

A  
**BODY OF DIVINITY:**

WHEREIN THE

**DOCTRINES**

OF THE

**CHRISTIAN RELIGION**

ARE EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED.

BEING THE

*SUBSTANCE OF SEVERAL LECTURES*

ON

**THE ASSEMBLY'S LARGER CATECHISM.**

BY THOMAS RIDGLEY, D. D.

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*WITH NOTES, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED,*

BY JAMES P. WILSON, D. D.

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# DR. SCOTT'S

ANSWER TO THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

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## PROPOSALS

BY W. W. WOODWARD, PHILADELPHIA,

FOR PUBLISHING BY SUBSCRIPTION,

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Scott's Remarks

ON

*"The Refutation of Calvinism,"*

BY GEORGE TOMLINE, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN."

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THE writings of this eminent divine are held in the highest estimation by the pious of various denominations. He is acknowledged to be one of the best advocates for evangelical truth, which the present age has produced. His commentary on the scriptures has passed through three large editions in this country and a fourth, larger than either of the former is now preparing for press by W. W. W. in 3 vols. quarto, 7 dollars per volume, without any marginal references—the notes following immediately after the text.

The work now proposed for publication is a most able and elaborate defence of those doctrines which are commonly called evangelical, and which are by no means peculiar to the Calvinists. The bishop of Lincoln, published what he was pleased to call "a Refutation of Calvinism," under which proscribed and odious name," says the Christian Observer, "he has attacked some of the fundamental points of that faith, which was once delivered to the saints."

"In this work of the Bishop," continues the Christian Observer, "he has greatly mistaken and misrepresented the sentiments and the persons he undertook to refute, and in many

important points has maintained doctrines contrary to the declarations of scripture."

Dr. Scott, in his remarks upon this publication of the Bishop of Lincoln, most ably defends that system of religion, which a great body of christians supposed to be contained in the scriptures, from the uncandid and illiberal attacks of its enemies, and obviates the unfounded objections which are so often brought up against it. The reviewers in the *Christian Observer*, after occupying about sixty pages of their miscellany in commenting on the excellencies of Dr. Scott's "remarks," conclude their review with the following passage. "We cannot, however, conclude this long extended article, without recommending the study of Dr. Scott's laborious work to such of our readers as feel interested in these discussions. It will amply repay those who are willing to undertake and patiently to pursue its perusal. If it does not afford, what cannot be expected from any human performance, a satisfactory solution of the difficulties which must ever attend *some* of the subjects of which it treats, it will be found to contain a large and valuable mass of observations on other most important theological topics; and will, at least, leave on the mind of every unprejudiced reader a strong impression of the extensive scriptural knowledge, the controversial ability, and what is far more estimable than any other qualities and attainments, the christian moderation and charity, and the mature and vigorous piety of its author."

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## CONDITIONS.

*The work shall be comprised in two large octavo volumes—answering as a sixth and seventh volume to his Miscellaneous works, published by W. W. Woodward; or will be sold separate in two volumes. It shall be printed on good paper with a fair type, and shall be delivered to subscribers for two dollars and fifty cents per volume, bound, and two dollars and twenty-five cents in boards, payable on delivery of each volume.*

*Those who interest themselves in the work and procure five subscribers, they becoming responsible for their subscriptions, shall receive every sixth copy for their trouble.*

*The work shall be put to press as soon as a number of subscribers shall have been procured sufficient to warrant the undertaking, Persons holding subscription papers are requested to return them by the first January next, to W. W. Woodward, Bookseller, Philadelphia.*

Philadelphia, August 21, 1815.

THE  
**DOCTRINES**  
OF THE  
**CHRISTIAN RELIGION**  
EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED.

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**QUEST. LXV.** *What special benefits do the members of the invisible church enjoy by Christ?*

**ANSW.** The members of the invisible church, by Christ, enjoy union and communion with him in grace and glory.

**QUEST. LXVI.** *What is that union which the elect have with Christ?*

**ANSW.** The union which the elect have with Christ, is the work of God's grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably joined to Christ, as their head and husband, which is done in their effectual calling.

**W**E have, in the foregoing part of this work, considered man as made upright at first; but not continuing in that state, plunged into those depths of sin and misery, which would have rendered his state altogether desperate, without the interposition of a Mediator; whose designation to this work, his fitness for, and faithful discharge thereof, have been particularly considered in several foregoing answers, wherein we have had an account of his Person as God-man; his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, his twofold estate, to wit, of humiliation and exaltation; and the benefits which accrue to the church thereby. This church has also been considered as *visible* or *invisible*; and the former of these, as enjoying many privileges which respect, more especially, the ordinary means of salvation.

We are now led to consider the benefits which the members of the *invisible* church, to wit, the whole number of the elect, who have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, their head, enjoy by him. And these are contained in two general heads; namely, union and communion with him in

grace and glory ; which comprise in them the blessings of both worlds, as the result of their relation to, and interest in him. First, they are united to him, and then made partakers of his benefits. All grace imparted to us here, is the result thereof ; as the apostle says, *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. And elsewhere our Saviour says, *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*, John xv. 5. And the contrary hereunto is inconsistent with the exercise of any grace : *Without me ye can do nothing*.

Moreover, that communion which the saints have with Christ in glory, whereby they who are brought to a state of perfection, participate of those graces and comforts which flow from their continued union with him ; and the first fruits, or foretastes of glory, which they have in this world, are also founded on it. Thus the apostle calls Christ in his people, *The hope of glory*, Colos. i. 27. and speaking of his giving eternal life to them, he considers them as being *in his hand*, from whence *none shall pluck them out*, John x. 28. or separate them from him. So that they shall enjoy everlasting happiness with him, inasmuch as they shall *be found in him*, Phil. iii. 9. which leads us more particularly to consider,

What this union with Christ is. The scripture often speaks of Christ's being, or abiding in his people, and they in him ; and assigns it as an evidence of their interest in the blessings he has purchased for them : and, indeed, it is from hence that all internal and practical godliness is derived.

This privilege argues infinite condescension in him, and tends to the highest advancement of those who are the subjects thereof. Now that we may understand what is intended thereby, let us take heed that we do not include in it any thing that tends to extenuate it on the one hand ; or to exalt those who are made partakers of it above the station or condition into which they are brought thereby, on the other.

It is not sufficient to suppose that this union contains in it no more than that his people have the same kind of nature with him, as being made *partakers of flesh and blood* ; he having *himself taken part of the same*, Heb. ii. 14. He is indeed allied to us, as having all the