messach set as king upon the holy hill of Zian? And is not all power committed to Christ Jeius, in heaven and earth? He is the head over all things to the church, which is his body. He afferted his right to a kingdom, when in this world: he fet up the kingdom of God among men, and claim'd a right over their hearts and contciences. and sent out his royal proclamations into the world, by the hands of his amballadors .-- And so, he appear'd when the scepter was departing from Judab; iprang of the same nation, tribe and family that the Messiab was to spring from; and was born in the same place, from whence the ruler of lirael was to come. In a word, his disposition and behaviour, his life and doctrine. his death and fufferings, all fuired to the character he sustain'd and the propheses of scripture concerning him. INDEED.

^{*} Had I been preaching among a people of a defilital turn. I might have been more particular, and have gone much to -

INDEED, his name evidences who he is. Christ is the same in the Greek, that Messiah is in the Hebrew tongue. Both fignify one that is aneinted or let apart to his office, according to the antient custom among the Jews when they consecrated their prophets, priests and kings, as a note of their being endow'd with the gifts and graces of the Spirit. For this reason he is said to be anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power; and to be anointed with the cyl of gladness above bis fellows, implying that he is not only endow'd, but that he is also exalted above all kings and prophets who were literally anointed, and above all the angels, having divine power and authority communicated to him. And his name Jesus intimates what he is; a servicur or the salvation of his people; not so much a saviour from temporal, as from spiritual enemies. And a glorious and merciful saviour Christ Jesus is; for the chief of sinners are saved from spiritual death, are pardoned and accepted, are reconciled and adopted, are sanctified and will at last be glorified through him. All those invaluable bleffings are to be expected in Christ already come and not in another. He has pur-

ther in evidencing the touth of the melliability of Christ: but I hope this short view will be of some service; and if any delire further light upon the subject. I recommend to their perusal the excellent letter upon the history and evidences of Christ's resurrection; by Gilbert West Esq; Also, thoughts on education of youth; a fuitable piece for heads of families. chased

chased and he confers this great salvation upon finners: the tendency and design of his mission was to offer and bestow life and blessedness upon those that were miserable. Job. iii. 17. For God sent not his for into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be Javed. His giving fight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and strength to withered and helpless limbs; and all by a word's speaking, in places of publick resort, in the presence of enemies as well as friends, might serve to convince all men that he had more than human power and skill, and more than intimate that he is able to save and deliver to the uttermost .--- Therefore, since Jesus Christ answers to all the characters given to the Messiah by the antient prophets; fince his birth, life and actions; his sufferings and death, his name and consecration conspire to show us he is the very saviour, this truth demands the chearful and present acceptation of all men.

Especially, if we consider

3. What his qualifications are. If Christ Jesus was not every way qualified to sustain the office of a saviour, it would be unreasonable for any to receive him as sent of God to save his people from their sins; for an unqualified saviour is really no saviour at all, and it is unworthy of God to provide and send such an one into the world under that character. But the Lord Jesus Christ

Christ is, on all accounts, divinely qualified to fave sinful men from all those evils they have brought upon themselves. His two natures in one person include all the needful and desirable qualifications for saving the chief of sinners, in the most exalted sense of a gospel salvation. For the evidence of this truth let us consider him in his divine and buman nature, and the union of these natures in one person.

(1.) Jesus Christ is really and truly God; co-essential with the Father. There are those who, because of the misteriousness of this doctrine, look upon it incredible, and treat it with ridicule and contempt. * But if we must reject all that is misterious, we must disbelieve that God has created all things out of nothing, because we can't possibly conceive of the manner of such a production: we must disbelieve the creator himself, because we can't comprehend

^{*}Those that have arriv'd to that pitch of wickedness as publickly to banter the doctrine of the facred Trinity, ought to be pitied; and I hope no serious christian will neglect to pray for them daily; especially in their closets, where they can freely mention their name, character, office, and the influence they are like to have upon others.—For my own part, I freely confess that I see no reason to expect that such haughty, blaspheming bablers, will, without deep repentance of this as well as other sins, be found in the last day, among those whom Christ saves: for they force the scriptures to speak contrary to their evident meaning, and virtually deny the satisfaction of Christ.

him: we must disbelieve any said-existing and eternal Being, because we can't explain how any being should never begin to be.—And yet we make no scrupte of believing these, and many other propositions, which have some misteries in them that we can't comprehend. Why then should the deity of our blessed taviour be look'd upon as a thing incredible and worthy of ridicula, because the manner of it is incomprehensible by finite minds? especially since it is plainly taught us in the sacred scriptures, and of infinite consequence in the salvation of sinners.

Now, the teriptures do abundantly tertify that Jesus Christ is really and truly God. St. Paul, who, for diverte years after his conversion, had no opportunity to be instructed by the other apostles, asserts that Jesus Christ thought it no robbery to be equal with God: he expectly tays that he is Gedover all bleffed forever; Ged manifest in the stess; the Lord of glory, and many more expressions of the like import, which he could not possibly have written under divine inspiration, unless Christ had been God equal with the father. And St. John, in the beginning of his gospel, written on purpose to consute the crfor of those who denied our faviour's divinity, (fuch as the Ebionites and others) affures us that the same word, which in time become incarnate, did exift in the beginning; that he was with God the father, and was God himlelf: that by kim all things were made, and nothing

made without him. And he is not only called God, but the true God, the living God, the great God, the Lord God, the Lord of glore, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, heir of all things, head over all things, believes other expressions which plainly denote his equality with God the father .-Yea, the effential properties and attributes of God, are applied to him. He is faid to full ail things, to be in the midst of all his people, to be present in all places; to be the same resterday, to day and forever, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the lest; to search the reins and the heart, to know all things; to be the mighty God, able to do all things and subdue all to himself; to be Lord of the living and the dead, to give us an understanding of him that is true, to be the proper object of religious worship: to uphold all things by the word of his power; to have the keys of death and bell, to be the resurrection and the life, and the Judge of quick and dead. Now, if these scriptures speak of, and refer to our Lord Jesus Christ, we must either say, that he is effentially God, equal with the father, or difpair of understanding the plainest texts of scripture .-- And however this doctrine may be to some a stumbling block, and to others fooliskness, vet, no doubt, it is, and always will be, to the true believer, both the power of God, and the william of God; one with the father; one that has the same divine essence, and so distinguished from all creatures and idols.

And is it any wonder that he who undertook to be the faviour of finners should be truly God? We must confess indeed, that it is just matter of wonder to angels and men, that God thould ever contrive a method of faivation for finners: but since he has done it, how was it possible that the most exalted creature should ever be able to lave men from their fins? sacrifice and offering God would not; in burnt offerings he had no pleasure. How could Jesus Christ have born the infinite weight of his father's wrath, due to fin, had he been only a man, or the most exalted creature that ever God created? Is not the wrath of an infinite God, an infinite weight? Is not the breach of God's holy law, an infinite offence, or an infinite affront of the divine majesty? If so, how could any thing short of a penalty of infinite account in the fight of God, be equal to the demerit of the offence? --- And could Jesus Christ bear an infinite weight of divine wrath in a short time, were he not God? Howcould he satisfy divine justice for the chief of sinners, by offering up himself to God, were he not really and truly God as well as man? --- But being God over all, he could fatisfy for an infinite offence, though it had infinite dimensions. In it, in a short portion of time, because he is an in minite Being. His sufferings were equal to men's greatest offences, because he is an infinite Being, and his blood is the blood of God. As God he is well-able to procure pardon and salvation

vation for finners; to overcome death and hell, and to destroy the works of the devil. He has merit enough to take away the condemning guilt of fin and purchase pardons for millions of souls; strength enough to subdue the reigning power of all fin, and grace enough to direct and fortify against all the devices of satan. His merits are sufficient to purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost, to renew, sanctify and comfort his people, and bring them to eternal blessedness. Whereas those who deny his divinity, only call him a saviour without allowing him power to fave: for the work of gospel salvation, in all its parts, is begun and carried against such difficulties as are insuperable by any being but God.

(2.) JESUS CHRIST is truly man. Some have advanc'd incredible and even ridiculous opinions about the humanity of Christ; asserting that he had no real body; that he appear'd only in the external shape of a man, and never had a real human nature. But the scriptures assure us, not only that he was God, co-effential, co-equal and ' co-eternal with the father, but that he was really man also. He took upon him the seed of ABRA-+ HAM, in a way that was more than the bare appearance of human nature. He had a living human body, animated by a living human soul, which grew in witdom as the body grew in strength. He is therefore said to be manifest in the flesh; to be the son of man; the son of DAVID;

the feed of the woman; the son of Abraham. He had the properties of a man; was born of a woman; cloathed himself with the weaknesses and sinless infirmities of a man; hungred and thirsted as a man; lay open to the invasions of pain and sorrows of a man; sweat with torment of body and anguish of soul, bled and died as a man. So that, whatsover the boldness or weakness of men may assirt or deny of him, he found himself to be really a man.

Nor was it a needless thing that he should be so; for how could he be the saviour of sinners, had he been only God? He could not have fuffer'd and died to deliver us from the wrath to come, and purchase eternal redemption; to bear our fins in his own body, and expiate the guilt of our offences, had he been God only. And yet it was necessary that the saviour of sinners should suffer death in our nature, Heb. ii. 9, 10. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the Suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Divine justice could not be satisfied, infinite wisdom, mercy and power could not be display'd in the salvation of sinners, the Father's glory could not have been manifested, unless Jesus Christ M

Christ had been made lower than the angels for a while, that he might give himself a sacrifice for sin. But being a man, the same nature might suffer that had sinn'd: the human nature of Christ was fitted for sufferings, that so he might have the iniquities of all the elect laid upon him, and perfect the work of redemption by sheding his blood. Whereas, had not Jesus Christ made satisfaction in the same nature that sinn'd, how could he have made amends to injured majesty, restored the people, that the fa-ther had given him, to the divine favour, and qualified them for the enjoyment of him?

(3.) CHRIST JESUS was God and man in ene person. There is some ineffable relation of the second person of the Godhead to the man Christ Jesus; such a union as is not between God and any other creature. The Son of God assum'd the human nature, and united it to himself; not as friends are united together, or as the elect, when they are converted, are united to God; but so as to have the FULNESS of the godbead dwell in the man Christ Jesus. He took to himself what he was not, i. e. manhood. Rom. ix. 5. Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. This clearly expresses the two natures that are in the person of our redecmer, the Lord Jesus Christ: he that was and is the one supreme God, took on him

the seed of Abraham, so that there is a communication of names, characters and properties of the natures to the perion. And this, I suppose, answers that promite, Isai. vii. 11. Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a high, beheld, a virgin skall conceive, and bear a fon, and skall call bis name Immanuel. And hence the great act of divine providence in our faviour's incarnation, was the accomplishment of what God had promised by his holy prophet. Mutt. i. 22, 23. (Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin skall be with child, and skall bring forth a fin, and they stall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.) And to assure us of the mystericus union of the human and divine nature, in the Son of God, St. Paul tays that he, who was God over all, was manifest in the stess, 1 Tim. iir. 16. And St. John tells us, the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. Job. i. 14. This is the mystery of godlinets, that the tecond person, the word, to commend the love of God to finners, should assume the human nature, and dwell among his people, that they might behold the signs and effects of his glory.

Mysterious indeed! We may well call this doctrine, as our apostle does, because it is difficult to understand how an infinite nature should be so united to a finite nature as to make one, and but one perion; how the creator and the creature should be brought into such an alliance. But the mysteriousness of this union, is no argument against the reality of it. We daily find, that there is a union between foul and body; that one and the same spot of ground will produce grapes and thorns: We believe that God has made temething out of nothing; that he fills all places with his effential presence; that he sees every thing, and can do every thing; and vet, who can comprehend these things? Some of them at least, seem as difficult to conceive of, (as to the manner of them,) as that the glorieus God thould be in perfonal union, with the human nature of Christ, or the man Christ Jetus thould be united to God-head. And, fince this is a doctrine of jupernatural revelation, let no man reject it, because there is formething hard to be understood in it; especially seeing its a very important article of the christian taith. Christ having two natures in one person, the properties of each nature are communicated to each other. Hence the death and fufferings of Christ, have as great a value and meritorious worth in them, as if God himseif had died. Ast vx. 28. If he had not been man, he would have had no blood to shed: if he had not been God, his blood could not have had a fufficient virtue and value in it for the redemption of finners; but the union between the divine and human nature was so strict, that the divine nature put such a dignity and value into

the sufferings of the human nature, as to make them an available ransom from all evil; and into his obedience as to make that an available purchase of all good; yea, a purchase to Jesus Christ, of all whom the Father hath given him, to be a peculiar people to himself.—As man he was wounded, bruised and died: as God he made satisfaction for sin, and reconciliation for iniquity. As God-man in one person, he is divinely qualified to fave from the guilt, stain and power of fin, from the curse and wrath of the incensed deity, and to set men in a blessed and glorious state forever. He is a middle perion, partaking of each nature, and so standing between the persons offending, and the person offended. Had he been only God, he would have remained angry with the whole race of apostate Adam: had he been only man, he would have had only the nature of the offending party, and could not have purchased salvation for sin-ners. But being God and man, he interposes between armed vengeance and perishing souls; and is every way fitted to adjust and make up the difference between them.

Now, if our Lord Jesus Christ is so divinely qualified to save sinners, even the chief of them: if he is the everliving and true God, and as truly man, God-man, mediator: if as God he was able to bear an infinite weight of wrath, and his merit was of infinite value in God's account; if in the same nature that sinned, Christ has made satisfaction

fatisfaction to injured majesty and glory: if by virtue of the union of the two natures in his person, there is such a value given to his sufferings, as to make them a suitable ransom from all evil; and to his obedience, as to render that a valuable purchase of all good; if those things are so, then this is a truth that demands the present and most chearful acceptation of all guilty, perishing sinners that stand in need of his salvation.

And methinks, all thould have their attention to an escape from ruin, engaged at this day. 'Tis every man's duty to attend to all God's merciful warnings to a sinful and guilty people. Such warnings we have lately had, by repeated and terrible earthquakes, which seem to be especially directed to us, both as to the threatning and the preservation: The violence of the shocks have been so great that many of us expected ruin, though we are spared while others are laid waste. Thoughtless and harden'd sinners may be still deaf to the messages of divine grace, because they don't consider that all nature is in the power of God, and he is exceedingly provoked by the contempt that is cast up-on the gospel: but the subject is too serious to admit of trifling or banter, though many fect to make light of that which is a folemn warning to flee from the wrath that is to come .--- Had you never heard of an alsufficient saviour, you would have the less guilt; but you enjoy the galpel

gospel of Christ, and have, not only your own milery and necessities open before you, but the certainty, excellency and fitness of Jetus Christ to fave you from your fins. O let me beseech you to treat this subject not as with neglect; but let the providence of God excite you to contider your pretent need of the gotpel-salvation. Would you be fortified against the distressing sears of a sudden death and a solemn appearance before the righteous tribunal of God? Then attend to, and accept of the message of divine goodness and mercy display'd in the gospel.——Down with all carnai hopes and expectations, and listen to a subject, and behold an object every way worthy of your picient attention. Surely, you have no reasonable objection to a present acceptance of him as he is offer'd to finners in the gospel. Are you assaid that what is declar'd concerning Christ and his purchased salvation is but a delusion and imposition upon the weakness of men? But why will you listen to such a conceit? Tis a truth revealed by that God that cannot lie; asserted by the most saithful men, who were uniform in their story, constant in their testimony, and God himself gave a vitible declaration in their favor by signs and wonders to put their integrity out of question. Are you afraid, in this hour of your distress, that Jesus Christ is not able to help you, since your fins and misery appear greater than ever you expected to find them? No fear of that: for though your fins be ever so great and aggravated, red like scarlet or crimson; yet Christ Jesus is every way sitted and qualified to save such sinners, and was sent by God the Father for that end. O therefore, beg, beg, that he would send his Spirit to open your understandings and give you a spiritual sight of the truth of God in this declaration, and the sufficiency of Christ to save the chief of sinners; and incline your hearts to esteem him a worthy saviour, and this a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief I Tim. i. 15.



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DISCOURSE V.

I. TIM. I. 15.

This is a faithful faying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world, to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

ferved mifery, their finful and corrupted meture, and their utter inability to help themselves genotwith standing the holy scriptures plainly teach us that there is salvation in no other but Jesus Christ, and that he is every way qualified to answer, the demands of law and justice, maintain the honour of the divine persections, and restore lost sinners to the favour and image of God; notwith standing they are in infinite hazzard of perishing forever by their continuance in a state of unbelief, and it is nothing but the amazing pass.

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Disc. V.

tience and mercy of God that keeps them out of heil; notwithstanding all these things, I say, some menseem obstinate against a present, chearful and believing entertainment to the reports of

the gospel concerning this important affair.

In my last discourse I consider'd the duty of all, to accept this faithful saying of God, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, without delay. I urg'd it from those considerations, that, one would be ready to think, might perswade the greatest sinners to forsake all for Christ, and venture their souls and all their everlasting concerns in his hands.

There are still, some further reasons to be

There are still, some further reasons to be offer'd which should serve to convince sinners that 'tis their duty forthwith to accept of this great and important truth, and perswade them

to do it with all their hearts.

I go on therefore to fay,

4. It will appear to be the duty of all men to give a present, chearful entertainment to this report of the gospel, if we consider who Christ Jesus came to save. Our text tells us that Christ came into the world to save sinners, and some of the chief of sinners: to save those that were helpless, worthless and could not save themselves.

But this does not imply that he came with an intent to fave all men universally. 'Tis true, Jesus Christ came to save all men, with a common salvation.

falvation. The earth and all its inhabitants are preserved through him. All the common blesfings of providence; all the means of grace; all the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and other benefits that the non-elect enjoy, Jesus Christ purchased for them, and in that sense ke is the faviour of ALL men. But he came to fave only a chosen number, the elect of God, with a special salvation: i. e. The design of his coming was to give them, and them only, special grace here and everlasting salvation hereaster in heaven. Though the obedience and sufferings of Christ were sufficient for the salvation of all the sons and daughters of apostate Adam in this special sense, yet this was not the design of his coming into the world. There was virtue enough in his blood and righteousness to redeem every particular person that ever was, or will be to the end of time; but the falvation of all was never intended. The primary intent of Christ's coming into the world was to glorify God in that way which was agreed upon between the Father and the Son before the foundation of the world. But he never agreed for all, but a particular number only; and hence it was that he laid down his life for his sheep; that he was stricken jor the transgression of his people; that he has purchased the church with his own blood; that they were chosen from the days of old, and their names written in his book of life from the foundation of the world; that they were the Father's, and

and the Father gave them to Christ; that all the Father's are his, and his are the Father's. By these, and such like scripture expressions, it appears that all Christ undertook for were the elect of God. He was substituted in their room; obey'd and suffer'd, liv'd and died, and rose again for them; to save them from going down to the pit, to fit them for and bring them to eternal glory. He engag'd for them in the everlasting covenant of grace, as their surety.---But if Christ came to save every individual man and woman that had sinned, he must have been substituted in their stead, and died for them in And if it had been so; it would their room. have been impossible that any one should perish: for it would be an unrighteous thing in God, to exact the punishment from the principal debtor, which had been fully paid for by his furety. Christ's full payment must be a full discharge for all them for whom it was design'd.

Some, indeed, suppose that if Christ is confider'd as coming into the world with a design to save all men, it tends to promote the glory of his grace; and that limiting the intent of his coming is a reslection upon his love. But it deserves consideration, whither their doctrine does not reslect upon our merciful saviour, as it represents him, not procuring certain pardon and reconciliation by his death, and as dying in vain for multitudes he came to save. And besides it seems as if these men had false notions about

the love and grace of God: for God's love is not to be consider'd as a passion in him which is to be mov'd by any thing out of himself; but as an effect, flowing from his sovereign will and pleasure. Hence the love of God does not consist in the numbers to which it is extended, but in the freeness of it, and in the generous manner in which it is communicated to undeserving and ill-deserving objects .--- Besides, if the glory of divine love was advanc'd by the redemption of all men, it would be still more illustrated by the falvation of all men; and confequently, more so by the salvation of the devils in hell. And hence it will follow, that if God does not save all men and all devils, it will be a reflection upon his love. And, I suppose, the same argument, in favour of universal redemption, will be as strong in favour of all the devils, as in favour of all men universally: for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is sufficient for the salvation of all the devils, as well as of all men. And it could be no more dishonorable to God to defign the falvation of devils, than the falvation of men. The falvation of devils might have been as great an illustration of divine grace, as the salvation of men .--- If this argument should be closely pursu'd, I believe, the patrons of universal redemption would be oblig'd to fly to divine sovereignty, in bestowing or denying special mercy, as well as we.

Some seem to think that if Christ did not come with a defign to fave all men, then 'tis not the duty of all to believe.--But if those who live under the gospel, and yet remain in final unbelier, will be condemn'd for not believing this faithful faying, which is worthy of all acceptation, then 'tis the duty of all to believe; not that Christ died for them in particular, but that he is the fon of God, and the saviour of finners. Now that fuch as believe not are condemn'd, we need no other proof than that Job. iii. 18. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but be that believeth not, is condemned already, because be bath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God. Unbelief does not arise from the particular end of Christ's coming into the world, but from the corruption of men's nature, their enmity to God, alienation from him, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.

AGAIN, neither does this imply that Christ come to save any IN their sins. Some, because men are saved by grace, and Jesus Christ has purchased salvation for the chief of Sinners, run into licentious principles, imagining they may live carnally; that no command of God obliges them to walk with God and be holy But one would be ready to think they had studied the Alcaron more than the holy scriptures, and chose a mahometan paradise before a christian's heaven. Besure those that imparti-

ally consider what is written in our bible, must be convinc'd that those who live under the reigning power of sin, don't partake in any part of the *special* salvation publish'd in the gospel. St. *Paul* has taught a doctrine quite contrary to their scheme of religion; Gal. v. 19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, batred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, bereses, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, sballnot inberities kingdom of God. 1 Cor.vi.9, 10. 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 extertioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Eph.v. 5,6. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, bath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: whenever your great account presses hard upon you, and the terror of your fins lies heavy upon your conscience, you will feel yourselves discward of God and under the curse of his law, if you are destitute of a principle of holiness.—But it is believing, penitent, returning sinners, that Christ come into the world to save with an everlasting salvation.

INDEED, faith and repentance are parts of that falvation which Christ come into the world to procure for finners. One revealed design of his coming, was, by the methods of his power and grace, to reduce us back to God; to restore his moral image in our souls, to save us from our fins, and the guilt of them; to imbitter all fin to our souls, and to engage our hearts to holiness as it is described in the gospel. These seems to be the principal things in his view when he suffer'd for the redemption of sinners, according to St. Paul's words, Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all insequity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And Eph. v. 25, 26. Even as Christ also leved the church, and gave himself for it: That he might sanstify and cleanse it with the washing of Water by the word.

AGREEABLE to this, faith in Christ Jesus, is the means of interest in that eternal salvation which is offer'd to sinners. 'Tis true, faith, as it respects Christ, in a large sense, is an assent to the person and qualifications, the doctrines and special character of Christ, as they are represented in the gospel, arising from the veracity of the speaker. Thus men may be perswaded of his ability to save from sin and misery; of his

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wildom and love; of his all-sufficient righteousreis and prevailing intercession, and of his faith-fulness to accomplish his word. They may be perswaded that, by his mediatorial commission, he is oblig'd to keep that which is committed to his trust; that it is his Father's good pleasure that of all that he has given him, he should loose nothing; that he is head over all things for the church, and that he is fully authoriz'd and fitted to communicate all those gifts and graces, and holy influences of the bleffed Spirit which are necessary to subdue, renew, sanctify and comfort his people, and ripen them for glory.

YEA, from a divine testimony of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghoft, and from their own inward sense of divine truth, believers have such a special knowledge of Jesus Christ and his ability to save the chief of sinners, that they "receive and rest upon him alone for justifica"tion, sanctification and eternal life, according
to the covenant of grace." This is an act of the rational soul, and the first act of spiritual life. In the understanding it is called knowledge, Job, xvii. 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. But without seeing the divine testimony, and having an inward sense of the veracity of God testifying to the person and character of Christ, the heart will never be perswaded to receive and rest upon

him. 'Is the spiritual knowledge of Christ and the gospel that gains the consent of the will, by which believers chuse to have an whole Christ, or Christ in all his offices, for an whole faviour and a compleat faivation. 'Tis from this knowledge of God in Christ, that supream Love to the divine Being and attributes, holy DESIRES after him, and holy Joy and Acquiescence in him do arise. Christ takes the supream seat in the heart, and next to him, the bleffings of the covenant. To him believers go, and from him they take the benefits of his purchase; grace to work all in them, righteousness to procure all for them, and divine influence to enliven, comfort and quicken them in their christian course. Sense of fin and divine wrath awakens their first concern; sense of divine sovereignty and righteousness drives them off from self-dependance and brings them down to God's foot, and a special apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ draws their hearts to him as the fountain of life. Hence,

Believers receive Jesus Christ in his several offices upon different considerations and for different ends. For if they receive and rest upon him alone for a whole salvation, according to the covenant of grace, then as the salvation promised is various, so they look to and rest upon him under different considerations for the accomplishment of it. Under one consideration faith has respect to Christ in one office, and un

der another consideration it has respect to him in another office: for if it had not, true believers could not be said to receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered in the gospel.—Thus saith looks to Christ as a prophet for divine teaching. Sensible of spiritual blindness, the true believer cries after Christ for spinitual illumination, and more intimate acquaintance with divine things.—And he looks to Christ as a king to bestow saving grace, sanctify his soul, subdue his sins, preserve and support him under all temptations and sufferings, restrain and conquer all his enemies, and powerfully order all things for the glory of Christ and his own eternal good.

But faith, as a means of interest in that evernal salvation which is offered to sinners, respects Christ in his priesthood only. The character that Jesus Christ sustains as a deliverer from the guilt of sin and a reconciler of God to us, is that of a priest. As such he offered himself without spot unto God, and made reconciliation for the iniquities of his people. His facrifice of atonement was acceptible unto God upon earth, and he is ascended into heaven there to present it before the throne, Heb. ix. 24. For Christ is not entered into the boly places made with bands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Hence faith, as a means of acceptance to the divine favour, and of interest in that

that salvation which Christ has purchased so sinners, views Christ as a glorious high priest, appearing before God to make atonement for fin and reconciliation for iniquity. It views him sustaining the persons of the elect and represente ing them before God as their high priest.

Now, to make it evident, that faith, as a means of interest in that salvation, and acceprance to the divine favour, respects the priesthood of Christ only, I desire the following things

may be consider'd, viz.

1. CHRIST JESUS, as a priest, has purchased pardon and eternal salvation for sinners. He represented sinners in the covenant of grace, and therefore became their high priest to make atonement for them. The injured honor of God could not be repair'd and the guilt of sin remov'd had he not been a priest, nor the counsel of peace have been between them both, Zech. vi. 13. In this character he offer'd the great sacrifice to God, to make reconciliation and interceed for his people. Though as a king he de livers them from spiritual enemies, sets up his rule in their hearts and subdues them to himself, yet as a priest he offer d himself up unto God, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. We are therefore invited to come boldly to the throne of grace, for pardon and salvation, because as the great high priest he is passed into the heavens, Heb. iv. 14, 16.--- Now, if Christ Jesus consider'd as a priest, has

has purchased salvation, then saving saith looks to him in that character for an interest in it: for he does not purchase this blessing by virtue of one office, and expect sinners should look to him for it as the purchase of another. And hence, if saith, as the means of interest in the gospel salvation, consider'd Christ in any other office, it would not receive and rest upon him for salvation as he has revealed himself in the gospel; and therefore it would be a salse saith.

2. Jesus Christ; consider'd as a priest, makes an offer of an interest in this blessing to sinners. He offers it as the fruit of his purchase. That he has purchased it in this character, see 2 Cor. v. 21. For he hath made him to be fin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in kim. Though personally considered he knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; yet by imputation he was a smner: God dealt with him as such; or he was -made a sacrifice for sin; that those who look to him in that character, might have his righteouteness imputed to them, and be accepted to the -divine favour and entitled to the gospel salvation on that account. And that he offers this salvation as the fruit of his purchase is evident from 2 Cor. v. 19,20. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto winfelf, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and bath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did befeech

vation.

beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's steat, be ye reconciled to God. As Christ has purchaset, so his ambassadors are required to offer in his name, a title and actual interest in this salvation. They are to tell sinners of the covenant of peace, that is made between the Father and the Son and that it is by virtue of the atonement of the Son that there is access to God; that the right teousness of Jesus Christ is to be imputed for the acceptance of their persons and is the valuable purchase of all new covenant blessings. if we, who are the ministers of Christ, are to offer this salvation to sinners as the fruit of Christ's purchase, the consequence is plain, that faving faith, as the means of interest, looks to Christ in this character only.

Had the time allow'd it, I would have offer'd fome further evidences of this truth: but these may suffice to teach us how to apply unto Jesus Christ in all our personal and soul burdens. Under a sense of guilt we should repair to his sacrifice and atonement for pardon and acceptance. Look up to the blood of Jesus, by which he has purchased our persons from the hand of divine justice, and purchased the blessings of eternal salvation for us according to the covenant of grace. Under a sense of blindness we should consider him as the great prophet of his church, and repair to him for divine teachings, by his word and spirit, that we might have the spiritual knowledge of God and the mysteries of sal-

vation. Under a sense of uninortified lusts, deadness in religion, decays of grace, prevailing tempmions, the working of enmity in the heart, and other spiritual and carnal lusts, we should the to him as our king, to rule in our hearts, to subque every high thought that exalts it self against God, to restrain and conquer all our unruly appetites and passions, and to bring us into subection to himself in all the faculties of our souls and powers of our bodies. --- Such as thus repair to Christ, he doubtless came into the world to eve; yea, he has begun to save them already.---But the general faith in Christ as the saviour of inners that most professors satisfy themselves with, is a false faith. Most men under the gospel take the history of the bible to be true, and think that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; but they don't receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered to finners. A Turk might say as much for the Alcaron as they can for the gospel of salvation; or a Jew as much against the Christ already come, as they can for the saviour of souls. Those speculative believers Christ does not receive into his bosom: they have not the faith which is the means of interest in the perfect righteousness of Christ; nor the faith that accompanies the mortification of fin, and love to God and his ways. And as our bleffed saviour knows them, and all their pride and corrupt principles, so he lets us know that they stand in no special or saving relation

lation to him. Job. 11. 23, 24, 25. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the seast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all mentand needed not that any should testify of man for he knew what was in man.

But true believers, who receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation according to the covenant of grace, Christ came to save: And as a good evidence of this, they have salvation already begun in their souls. They are true penitents. That fight of the divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ and his superlative excellency as he is represented in the gospel, by which they are brought to receive and rest upon him, also produces repentance unto life eternal, never to be repented of. Zech. xii. 10. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. The Jews actually murdered the Lord of life and glory; and all men under the gospel pierce him by their sins: but when God the Father pours out his Spirit in his saving in fluences upon souls, they look unto Christ by faith; they have such a spiritual sight of his personal and mediatorial glories, and of his suitableness

ableness to their case, that they can't but embrace him; and true repentance always accompanies this faith. With grief and hatred they bitterly lament the fins which have brought forrow and shame upon Christ. There is no man that has a saving faith, but has also a sight and sense of fin; not only of its dangerous tendency, but of its filthy and odious nature. The spiritual knowledge of God in Christ and a sense of his glory, will be attended with a sense of the infiaite evil there is in all sin, as it is against a God of infinite glory and holiness; against his law and government. And hence he lothes himself and is ashamed, yea, even confounded for his iniquities, and turns from them all unto God, and has a gracious respect unto all God's commands; whither they concern the inward or the outward man, the head or the heart.

INDEED, 'tis lately afferted, with more confidence than wisdom and good sense, that "true "faith, (i. e. the faith which is a principle of "obedience in some) is not a principle of obedience in all." That the same faith which prompts some persons to hate sin, does not prompt others to it; the faith that excites some to live to God, has no such happy effect upon others.—I readily allow, with the writer, that this notion of faith "is one of the greatest speculative difficulties that occurs, upon the sub-"ject of religion." But if we consider the different kinds of faith spoken of in the scriptures,

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we might easily see, that, while a speculative faith is never accompanied with evangelical repentimes and new obedience, the faith that has because how treated of, is never found witheasile. A speculative knowledge of the revealed it shoof the gospel brings men to assent to them; 1 ta initial knowledge of the same truths begers wayne and a fincere disposedness to live unto God. We find from the scripture, that many, who receiv'd the doctrines of the gospel as mati ters of speculation, had a faith without works their faith, or profession of faith did not produce holy living; hatred of sin and christian obedience. But when a man is affured of the reality and excellency of gospel truth; when he sees that the gospel is an infallible as well as faithful saying of God, and is as confident of it as he is of any thing that is before his eyes, he cannot but abbor himself and repent in dust and ashes. There is as great a difference between a Spiritual and a speculative knowledge of divine things, as there is between ocular demonstration and common fame. By human testimony God reveals the gospel to us; but by the special in-fluences of the Holy Spirit he reveals it in us. And whenever souls have the spiritual knowledge of the gospel they are sincere mourners for their sins, and lothe themselves, as having by fin made themselves odious to the holy and blessed God; and the more they increase in this divine knowledge, the more odious all sin will be to them. Now:

Now, if Christ came to save with an eternal salvation, all true believers, who are also true penitents; and if he will not bestow this salvation upon any others, then, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, is a saying that deserves the present acceptation of every one. Tis a duty of infinite importance, and a further delay is infinitely hazzardous: for as God can't justly damn any that have the faith of his elect, which is always accompanied with true repentance; so he can't justify and save any that have only a speculative faith, which is never accompanied with true repentance. If he should bestow eternal salvation upon those speculative believers, as well as upon those that receive and rest upon Christ alone for it, according to the covenant of grace; how could he, as a judge of men, be said to do right? --- Neither the justice, the mercy nor the faithfulness of God, nor yet, the great design of Christ's coming into the world, could be illustrated in the salvation of sinners. And therefore the interest and safety of sinners require the speedy and chearful acceptation of this faithful faying of God.

5. It will appear to be the duty of all speedily to entertain this report of the gospel, if we consider what Christ come to save them from. Salvation is word that comprehends all the blessings promised in the gospel, that now have, or ever will have their effect upon God's elect. In-

deed Christ himself, the head of the covenant of grace, has the first and chief interest in the promises. He is the HEIR of all things, and therefore all the promises are primarily made to him: but in him, they belong to his people: they have an interest derived to them, through Christ their exalted head, as united members of his body. By virtue of their union to Christ, as his living members, all the bleffings of grace and glory are theirs. And these are the blessings of that salvation, every part of which is exceeding great; and therefore demands a speedy and chearful acceptance. Let us confider some of the bleffings contained in the promised salvation; and then see if Jesus Christ the purchaser of them is not worthy of present acceptance.

Particularly,

CHRIST came to deliver his people from the condemning sentence of the law, and entitle them to the divine favour. This is the beginning of that falvation that is confer'd upon believers. They were dead in law as well as others; and could not be recover'd and entitled to eternal life, but by the alsufficient righteousness of Christ; and therefore it is said that in HIM shall all the seed of Israel be justified. By his sufferings and obedience, they are actually forgiven and entitled to the bleffings of the new covenant, upon their believing. Christ is the merciful high priest, that by his blood this covenant might be confirm'd, that so God might be merciful to their unrighteousnesses

unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities be might remember no more. Their sins are imputed to him, and as soon as they are vitally united to him by faith, they have the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of divine grace; and God is well pleased with them in Christ, to whom they are united, and in whom he looks upon them. Though they are odious to an holy God in themselves consider'd as sinners, yet they are accepted in the beloved as sons and daughters. The righteousness of Jesus Christ is freely given them, and they have a common interest with him in it; and this being an everlasting righteousness, their title to eternal life remains sure.

Hence Jesus Christ brings them into a state of peace with God. The elect are by the fall in a state of enmity. Though God had everlasting designs of friendship for them, yet they are, before believing, condemned male-sactors. Job. iii. 18. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. But being justified by faith, they have peace with God, thro' the Lord Jesus Christ: God is reconciled to them by the satisfaction which Christ has made for their sins. They were at a spiritual distance from God; had no communion with him by his Holy Spirit, no legal friendship between God and them: but being in Christ, God is pacified towards

towards them. In this sense Christ is our peace, Eph. ii. 14. He has made up the breach, and God the Father is their friend; he converses and sympathizes with them; admits them to the knowledge of many things which the rest of the world are strangers to. He allows them to look into the ark of the holy of holies; guides them in the dark and difficult passages of life, and is the same in affection to them, yesterday, to day and forever.

AGAIN, Christ has procur'd for believers the priviledge of adoption. All men by the fall, are become bond-servants; under the curse of the law; for the law curses all those who continue not in all things contained in the law. But Christ Jesus undertook for his people, and paid the price of their redemption, the invaluable price of his blood, that they might have deliverance from the curse, and partake of the blessings of children. Gal. iv. 4, 5. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law: that we might receive the adoption of sons. Hence those that have faving faith, are actually brought into the liberty of sons and daughters. By union with Christ, they are in this respect exalted to a dignity above the holy angels. They stand before the Father in a more glorious righteoufness than the angels, in their justification; and have a more glorious sonship in their adoption.

Their adoption is founded on a higher right than that of the angels, even the sonship of Christ. Men are apt to glory in titles of honor, and in their relation to great names; but there is no title equal to that of the sons of God. Angels are servants and ministring spirits; but saints are the excellent ones of the earth; kings and priests unto God; yea, the sons of the living God, the KING of kings and LORD of lords, --- And there are great priviledges attending this dignity. God the Father takes pleasure in them as sons, and delights to do them good. Job. xvi. 27. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. Hence he will gradually discover to them the secrets of his covenant, as he takes a peculiar delight in them. The Father will also lead them by the hand, and by their sonship through Christ they have boldness and access to him. They have an Avocate in the Father as well as in shemselves and with the Father; and as sons, Not as Jervants, they abide in their Father's house, we an inheritance in the promises of grace and story; their home and happiness is in their Father's kingdom; their portion is laid up for them, and by and by the Father will call them home, and make them thine as the fun in his glory, when they come to possis that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.

AGAIN, Christ came to give them peace of conscience.

conscience. This is one of the bleffings Christ has purchased, and a legacy which he has lest to such this faithful saying of God, worthy of their present acceptation. Joh. xiv. 27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your beart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Indeed, it is of a temporary nature and not immoveable; for sometimes those that are in a state of peace and reconciliation with God, may have satan let loose to buffet them, or lie under some other testimonies of God's displeasure that keep them in a fort of bondage. Yet the guilt of fin being remov'd by Christ, there is a foundation laid for inward peace, but this peace is to be found only in the way of duty. The Holy Spirit meets the children of God in the way of their duty; he drives away the tempter, brings them near to God, applies the blood of Christ to their souls and prevails with them to entertain peace. And so Jesus Christ has not only pro-cured the ground and brought them into a state of peace, but he opens their ears to comforts and puts them into the actual possession of peace. And because the Holy Spirit is the producing cause of it, therefore it is called joy in the Holy Ghost; i. e. spiritual comfort, arising from a present sense of the favour of God.

AGAIN, Christ came to save them from the power of all sin, to restore God's boly image in their souls and bestow all needed grace upon them:

them. In the first apostacy from God, all men become guilty of Adam's first sin, lost original righteousness and their whole nature was corrupted. They were so defiled in all the faculties of their fouls, as thereby to be infinitely edious to a holy God. From hence spring all cor-rupt principles and practices in the world; and it is impossible for them to renew within themselves the image of God's holiness. In this deplorable condition they must have continued forever, had not Jesus Christ come into the world to fave finners. But when he undertook in behalf of the elect, the Father promised that he should have a feed to serve him; that he would take away the beart of stone, and give an heart of flesh; that he would put his laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. This seems to be the chief design of Christ's coming into the world. Hence at the time appointed these promiles are accomplished. The elect are born from above, and brought to commit themselves and all their everlasting concerns to Christ Jesus; and he is not only made righteousness, but jancti-fication to their souls. The seeds of grace being implanted, needed grace is deriv'd to them from the all-fulness of Christ. Job. i. 16. And of his sulness have all we received, and grace for grace. Where he gives true grace in the principle, he gives more grace; not only grace to forbear inful actions, but grace to weaken and destroy nower of all indwelling sin; that sin might

not have the dominion over them; that there might not only bring under their groß and filthy affections, but also that they might have the inful inclinations of the will, and the corrupt dictates of reason under command; that thro the cross of Christ, the world might be crucified unto them, and they unto the world .-- And not only to, but Christ bestows upon them a power of living to God: having put off the old man which is corrupt, they put on the new man, which is renewed day by day. The Spirit of God, which raited up Christ Jesus from the dead dwells in them; and hence they have 2 prevailing disposition to give themselves to the Lord. Though if they skeuld fay that they are without fin, they would deceive themselves; yet they tend towards perfection. By a power and virtue that flows from Christ and his resurrection, they are disposed and enabled to walk is neumels of life, Rom. vi. 4. He comes by the special influences of his Holy Spirit, and quickens gracious actings of foul; gives grace to excit and direct them, and thoroughly to furnish them to every good word and work.

AGAIN, Christ comes to give believers to assurance and foretastes of glory. Many professions look upon an high confidence of the divine approbation to be truely gospel assurance. But their ostentatious boldness brings the truth into contempt, and causes some to think that the is properly no such grace as the assurance

God's love. But Christ come not only to procure the happiness of heaven to believers, but to secure the evidences of it, and to give his believing children a gracious persuation of their being accepted in the beloved, of their special interest in the promises of the gospel, and there being preserved to eternal life. And hence saints have been assured of these things, 1 Cer. ii. 12. New we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 1 Joh. iii. 19, 24. And bereby we know that we ere of the truth, and skall afture our beerts before bim. And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit selich le bath given us. Rom. viii. 35, 37, 38, 39. Who shall separate us from the two of Cirist's shall tribulation, or difirefs, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay in all-thefe things we are more than conquerers, thro kim that loved us. For I am perfivaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principslities, ner powers, nor things present, nor things to come; ner height, nor depth, nor any other creature, skall be able to separate us from the love of God webich is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And what has been given to faints of old, may be given to faints now; yea 'tis fact, many have his falvation bestowed upon them as the fruit of Christ's purchase. Neither does the clearest

conviction of fin, a sense of the desert of divine wrath, godly forrow, felf-lothing and a contrite spirit, at all abate this gospel assurance; but these things tend rather to increase and strengthen it; for love to God and man, holy satisfaction in God as the chief good, rejoycing in Christ Jesus and peace in believing are the attendants of them. These gracious affections are the foretailes of glory; the pledges of Christ's and the Father's everlasting love; an earnest of that inheritance which is reserved for them and which the taints in light are already possess'd of.

FINALLY, Christ came to bestow beaven upon them. By his obedience he paid down a valuable consideration, and procured a title to heaven for his people. Their debt is transfer'd to him, and he has wrought out their righteoufness for them, Rom. v. 18. God the Father also is well pleased with the payment that Christ has made; he has accepted it, and therefore will not deny them the last blessing of his purchase: and therefore Christ has promised, that when by divine providence they shall be removed out of this world, he will actually take them up to the possession of glory. Joh. x. 28. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. They are in his hand, and he will see them all sorth coming another day. This is one part of his intercession at the right hand of power. John xvii. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou

hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may beloid my glory which thou hast given me: for theu loveds me before the foundation of the world. He has procur'd them a right to be in God's immediate presence, beholding, admiring, loving and adoring God and the Lamb in a persect manner forever and ever. And this he invites the chief of sinners to be ready for: This is the delightful work he offers them to be employ'd in, after they have put off these tabernacles of slesh.

O the falvation, the glorious falvation, that Christ came into the world to bestow upon finners! A salvation worthy to be listened to; a salvation worth striving after; a salvation well worth all the pains and care of self ruined man-kind sinners! Are not some souls present, so happy as to be among the number of the saved of the Lord? O what a wonderful salvation has Christ purchased for you and bestow'd upon you at the infinite expence of his life and blood! He has not only saved you from the condemning sentence of the law and entitled you to the divine savour by his all-sufficient righteousness; but he has brought you into a state of peace, given you the privilege of adoption, redeemed you from the reigning power of all sin, disposed your heart to holiness, and will finally give you the full possession of that inheritance which is greater riches than the treasures of Ægypt. You have already seen this saviour through the You have already seen this saviour through the glass

glass of the gospel; you have had some relish of the blessings which he has purchased and enrich'd you with; and now the world has lost its splendor. You can, by divine grace, view the face of God in Christ Jesus the saviour, the face of God in Christ Jesus the saviour, as reconciling sinners to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. You can dwell upon his several glories with facred pleasure, and list up your eyes to him with holy boldness and humble considence. You can chearfully intrust God with all your important concerns, being perswaded that he is able to secure them until the day of judgment. Though storms and earthquakes should throw all nature into a convulsion, and the blast of the terrible ones. a convulsion, and the blast of the terrible ones should be as a storm against the wall, while nation rises up against nation; yet if saith is in exercise and God shines in upon the salvation begun, you may assure your hearts that Christ has bloted out all your tins by the blood of his facrifice, and that your name is written in the lamb's book of life.---If the heavens were now passing away with a great noise, and the elements inclting with fervent heat, you might look up to glory; look upon God the center of all persection and blessedness; look upon the sain in their robes of glory, and the millions of holy angels as servants to Christ Jesus, flying at his command; look unto Jefus the mediator of the new covenant, with ardent defire and intenfe delight. O look and wait; look with believing

desire and expectation, until the salvation that he has purchased for you and begun in you, shell be compleated in heaven.

O that poor excelened sinners would now accept of Christ Jesus, and partake of this salvation! Are there none in declining years; none in the bloom and vigor of life; no parents nor children under the guilt and power of fin, that stand in fersible need of this salvation? If any of you defire peace and pardon, the ipirit and privileges of adoption, renewing, quickening and comforting grace, and eternal bleffedness in the end, O give credit to this faithful faying of God. I do now, in his name and fear, make you an offer of his ion, who came into the world to save sinners. O that you would confent to be saved upon the terms of the gospel. O that some, if it were but two or three, would O that some, is it were but two or three, would freely and chearfully entertain this report of the gospel which is worthy of all acceptation. Christ who can save according to all that is written of him, can surely answer all your miseries and dangers. He who can command deliverance to Jaccb, can save you from the condemning guilt of sin. And though sin does easily beset you; though you feel yourselves at an awful distance from God; though you find that you have nothing to atone for your guilt, nor any ability to restore your souls to the divine likeness, yet you may come to Christ Jesus freely, and through him partake of needed salvation. The goipel

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gospel is a dispensation of mercy to sinners. You need not fear coming to Christ now; coming as you are; coming with an hard heart, a polluted and guilty soul. Christ, the saviour of great sinners sees your wretchedness, and is able and willing to supply all your needs. O the riches and freedom of divine grace in Christ Jesus, who has purchased this salvation! Surely you deserve to perish if you will not consent to be saved upon gospel terms this moment. In vain do you look to creatures, to duties, or any thing short of Christ for true happiness. You can't escape the mighty vengeance of an incensed God, if you reject the Lord Jesus Christ. O that you would accept of a whole Christ in all his gospel characters, and an whole salvation while it is called to day, least you perish before to morrow comes.



DISCOURSE VI.

I. Tim. I. 15.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

整整HE encouragements of the gospel to faith TT in Christ are every way suited to perfuade a rational soul instantly to receive and rest upon him alone for salvation. God, who has told us that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, remembers the word that he has spoken, and will certainly make good all his promises to them that accept of his mercy. Faithfulness is inseperable from his nature, and therefore he cannot suffer it to fail. The promises of the new covenant are made to Christ, and he has purchased all the blessings of them at an infinite expence.—The special mercy of God to sinners is the fruit of his purchase: for this end he came into the world; for this end he was anointed of God; for this end he

was qualified and sent forth; " God and Man in two dillinct natures and one person forever," that he might fave the chief of finners. And being qualified for his office, he does actually fave believers from the guilt of all their fins, from a state of enmity and servitude: He gives them the bleisings of children, peace of conscience, all needed grace, the foretastes of glory,. and at last he will bring them to the full possession of the heavenly inheritance. There is nothing can hinder the accomplishment of these promised blessings from being accomplished in due time, upon all the proper and qualified subjects of them: And therefore there is sufficient grounds to encourage the chief of sinners, to give a chearful credit to the divine message contain'd in my text.

Bur without any further repetition of what has been offer'd under the second doctrine, we

must enter upon the application of it.

Use I. May be of imformation in feveral heads. If it be as we have heard, that I fus Christ came into the world to save sinners, if he was the very person that was to come according to scripture prophesy; if it was necessary that the saviour should be qualified as Christ is represented to be, in the preceeding discourses; and if those whom he does save are true believers, pentent and holy persons: Then from hence we may learn many important truths, that demand our consideration. Particularly,

(I.) LEARN

(1.) LEARN hence, the amazing love of God to lost finners. Man in his fallen state, had no more right to salvation than the devils, who are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. And those that are brought into a state of salvation, could make no better claim to it than any others among the children of men. But God has appointed some to grace and glory, though he design'd no such savour to others, 1 Theff. v. 9. For God bath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. To accomplith this gracious design, God provided an all-sufficient saviour to make satisfaction to offended justice, to repair the injuries done to a violated law, and expiate contracted guilt. When thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil could not do this; when the fruit of the body would not atone for the fin of the foul; when the case was reduc'd to such an extremity that God must, either destroy the whole human race in hell forever, or make his dearly beloved son a curse for us, he has laid the iniquities of his people upon him, that by his stripes they might be healed. Christ himself speaks of this as an evidence of love beyond compare, John iii. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave bis only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in bim, should not perish, but have everlasting life. Who can express or conceive of the greatness of this love? God the Father did not send one

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of his adopted sons, but his only begetten son; the son of his love; the second person in the adorable trinity, to become incarnate, to do and suffer instead of sinners. Christ came into the world with a commission from his Father, and according to the agreement between him and the father, he was every way fitted to undertake and go through the whole work of faving fin-This is such an astonishing instance of divine love, that the apostle thought it could never be equal'd, Rom. viii. 32. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how fiall he not with him also freely give us all things? God's severity against sin was so great that he did not favor his son, and his love was so great to sinners that he did not withhold him. And this love is the more astonishing, as it is towards the unworthy; yea, towards those that were enemies, Rom. v. 8, 10. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son: much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. Divine love is gloriously desplay'd in revealing such a suitable saviour to us in the gospel, while most of the human world are perishing for lack of vision. But this love is more surprizing still, where the Spirit of God so accompanies means as to leave saving impressions upon touls.

(2.) LEARN hence, a good witness of true christianity. There is a greater variety of opinions among professors, respecting the doctrines of the christian religion, than there is of different denominations of protestants in their forms of worship and discipline. And many of these opinions reflect great dishonor upon our Lord Jesus Christ; particularly, those that teach men to expect acceptance with God for their faith consider'd as a work; or on account of their faith and obedience together. And those that deny the divinity of our bleffed faviour, and represent him as a mere creature, besides many other dangerous errors which I shall not take the time to enumerate.---But all those opinions that do exalt felf, or do not exalt the only saviour of sinners are to be obhor'd as subversive of true christianity: all opinions that imply the insufficiency of Christ's righteousness, or the sufficiency of our own to justification, are absolutely to be rejected. If you put on Christ by faith, and so are vitally united to him in whom all fulness dwells, you have that compleatness and perfection which is made over to you and accepted for you. Christ is both meritoriously and efficacioully all things to, and in all those that are regenerated. Being by faith one with him, you have all for present support and future glory. And though haughty men should advance principles ever so contrary to what you have been taught, or deride and banter the most sacred and important

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important truths, yet you may rest satisfied; in patience possess your souls under all the scoffs and derisions that may be cast upon you. Your unhappy sellow protestants, that corrupt the word of God, by the salse glosses they put upon it, have their eyes held; and hence they fall in with those damning principles that are boldly advanced among us. While you are to pity them in their spiritual ignorance of the doctrines of salvation, it becomes you to abide stedsast in the truth; that you might know the love of Christ, which passet knowledge, and that you might be filled with all the fulness of God.

the truth; that you might know the love of Christ, which passets knowledge, and that you might be filled with all the fulness of God.

(3.) Learn hence, what reason we have earnestly to contend for the doctrines of the gospel at this day. 'Tis a sad and very affecting consideration that many in our churches have fallen from the great and essential truths of the blessed gospel; and that others esteem those truths merely speculative notions, and therefore maintain a mixt communion one with another, where principles even in the most concerning points are opposite. By this means the way is open'd to the utter exterpation of the doctrines and interests of our blessed saviour; and to the spreading of poison, instead of giving out those precious truths which are proper food and nourishment for souls. Now, if christians tamely suffer the essential doctrines of our holy religion to be run down, as they lately have been; if they will not speak and act in a proper

proper way, against those communions where important principles are opposite to each other; what can be expected, but that our land will soon be number'd with the dark places of the earth, and our once flourishing churches will be left unto us desolate, for the reward of our shame? The trimming methods taken by many, feem to be the most effectual that earth and hell could take, to eclipse the glory of the gos-pel, and forever to hide the way of salvation by Christ from the eyes of perishing sinners. This keeps the Arian heresy in countenance, which clouds the glory of Christ, and virtually denies the necessity of satisfaction for sin. This encourages the Arminian herefy, which exalts free-will in opposition to efficacious grace; introduces that very boassing, which the gospel disowns, and leads men to establish their own righteousness, which is inconsistent with a right submission to the righteousness that is of God by faith. Arminians as well as Papists disparage the righteousness of Christ; substitute something of their own duties or endeavors in the room of it; frustrate God's design of exalting his own fovereignty, and of securing the honour of his mercy and holiness together.--These, and such like errors, drag'd in and united in communion with those that hold true principles in speculation, are, to me, like the dark-mess of hell, and the light of heaven mingled together. Surely, it becomes us, who appre-

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hend things in this light, earnestly to contend for the faith, once delivered to the sairs; and to take occasion from the dark clouds, if posfible, to make the doctrines of salvation shine with a greater lustre; that as these thick clouds in our conspicuous hemisphere, overcasting the glorious luminary in the firmament, serve only to set off the glory of the sun with the greater advantage; so this great darkness in the hemisphere of the church, might serve, in the event, to set off the glory of the pure gospel.—

I must confess, that these mixt communious referred to look to me like a confisience are interested. ferr'd to, look to me like a conspiracy against the gospel: and how can any of us think otherwise, while a strict adherence to the important doctrines of Christ Jesus, together with their practical esticacy upon men's hearts, is a sufficient reason with many, to stigmatize persons with the name of mean, stingy and uncharitable Souls?

(4.) To come nearer to the case of my hearers, learn hence, the safety of all these that comply with gespel-terms of salvation. No malicious spirit or other creature, can deprive persons of what a faithful God has promised, an all-sufficient saviour has procur'd, and does actually bestow upon returning sinners. If Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of them; if he is every way qualified to save from the condemning guilt and the reigning power of sin, and to bring them to eternal blessedness;

bleffedness; and if the great design of his coming cannot be frustrated; who can rob souls of the bleffings he confers? The devil himfelf, how infatiable foever in his defires to do milchief, knows that he can't so much as enter into an herd of swine, without permission from Jesus Christ; much less is he able to piuck true christians out of his hands. They are in the hands of Christ, and tha'l never perish: tho' they fall, they thall rite again, and his almighty hand shall preserve them, through faith, to eternal falvetion. When Christ stands upon the throne of his mercy, and proclaims this faithful faying, that be came into the world to save the chief of sinners; and that he that accounts this laying worthy of his present, chearful acceptation, thall be fared: I say, when he makes this proclamation, all the powers in hell cannot destroy the sinners that receive it.

But, poor awakned Souls, in vain do you look for falvation from any other quarter: your sins and miscries are too great and dismal, for any but this almighty saviour to recover you. And if you reject this saviour, the sin and punishment must be more grievous, than that of those who despised the Law of Ged, given by the mediation of Moses. O that you would duly consider of this matter while the door of mercy stands open, and Christ stands at the door of your hearts, kno. king and calling by the inward motions of his Spirit, for admittance!

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tance! I need not tell you all my fears; but I will freely tell you, as I have told you before, that it is highly probable your golden opportunities which you now enjoy, will foon be over. The appearance of things is very threatning at this time, and feens to call upon every one to make ready for that terrible event that is to happen, as a preparative to that glory that will fucceed. O let the thoughts of fuch a day rouse you up to reverence God and fear his judgments; to betake yourselves to Christ and his covenant mercies. There is no safety in difregarding this gospel-proclamation; especially now, when God so many ways warns you of your danger, and threatens to sweep you away with the besen of destruction.

(5.) LEARN hence, the greatness of the sin of unbelief. The sin of unbelief is common, and men in general, make light of it. But our blessed saviour sees much more evil in this sin than men or angels can discover; and represents it as the greatest sin, by saying, that when the Spirit comes according to his promise, he should convince the world of sin because they believe not in him.

Now something of the greatness of this sin may appear from considering a few things.

Particularly,

THE vile reflection it is upon the GREAT and GLORIOUS GOD. The promises of God in the gospel are a sufficient ground of faith;

for

for it is evident from the nature and unchangableness of God, from the word and oath of God, and from his forefight of all possible hindrance, and his ability to remove them, that he stands ready, and will infallibly make good all his promites to true believers. God makes all his name, some way or other, subserve the glory of promised mercy; and his invariable faithfulness in accomplishing his word, is what he glories in. What can unbelief therefore, find to excuse it self? God has sworn by his beliness, that he will not lie unto David. He has made all his promises in infinite wildem, and will fulfil them in loving-kindness. But unbelief is a reproach cast mon these perfections of belief is a reproach cast upon these persections of the divine nature. God has provided for the salvation of sinners, in a method to display his infinite wisdom; but, in refusing to accept of Christ Jesus and salvation through him, you practically say that the method is not wisely contrivid. He threatens you with everlasting destruction, upon your continuing in a state of unbelief; but unbelief is an evidence that you unbelief; but unbelief is an evidence that you don't really think the threatning will be fulfill'd. And though his holiness, wisdom and love, are all engaged to accomplish his promises of grace and salvation to returning sinners, yet you virtually say that he is a liar, and in his proclamations of peace and good will, he is unworthy of credit. Every day that you live in unbelief, you rob God of his glory and give

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him the lie. Either you imagine that he has not sent his Son into the world to save sinners; or that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God and a qualified faviour; or that God fent him to deceive the world; or that he has permitted him to devise an hely religion, worthy of all acceptation, which is yet but a lie, and then has sent the Holy Spirit to obtrude such a religion upon men. + And is not this to make God the author of a lie? Is it more than a mere suggestion, as if you were afraid he had not spoken true? Does not God, in his word, reckon this as the greatest injury imaginable? Is it not the boldest provocation and affront that a poor finner can possibly cast upon God? To deny his eternal power is blasphemous; but to deny his holiness, wisdom, truth and goodness, is inexpressibly more so. God pawns his faith-fulness, and therefore his love, wisdom and holiness, upon what he has declared in my text; but unbelief says it is not true!

AGAIN, the injurious reflection it is upon the Lord Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ is every way sufficient, and divinely qualified to purchase and bestow salvation upon sinners, is abundantly evident from what has been offer'd under the doctrine. And it is no less evident that he is willing to save all that come to him. But unbelief practically says that Christ is not able to save; that he is not a suitable undertaker to adjust

† Vid. Mr. Henry upon 1 John v. 10.

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adjust and make up the difference between God and finners; that the virtue of his blood and mediation, arising from the worthings of his person, is not sufficient to divine acceptance for fuch vile and guilty creatures. Unbelief has a mean opinion of the all-fulness of Christ, and of his readiness to deliver the guitty, though he assures us that he always stands ready. Sinners under conviction, that are sensible of their guilt and mifery, will not be perswaded that Christ is willing to receive them, though he invites and calls them to come to him, and engages that those who do come, he will in no wife cast out. They will not take his word, but virtually charge him with falshood. They set a greater value upon their own righteoutness than his righteouiness: they disdain such a saviour as will have all the glory of the purchase, and cannot endure to have their own goodness and honest endeavors set aside in the matter of their acceptance with God. When God offers them his dearly beloved Son, when Christ has procured and freely offers them an whole falvation, in the right of his own merits, they willfully refute him, and a compliance with his proposals.

And all this, and much more guilt do sinners bring upon themselves, by their unbelief, though the necessities of their case loudly call them to believe. By unbelief they shut themselves out of the gracious presence of God, and cut themselves off from all the special blessings of the

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new covenant. No access to God the Father in prayer, nor any gracious acceptance with him, because they come not in the name of his Sen Jesus, Joh. xiv. 13, 14. They will not take hold of the name and merits of Christ, to bring themfelves and fervices to God: and hence they prevail nothing, but come off with shame and miserable disappointment. They have no hely heavenly exercises of religion; no spiritual sense of nor relish for divine and eternal things. They have no holy converse with God in any of their duties: if they enter into their closets to read and pray; if they attend the same duties in the amily, or come into the publick to worship with he church of God, or to attend christian sacraaents; or if they do any other spiritual duty, fill they do nothing to divine acceptance. And consequently they lie under the condemning guilt of sin; no pardon, no reconciliation to God, but lie exposed to the fiery indignation of almighty vengeance.

Besides, the unbelief of goipel sinners, is exceedingly aggravated, which adds a vast weight to their provocations. They obstinately refuse Christ, their only remedy, against the dreadful threatnings of Ged's holy law; against awful examples of destruction; against great and precious promises; against the holy institutions of the gospel; against the strivings of the Holy Spirit with them, in ordinances and providences, and against Jesus Christ himself, who has been

men unto him.—And all this they are guilty of without any provocation. What shadow of excuse have gespel sinners for continuing in unbelief? What have they to alledge in their own defence? What iniquity can they find in God or his Son Jesus, that they continue to rebel against the express command of God?——Has not God a right to make the terms of peace, pardon and blessedness? Has he gone beyond his just prerogative in any demands made upon them? No, he has consulted their good in the proposal of a saviour, and in requiring faith in his blood. Had men and angels been to devise a method of salvation, they would have fallen infinitely short of the excellency of the way that is opened in the gospel.

Doubtless if these things are put together, and weighed in the ballance, it will appear, to every one that has a right sense of sin, that the sin of unbelief is exceeding great. --- And yet, as great as it is, gospel sinners are generally intensible of its greatness, and searless of its consequences. Those that are under awakenings have slings of conscience for other sins, when they are not at all affected about this sin. They may be greatly affected about their many breaches of the moral law, and quite insensible of the great sin of difregarding this faithful saying of God, though this is the sin that shuts them out from a covenant blessing.

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Use II. Let us enquire what interest we have in this saviour and the salvation which he has in this faviour and the falvation which he has procured. The gespel in our text is not a declaration of God's eternal purpose of electing some to everlasting life; nor a declaration for whom Christ died, nor a promise of the effectual working of the Holy Spirit: but it is a declaration of the end of Christ's coming into the world. And there is no reasonable ground of doubting but that the revealed end of his coming is truly represented before us: we are assured it is a faithful saying, and that it demands our present and chearful acceptation.—But the important enquiry is, "do I freely and fully ac-" cept of Jesus Christ as he is offered to sinners in the gospel? Do I receive and rest upon him alone, for rightcousness and life, peace and pardon, and for the acceptance of my person as rightcous in the sight of God; for grace and eternal glory?" To resolve this question let us briefly consider a few things, viz.

1. "Was I ever made sensible that I could not believe this faithful saying, according to " not believe this faithful faying, according to the discription given of true faith in Christ?"
Men under the gospel, though they have been educated in true principles, yet secretly imagine that 'tis an easy thing to believe the gospel. They can believe at any time; and therefore if their souls are troubled within them, they are not much distress'd about the sin of unbelief.

And indeed, if there was no difference between

a common faith and that which is peculiar to God's clect, I should not much wonder if all men embrac'd the same opinion, and so continued easy in their fins .--- But men are generally under a great militake about the nature of faving faith, and consequently about their ability to believe; and that is one reason why they make so light of the fin of unbelief. No man ever did or will commit himself to Jesus Christ, upon the word and shithfulness of God before he is regenerated. An unrenewed understanding can lee no moral excellency and amiableness in the person of Christ, nor have any spiritual sight of his fitnets to be the faviour of finners. An unrenewed will cannot chuse him, nor rest upon him alone for falvation, according to these characters that are given of him in the gospel. Though there is no force or co-action upon the will, yet there is something more than moral swasson which inclines men to consent to have Christ Jesus for an whole saviour. There must be a divine power put forth upon the foul, by which it is made willing to close with the offer of Christ. Such is the darkness of the understanding, the obitinacy of the will, and the depravation of the affections, that no man can come unto the Son, except the Father draws him. Now, let us ferioutly confider whither we have been duly fentible of our utter inability to give God the honor due to his faithfulne's, by giving credit to the report of the Gospel concoming

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The method of the Spirit's operation upon fouls, is to convince them of unbelief, and of their inability to believe, before he enables them to embrace and receive Christ as the only and the all-fufficient faviour, and to trust him with all the concerns of their fouls. And therefore, no doubt, those sinners are in a state of unbelief, who were never sensible of the sin of it, and of their utter inability to believe to the saving of their fouls.

2. " Have I been made sensible that it would be just with God, it he should refuse to give me faith, upon my best en leavors and highest improvements in an unregenerate state? when souls are under the awakenings of God's Holy Spirit, they are put upon shuning the co-casions of sin, and a diagent improvement of the external means of grace. And there is such pride and ignorance in them, that they are apt to imagine there is so much goodness in their reformations and duties, as to be the promited condition of faving grace. But sinners, before they are faved from fin, are made sensible that all their best duties, though for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, yet because they proceed from an unsanctified heart, and are done in an unsanctified manner, they are finful; and therefore cannot possibly be the condition of faith in Christ Jesus. The law, convincing them of the sinfulness of all their

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best works, kills their carnal hopes of salvation by their own righteouthers. They are made sensible that they have no moral goodness in God's account, to recommend them to his acceptance; and that those duties were never an appointed condition of the covenant of grace. They are also, sensible that God is righteous in all his requirements, and may, as a fovereign, dispose of his blessings to whom he will; that he is not chargeable with any injustice if he casts them off forever, that the good pleasure of his will is the rule of his merciful dispensations; that nothing out of himself, nothing but his own gracious inclination moves him to bestow his special grace upon any; that he is not indebted to any, and therefore if he renews, pardons and bestows all the bleffings of salvation upon some, and not upon others, he cannot be accused of injustice. They see themselves under the doninion of sin; empty of all spiritual good; liable every momert to have the sentence of the law executed upon them, and that all their projections to help themselves are utterly vain; yea, that it is utterly impossible for them ever to do any thing to help themselves. Now, instead of murmuring against God, they are astonish'd that they are out of hell: instead of imagining there is any meral rectitude in their works, they wonder that God has not cut them off and cast them into the perdition of ungodly men, even for their best duties; instead of thinking God is 140 The IMPROVEMENT of Disc. VI.

oblig'd to them, they wonder at his infinite grace in giving them leave to beg for mercy.—Well, have we undergone these changes in our souls, by the convincing influences of the Holy Spirit upon our understandings? Have we had those different apprehentions of God, of sin, and of our duties in a state of unregeneracy? If not, doubtless we are guilty of rejecting Clarist and the purchased salvation to this day.

3. "Does my heart now yield to the truth

" contained in the text? am I knilble of the " truth of what is therein asserted? Do I see " the excellency of Christ, and the faithfulness " of God in this report of the gospel?" Those that receive and rest upon Christ Jesus according to the covenant of grace, have an inward sense that life and salvation are laid up in him. They have found insuperable difficulties, through the ignorance and perverseness of their hearts, in believing that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: they could not realize that he was every way qualified for a saviour; to purchase pardon, peace and reconciliation; to give grace and glory. But now they are sensible of this divine truth, and are assured of the faithfulness of God in the report. They see that the offer of Christ and the gospel salvation is made to them in particular. And those that do not realize these things are yet in a christless condition; they have not received and trusted in Christ for falvation as he is offered in the gospel. 4. " AM

because

4. " Am I sensible that if I heartly consent " to take Christ in all his gospel characters, nothing can hinder my falvation? "There are, as to men, some insuperable difficulties in the way of their falvation, which are as fo many bars to hinder it. The jullice of God is like a flaming sword, which turns every way to keep the tree of life; and as long as justice is demanding vengeance, no man can stand before God. Neither will the law of God be turn'd off without perfect satisfaction to its honorary demands: and yet sin is so infinitely vise in God's account, that though a man should offer the fruit of his body, for the sin of his soul, both law and justice would utterly despite and reject it.—But those that are partakers of the special grace of God, and brought to rely upon Christ Jesus, are sensible that there is nothing in the way to hinder the salvation of them that believe. They see that divine justice cannot hinder it, because justice is satisfied for such, by our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered himself a facrifice to God, of a sweet smelling savor.---They see that God's holy law cannot hinder it, because he has fulfilled the law, on account of his redeemed ones: he was made under the '.w, and came under the curse, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the Spirit, the priviledges and the bleffings of children .-- They see also, that sin, the worst of evils, cannot hinder the falvation of them that believe,

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because Christ has put away the condemning power of it, that it should be no more an hindrance to their peace and reconciliation with God. Indeed, sin is not banished out of the world, but is greatly aggravated by the death of Christ; and though sin is subdued in all true believers, yet there are the remainders of it in the best of them; and these remains of sin are as loathsome in the fight of God, and as deserving of eternal misery as ever. But they being vitally united to Christ, the new-covenant head, he is answerable for them: he has satisfied the demands of the law for all those, in whom he has overcome the strength of sin by his power and grace.--But if, we are not made sensible that, although men's fins are ever so great, and although the law is infinitely holy and strict in its demands, and divine justice is infinitely incensed with the guilty, yet, every hindrance which stood in the way of salvation, is removed, as to those that believe this saithful saying of God, we are doubtless in a state of sin ourselves.

5. "AM I inwardly sensible that the great difficulty in the way of my salvation, lies in my own will; that if I do not partake of the special blessings of Christ's purchase it is my own fault, and the blame will be found to lie at my door?" sometimes those that have been constrain'd to submit to God as an absolute sovereign, and have had such discoveries of the excellency

excellency and safety of the way of salvation by Christ, that they could not but rely upon him alone for all the bleffings of grace and glory, yet have no fatisfying evidence that they are in a state of salvation. But they are sensible that Christ is offered to sinners, and that he is every way fitted to sustain the characters given him in the gospel, and qualified to save the chief of sinners, such as they see themselves to be. They see that all those things, which stood in the way of falvation, are remov'd, and every one that consents to take Christ as he is offered in the gospel will be saved in a way that honors the law and justice of God; that God will not reject them be they ever so vile; no, not for & moment, if they are now willing to be saved upon his terms.--- Persons under awakenings often think that they are willing to have Christ for their faviour, and will not be perfivaded to think it possible to be otherwise, when salvation is what they are feeking after. But their willinguels does not respect Jesus Christ as the object. 'Tis true, they are not willing to perish, and from a sense of their perishing condition they are driven to seek Christ, and an interest in the favor of God; but their hearts don't consent to have Christ and salvation through him. They are not so sensible of their own vileness, and the loathsomeness of all their best duties in the fight of Goa, as to be thoroughly convinc'd that they lie justly condemn'd to eter-

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nal misery after all they can do in a way of means for an escape. They are not sensible of the excellency and fuitableness of Christ to save sinners: they have no spiritual sight of his perfonal and mediatorial characters; the virtue and incomparable worth of his blood in God's account: and therefore they are not willing to take him for their faviour. But true christians, who really confent to the terms of the covenant of grace, and yet fear that they have not truly confented, see themselves inexcusable if they perish. They have a thorough conviction that there is glocious provision made for the chief of sinners; that Jesus Christ is the person spoken of by the prophets, as the true Milliab; that he is incomparably excellent and amiable in his perfon and offices; and therefore, though the law is rigorous in its demands, and divine justice calls for satisfaction, yet God can honorably justify them that believe in Christ Jesus. All objections, arising from the greatness of their sins, the strictness of the law and the justice of God, are taken away; and they have such a sense of the faithfulness of God in the proclamations of peace, pardon and falvation by Christ, that they cannot but acknowledge, if they should perish at last, they are self-destroyers. And unless we are brought to justify God; to see his truth and faithfulness in the promise of salvation; to be sensible of the divine sufficiency of Jesus Christ to fave the chief of finners, and therefore that the

Disc. VI. the second DOCTRINE. 145 the fault lies at our own door if we are not saved, we have not yet received Jesus Christ as

he is offered to us in the Gospel.

6. "Do I seel a great and blessed change made in the faculties of my foul?" There are no new faculties created in regeneration; but all those faculties which God has aready created, are renewed. The understanding is favingly enlightned, to know God and his fon Jelus, and the things that are freely given us of God. The will is renewed and powerfully dotermined to that which is good. God takes away the stubbornness of the heart, that would receive no kind impressions from the word, provillance, or common influences of the Holy Spirit and gives another temper and inclination of heart, quite different from the former. Before this change, men harden themselves, under all dispensations, through the deceitfulness of sin; but after this change, they hearken to God's law, tremble at his threatnings, comply with the inclinations of his providence, and are disposed to walk in newness of life and new obedience. They are made willing and able to answer God's call, and to accept the grace and salvation that is offered them. God purges their hearts from all their idolatry and wickedness, and inclines them to love and trust in him; to fear and honor him, and live in all holy obedience to his commands. We do but deceive ourselves therefore, if we flatter ourselves that we have receiv'd Christ

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Christ as he is offered in the gospel, and so are brought into a state of salvation by him, unless we have experienc'd this great and happy change in our minds and the disposition of our hearts. Can we be partakers in this special salvation, and yet have no apprehensions of the glory of the divine perfections, the excellency of Christ, the finfulness of fin, and the vanity of the world, different from what we had before? No, faith fets all these in a proper light, and has genuine If we are in a state of salvation, we have been convinc'd of the moral rectitude and glory of the divine attributes; convinc'd of the excellency of his loving-kindness; of the preciousness and all-sufficient righteousness of his son, and of the faithfulness of his word and offers of mercy. Hence, we cannot but love God and abhor all sin. Under such discoveries, we cannot but see abundant reason to lie in the dust before God and submit to his all-disposing hand; we cannot but sacrifice all our time and tallents, our names and worldly interests to his glory; we cannot but look down upon this bewitching world and all its entertainments with holy dif-Now the faints of God are, in our esteem, the excellent ones of the earth; and the holy saviour, that ornament of heaven is our desire, trust and constant delight. Now we see abundant reason to make the glory of God our chief end, and love to abase ourselves before him. And though, before we were converted, we had

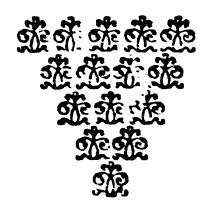
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an aversion to holy living, because we were under the reigning power of sin; yet, if we are in a state of grace, now we are habitually inclin'd to christian obedience. We esteem all the commands of the Lord, to be faithful; and therefore whatever we loose by obeying them, we chuse to walk in them all, without rebuke before him in love.

THESE, fellow-professors, are some, among many things, by which we may try ourselves. And now let us retire from the noise and business of the world, that nothing might interrupt us; let us summon ourselves before God, and with the utmost seriousness and resolution enter upon the work; and if possible get the matter well settled in our own minds, whither we are the saved of the Lord, or not. Divine judgments, and more awful threatnings of the nation and this land, and so, of every one of us, call upon us to see that an interest in the special favor of God is secured to us. The very design of God's judgments and threatnings of vengeance is that we should earch and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord: and if we have been careless about the most interesting affair, in the time of peace and prosperity, surely it be-comes us to be wiser in the day of evil. 'Tis true, if we are in a state of salvation, we are safe in the hands of Christ, the city of refuge. Though nation lift up sword against nation, or the earth be moved out of its place, all shall serve.

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ferve to bring us nearer to God, and tipen us for glory: but as we may have our part in the common calamities, or in these that hang over and forely threaten a sinful people; so it highly concerns us to see whither we are in a safe state or no. It has been common with the godly, to search into the grounds of their hope, in a time of general calamity: O that every one of us may enquire diligently and in good earnest, whither God has called us by his grace, and saved us by his son Jesus; that we might be happy now in the knowledge of it, and triumph in it when we are called to part with all things here below, and enter upon our everlasting state.



DISCOURSE VII.

\$

I. Tim. I. 15.

This is a faithful faving, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jejus came into the world to fave finners; of whom I am chief.

WE were upon the application of the second destrine, in the morning, in diverse inferences, and a use of examination.

AND now, to thut up the whole upon our

text, for the present, let us attend to the

THIRD and last Use, which is of exhortation, and that in two branches.

I. To such as do cordially receive Jesus Christ in his gotpel characters, and partake in that special falvation which he has wrought out for finners. I hope that many in this assembly have received the special grace of God, and do place their entire dependance upon the blood and righteousness of Christ Jesus; that they have a good hope, through grace, that God will teach, guide and uphold them in this world, and be their everlasting inheritance in a better. But let us consider, that we are not only called to partake in the privileges of Christ's friends, and to make

a profession

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a profession of his name, but that we are under special obligations to live as becomes the gospel, and to adorn the doctrine of God our saviour, in all things. Therefore let us, by all means, en-deavor to answer the reasonable expectations of heaven concerning us. We are not our own, for we are bought with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish, and without spot. and if we are the redeemed of the Lord, we have the Spirit of Christ, and he teaches us to die, respecting sin, and to live, respecting righteous-ness. Were we indeed lest to ourselves, we might live as others do, professing to know Christ Jesus and the power of his resurrection, and yet in works deny him; but, blessed be God, the case is quite otherwise. Others may make plaufible pretences of being partakers in that special grace and salvation, which Jesus Christ has purchased with his blood: "they may have great zeal, and want integrity; promise much, and perform the contrary; be virgins with lamps, and yet want oil; seem lively saints, and be dead The confideration of the many mistakes men run into, in judging of their state, by which they finally miscarry, should excite us to the strictest care and jealousy in dealing with our But if we are, indeed, the fubjects own fouls. of special grace, and partakers in the special blesfings of the new covenant, it highly becomes us to improve the grace which God has given us, in the best manner. St. Paul argues from the choices

Disc. VII. the second DOCTRINE. 151 choicest blessings that true christians are favored with, and those that effectually secure them from eternal misery, to their living devoted to God; Tit. ii. 11, 12. For the grace of God that bring-eth salvation, hath appeared to all men. Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; Rom. vi. 13, 14. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield your selves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin skall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 'Tis true, there are remains of fin in the best of us; but how shall we who are delivered from the condemning guilt of sin by the satisfaction of Chirst; how shall we, who are made the subjects of special grace, how shall we now live any longer, under the command of fin and satan. Are we delivered from the law as a covenant of works, and are we now the. Lord's free men? Let us then, yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive unto God: let us bequeath and dedicate ourselves to the service of God, and not be remiss in our improvements. Let mortification be our work while any fin remains; let us be more renewed in our minds, and our works be more perfect.--- Thus the Holy Ghost argues for universal holiness, from the abounding of free and sovereign grace, in the salvation of finners. These are the proper motives, an d

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and O let them duly operate on our minds, by the grace of God given us.

AND though we have given some particular exhortations and counsels to believers, under the sirst doctrine; yet there are some others reserved to this place, which we are now to attend to.

Particularly,

LABOUR to get the evidences of your saving in-terest in Christ, cleared up to your own souls. This may be known in the diligent use of appointed means, as was observed in evidencing the last doctrine. And it is the duty of every true believer, to do his utmost in a way of means, to gain some surther degrees of light concerning his state, than he has already attained; for many other duties depend upon a satisfactory evidence of interest.—If you have not a clear conviction of your saving interest in Christ, how can you go with considence to God as your heavenly father? If you have not a comfortable evidence of this, child-like love and delight in God will be greatly check'd, and obedience to his commands will be the less evangelical. If your evidences are clouded, in what a poor manner will you acknowledge and praise the glorious author of this salvation; and how will you improve the grace that you have already received? The foundation of praise for mercies, lies in the knowledge of having received them; and the foundation of improving and growing in grace, in some sense, depends upon the evidences of being in a state of grace.--Therefore

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Therefore roule up, drowly christian, and be in earnest to gain a clear and gospel perswasion of your in-being in Christ. And to this end, meditate more and more upon the excellencies of Christ and the infinite value of his sacrifice. Go down into his grave, and, by faith, dwell upon his abaiement: follow him to his throne, and, by faith, confider his exaltation. View him God over all, bleffed forever, united to the man Christ Jeius; view his qualifications to fuffain the office of a mediator. Carry him with you in all your humblings for fin: when you would mourn for your backillidings, for your indwelling sin, and for your often infirmaties, begin with Christ; and is from him go down upon fin. Labour to mortify all your carnal affections, and hearken to the Lord when he speaks peace to your souls .--The more you see of God's astonishing love to sinners, the more satisfaction you will have of your interest in his favor: and where will you see so much of his love, as in the person and natures, the humiliation and exaltation of Christ? Where can you see so much of the vileness of sin, as in the abasement of Christ? What way can vou take so proper, for getting a solid perswalion of your interest in Christ, as the mortification of carnal affections and tubmission to God? And what is more fuitable for a believer, than to hearken to Christ when he speaks peace?

AGAIN, stay your souls upon God, in every condition of life. Has Jesus Christ saved you were to the front

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from those evils, and entitled you to those blesfings that have been enumerated? Then your thand in a peculiar relation to God, and are peculiarly favor'd on that account. As a father God loves and honors you; as a father he delights in you, and gives you access to him; as a sather he hears your believing prayers, gives you an inheritance and all needed ground of Jupport. As a king he has undertaken to protect and preserve in all dangers and difficult services; to fight for you and destroy all your enemies for you. He is benevolent and ready to help you as a friend; openly to converte and sympathize with you in all your forrows, and counfel you in: all your perplexities. He is ready to pardon and justify you from all your sins, upon a fresh application to Christ; ready to renew and strengthen you in the inner man, day by day, and will conduct you fafely to a state of uninterrupted blessedness. Therefore

Suppose you meet with some heavy efficiliens in this present life? Are you grappling with some surprising and unexpected trial? Perhaps your spirits are greatly oppressed and almost exhausted by it, and you are ready to think that all is going: and what gives the keenest edge to the dispensation, is that you cannot find out the reason of it.---But if you have truly received and rested upon Jesus Christ according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, though dispensations are changed, yet God's heart is not at

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all changed towards you. He knows what he is doing, and for what wife and holy end: his eye is ever upon you, and he will give a safe and happy issue of all.

OR, are you under the bidings of God's face? Does God in wisdom and righteousness turn from you, and leave you under sore desertion? Are you destitute of the tokens of his favor, and press'd under the burden of his displeasure? Well, have you not a mighty saviour, who, in the victure of his maritarious serification is now at the virtue of his meritorious sacrifice, is now at the right hand of the Father interceeding for you? Cannot he that has faved you from the guilt and dominion of iin, prevail to scatter the darkness that lies upon your spirits and return your interrupted joy? O then, under these dispondings and dejections of spirit, endeavour to fix your faith and hope in the most excellent and amiable perfections of God; especially in his covenant love and faithfulness declar'd, in his word; and strive to realize your interest in him, who, by the mediation of his son, is reconciled to you.

OR, are you forely buffeted by satan, that enemy of all righteousness and gospel peace? Does that foul fiend, armed with malice, policy and power, sall upon you, as a roaring lion, seeking to devour, at least to disturb you? But if you look unto Christ Jesus, your saviour, will he not relieve you? He has already turned him out of his dominion in your fouls; not only by restrain-

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ing and preventing the effects of his malice and power, but by communications of divine grace to give you an innate hatred of his ways. Surely then, you have sufficient encouragment to wait upon the Lord, expecting, that as he has freed you from the dominion of sin and satan, so he will deliver you from his malicious temptations, or support and strengthen you under them. Tis your duty and privilege, under any aptations, to look unto Christ Jesus, who will bruise him still more and more under your seet. Christ knows how to restrain the power, and defeat the policy of this outragious and malicious enemy. And though, at times, God suffers him forely to buffet you, and sometimes to gain ground upon you; yet he will deliver you from every evil; give you compleat victory at last, and a triumphant introduction into a coelestial and plovious inheritance. glorious inheritance.

OR, are you under the accusations of conscience on account of sin't you have the more need to rely upon God in Christ that he would purge away all iniquity; break the power of sin more and more, and keep you from backslidings for the time to come. But as I have considered something of this under the first doctrine,

I pais on to fay,

AGAIN, that you ought to get more acquaintance with the privileges of your state. Among other means, which God makes i'e of to preserve his children from apostacies, one is, a thorough

Dise. VII. the second DOCTRINE. 157 thorough acquaintance with their privileges; I folm v. 13. These things have I revitten unto you that believe on the name of the son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the son of God. You have indeed many sinful infirmities, and are often falling under guilt; but being justified your title remains sure. And though you have much indwelling sin and many spiritual enemies, yet the grace of Christ is wrought in you, and his grace will be sufficient for you, to carry you along till you arrive safely in glory, 2 Cor. v. 1, 8. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the beavens. We are confident, I fay, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord: You will be immediately with Christ, when your souls are seperated from your bodies, and inconceivably happy in the prefence and enjoyment of him. And if the gracious presence of Christ is more desirable than any, or all the enjoyments of time and sense, what must the presence of his glory be, but fulness of joy and immortal pleasures? If his gracious presence beautifies his temple here below, and makes all his hely ordinances to amiable, that we are constrain'd to say, in our hearts, it is good for us to be bere; O how gloriously blessed will it be, for you to see him face to face, without an interversing cloud, or any thing to interrupt your com-

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munion forever? If communion with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, is so very entertaining, as you sometimes find it under the means of grace, and especially at the sacramental table; what will it be to have communion with them in a state of glory, and sit down in his kingdom forever? --- Thus to meditate upon these, and other privileges contained in that salvation which Christ has procured, and will bestow upon you, may be of eminent advantage on many accounts; but especially, to relieve your minds under the pressures of affliction and temptation, and to encourage your hearts to fight the good fight of faith and go on fighting, till you have got the crown. O when you see the hope of your calling, with what holy courage will you press forward, and that without fainting? Here Christ comes and saves you in a time of need; but hereafter he will appear in his glory, and give you the open vision and most delightful and everlasting fruition of himself. O if you had a better acquaintance with the rich blessings of your state and title, you would prize Christ Jesus more and serve him better.

AGAIN, be concern'd to know and careful to promote the interest of Christ in the World. Mistaken apprehensions about duty, have created abundance of confusion in the church of God: they frequently excite a warm, but blind zeal, which often proves destructive to the true interest of Christ among men. 'Tis amazing to see

the

the heat of Arminianism, and the heat of Enthu-siasm, both tending to promote a cause against Christ at this day. But those that have received Christ are not to be indifferent because others have blind zeal: the scriptures are an infallible rule of faith and practice; and the providence of God may direct you in timing duty. And having found out the way, and fixed upon the proper scason of action, you must be careful to promote the kingdom of Christ among men. If you are the happy subjects of special grace, and partake in those blessings of salvation that have been hinted at in priceeding discourses, the true interest of Christ will lie near your hearts. The faving knowledge of God in Christ, gradually fills the foul with love and holiness; and as there is an increase of these, there will be enlarged defires to promote the redcemer's kingdom. Oget more frequent and further discoveries of the excellency and glory of Christ, and you will think more hightly of his cause. High degrees of grace have enlarged desires for the honor and advancement of Christ, and will devise ways to serve Christ in, and freely consecrate all to him.

Surely I can never do too much, never do cnough for Christ, says the devoted soul, who

has infinitely condescended to save me.

" have received all this faivation from Christ,

" and still expect inconceivably more; and shall I deny him any thing that he has put into my

"hands, any time or tallents that he has entrust-

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ed me with? O who could (fure I cannot)

look upon any thing as tending to promote

" his kingdom, and not have his heart burn

within him. O'tis impossible that any but the evil and unthankful should think much

of any thing done for Christ!"

FINALLY, Live more to the glory of God. Live more conflantly in the realizing views of his gloriousness, and then you will acknowlege him to be what he is, and think it an honor to speak of his praises, and to confess that he is worthy to receive all honor, glory, might and majesty. You will confess that all the glory, gifts and dignity you have received above others, are freely given you of God. You will willingly abase yourselves and acknowlege your own meanness and vileness; and you will openly acknowlege the true religion, and those special and important doctrines of the gospel which are oppos'd. Yea, if you live more to the glory of God, you will shine brighter in relative and stational duties; be more and more mortified; pride, envy, and all spiritual and carnal lust will die daily within you: You will be more weaned from the world, and live more carefully in the practice of righteousness and true holiness. And all these things you will observe and defire from a supreme love to God and regard to his declarative glory .--- Now, are you not under the highest obligations thus to live unto God? Yea, is not living to the glory of God, in this manner, a part of that falvation which Jesus Christ

Disc. VII. the second DOCTRINE. 161 Christ has purchased for you? Is it not for this end, that he renew'd and sanctified you? Are you some of those sinners, that are blessed with pardoning and renewing grace? Then you are prepared and designed for this end: the great thing in view is, that you should shew forth the praises of him that has called you. But if you are not fruitful in good works, how do you glorify God? Unfruitfulness is a practical saying, that there is but very little amiable and worthy in God the Father and in his Son Christ Jesus; very little good to be had from them; but little in them, and in that salvation you partake in.

2. To such as have hitherto withstood an offered savicur, and neglected the great salvation. I have address'd my self so often to persons in a state of sinful nature, and several times in these discourses, that some may think strange that I should offer a word more to them. But be it so, that you had heard the same things (and if in the same words) scores of times, yet how shall I conclude without speaking once more, and more particularly than before? Ministers are to be instant in season and out of season; offering matter of conviction to such as gainsay the truth, rebuking all forts of finners, persuading with a spirit of meekness and long-suffering. And O that God would give all present, who are yet christless, eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand, that the word might be quick and powerful unto them, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit;

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162 The IMPROVEMENT of Dife. VII. to show them what they are, and to charge the

truth home upon them!

(1.) I Have a word to leave with unawakned finners. How many, in this day of general concern, are of this fort God only knows: but whoever they be, the precious truths that have been offered may ferve for convincing and alarming their stupisted consciences. For being yet in your fins, yet without God and without Christ in the world, there is a heavy yoke lying upon you, which neither you nor other sinners will be able to bear. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to them that receive and rest upon him alone for salvation: he has taken the law upon himself as a covenant, and born the curse of it; but you are yet under the law, and therefore under the curse.

The law requires perfect obedience of you as the condition of life. It promifes life upon no other conditions, and will not abate one jot or tittle of its demands. There is no other way of acceptance with God, under the covenant of works, but perfect, personal and perpetual obedience. The law will not make any abatement; it will give no mixtures of mercy upon imperfect obedience, nor hope of pardon upon the least breach. Tis like a severe creditor, who takes the poor debtor by the throat, saying, pay what thou swest. And if you cannot answer its sull demands, it will reject all your works as damning sims. Rom. iii. 10. As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one. Now, have you any ability

Disc. VII. the second DOCTRINE. 163 to answer the thrick requirements of the law, when it forbids the least fin upon pain of damnation, and lays the burden of daty upon you, without providing any strength, either to avoid the fin or perform the duty? It not, then you can never be faved, nor escape hell, while you despite and reject the Lord Jesus Christ. There was such a necessity of the law's demands being answer'd, both in its precepts and threatnings, that Christ came into the world on that errand, that so, by his obedience and sufferings, those might be laved, who should believe in his name. And if God stood so much upon the honor of his law, as to make no abatements of it even to his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, how exceeding unreasonable is it for you to imagine that he should abate any of its rigor to you? Depend upon it, nothing will be accepted at your hands but persect obedience, unce you despite the Son of God. And inalmuch as you are already notorious breakers and despisers of the law, you may expect that it will carry you before God as an impartial Judge, there to receive the sentence it passes on all offenders. You have broke away from your rightful sovereign, but God's officer will fetch you back to receive your due reward. All that you can suffer in this passing world, will not, in any measure, satisfy for the injuries done to the honor of God by violating his holy law. Nay, after you have lain weltering in hell-fire millions of ages, the law will not be satisfied, and therefore you can never get from under it. Then

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it will force you to judge and condemn yourselves for tin, the you should be let alone, to live at ease in Zinn, all the days of your life. You may bless yourselves in your present unconcerned and stepid frame of spirit, and not say these things to your heart, nor remember the latter end; you are willing to sleep on in security, and not wake to see your danger, even now the earth groans under the burden of sin that is upon it: but the law will, by and by, come upon you like an armed man, and force you to judge and condemn yourselves, and fill your guilty souls with inconceivable anguish and surprize. Tho custom in sinning has awfully worn out the power of conscience for the present, yet it will rouze up, like a lion out of his sleep, when the authority of the law seizes upon it.

O THEN, what a difinal condition will you foon find yourselves in, if you go on in carnal security a little longer! Your understandings and imaginations will be employ'd in viewing the tremendous majesty of the great lawgiver, and the avenging curse of his strict and holy law, your memories will be stored with a fresh and piercing remembrance of all the sins of youth and riper years, with all their dreadful and tormenting aggravations. All the faculties of your souls will become vessels of wrath and be enraged with dispair. Despite the law if you dare; but then, consider whither you don't make a sottish bargain, to sell your souls for the enjoyment of carnal ease and pleasure, or for the honors or interests

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ments or amulements, compensate for the biting reproaches of an enraged conscience in hell? O consider this, ye that forget God, least he tare you in pieces and there be none to deliver.

(2.) LET awakval firmers As to Christ Jesus that they may be faved. Some of you begin to feel the milery of your state, as you lie under the wrath of God; and, pethaps, the law has got fuch hold of some of your hearts, that it spoils all your duties .--- You see that your condition is miserable. Your lust is still after idols, but the terrors of the Lord make you afraid. You can't enjoy your fins with that pleafure and fiveetness that you would do, because the sentence of the law and the awful threatning of almighty vengeance purfue you, and force you to taile something of the bitterness of sin, and to attend some duties. This, I believe, is truly the case with many in this affembly, who yet continue in their fins, rejecting the only remedy provided for help. O fail down beforeGod and beg; O beg with importunity for a present sight and sense of the faithfulness of God in the gospel of my text. Are you sensible of the necessity of faith, and of the hindrances that stand in the way of falvation? Are you bourn down with some sense of the fin of unbelief, and the impossibility of your chasing Christ to be your faviour, till God reveals him in you? Well, as you'd have the forgiveness of fins and a title to eternal life; as you'd be qualified for the enjoyment of God and the felicities of the coming world, you must chuse Christ for your saviour, and rest upon him alone for falvation as he is offered in the gospel. O therefore beg, cry earnestly to God, that he would now put forth his mighty power and draw you in. --- Surely, itis not impossible but you may be faved from all your fins, from the guilt, defilement and power of them. And why may not this happy change of your state be now, as well as in any future seafon? Now God is calling you by his awakening providences; now he is exciting his ministers to be more importunate with you; now you enjoy many opportunities of hearing the word dispended, in season and out of season; now the Spirit of all grace is striving with you, and now you are arrested by the law and made sensible of your misery. Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of faivation: whilst Christ is speaking to you, whilst he stands at the door and knocks and calls

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calls after you; to-day if you will hear his voice, harden net your hearts; now is the day of your opportunity, and this day will not last always, therefore improve it while it is called to-day. Now you hear that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; you hear that the chief of sinners have been made the most eminent saints; you hear that the invitations of the goipel are given out by a faithful God that stands ready to make good his word: 'tis a word that you may depend upon, and it deserves your present attention. O venture now upon that God that has promited; now make a trial of his saithfulness; now see if he will not be as good as his word: now down with the unbelief of your hearts; down with this seperating-wail, that the king of glory may come in.

AND for further motive confider, that notwithstanding the severity of the law, notwithstanding your past obstinacy in refuling Christ and his salvation, yet the terms of peace and happiness are still kept open unto you. Whatever else you find written in the bible, this St. Paul asserts in my text, that Jesus Christ came into world to save sinners, and that there glad tidings demand the present and chearful acceptation of all men. And this meilage belongs to you in particular. There is no such message sent to the sinning angels, but they are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. There is no such good news sent to those that are already dead from under the light of the gospel, who died in the neglect of the great salvation, but they have their portion in eternal and remediless dispair. There is no such mesfage fent to such as are entirely destitute of all the means of grace, who dwell in those dark places of the earth which are full of the habitations of cruelty. There is no such meffage sent to them that have sinned the sin unto death; for that in can never be forgiven in this world or the world to come.---But this mercy and salvation is offered to you. God himself comes and makes you the offer. O the amazing love and condescention of God! Read his gracious words, and see your warrant to come, Isai. lv. 1---4. See the leve of that God who looks upon all sin with infinite abhorrance; that God whose laws and authority you have trampled under your feet; whose name you have despised, and whose dearly beloved son you have hithertorefused: yet this great and blessed God is pleased to make you

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you one offer more of his Chill and the great salvation which he has purchased with his blood .-- And is it a small matter to withitand fuch wonderful loso and fuch amazing condefeention? Is it a light matter to despite the precious blood of the son of God? O will you shut your selves out from all the rich bleshings that Christ has procured at an infinite expence, and leave your precious fouls to aniwer for it in the great day of accounts? O the patience of God towards such inners! Some of you are greater funers than many that are now, doubtlefs, in hell; and itis a wonder that God has not sent you also, long before now, to blackneis of darkneis forever. But you are yet alive, yet under the means of grace, and God is yet inviting you to look unto Christ and be faved. And will you not hearken to the glad tidings of great joy? The holy angels lookt upon the proclamation of peace and good will to men, by Christ Jeius. the most joyiul news that were ever brought to a perilbing world. And will you despite it, though it infinitely concerns you to partake in the salvation that Christ has purchased? O if finally you withstand the call of the gospel, and will not listen to the mellage of divine love, how will you eleape? --- But if you would part with all, under a sense of your condition, let me tell you, the way is open to the favor of God. You day and feel that you are finners; and Christ Jelus came into the world to fave fuch, and God is in Christ reconciling the world of finners unto hunfelf. The terms are ea v; there are no reat matters required of you in order to your salvation, but to receive and rell upon Christ as he is offered in the gospel. These are the terms that God likes; the terms that directly tend to promote his glory, and abate the creature in his presence. But if you refuse this way of salvation, there is no other remedy provided for you: 'tis not on'y the best, but the end way to bleffedness. Take Chill and a whole falvation as the fruit of his purchase, or you are gone forever. This is the way proposed, and it is confirmed and ratified in blood; therefore you may freely come, and come with boidness to the throne of grace in this way. But in no other way can you find acceptance with God; in no other way can you find strength and grace to live devoted to God; in no other axy can you find motives that will give life and chearfulness in christian obedience. This way lies so near the heart of God,

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and so nearly concerns the honor of his son Jesus, that he will certainly be avenged of those adversaries that neglect it, and there remains for all such, nathing but a fearful looking for ef

judgment, and fiery indignation to devour them.

To conclude; Some great event is nigh at hand: how foon it will commence, perhaps no man can certainly tell; but the greatest difficulty seems to be, in fixing the year of Daniel's prophely, before our Saviour's incarnation. Yet this is not for difficult but that, I believe some extraordinary event may be reasonably expected very scon; yea, we may look for the beginnings of it, and especially for those terrible things in righteousness which will preceed it, from year to year. shall we say of those great earthquakes that have lately been in diverse places; of those seasful sights, and great signs that have been in the heavens; of those signs that have been in the sun, and in the moon; while there has been upon earth diffress of nations, with perplexity, the fea and the waves roaring; wars and rumors of wars; nation rifing up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth; what, I say, shall we think of these things, unless we look upon them as solemn warnings of some great and surprising event at the door? In the name of God, I once more call upon all my hearers, to fly to the city of refuge, that they may be fafe from the avenger of blood. O let us get into the ark Christ, before the floods of divine indignation over flow, and swallow a finful world. O that Jesus Christ, the hope and helper of his people, would make us all fenfible that he is able and ready to fave us, though we are the chief of finners. Now Christ visits us and others with the word of salvation; now we may look through the glass of the gospel and behold his heart melting with love: but when he comes for the overthrow of mistical Babylon, that habitation of devils, how terrible will his countenance appear, to them that resule his offers. Yet if we should see that day, and be found compleat in Christ, while others are filled with anguish and dispair, we may triumph in our faviour, and rejoyce in the prospect of that glory, which is forever removed from the scenes of darkness, and will soon open to us in one eternal day.

FINIS.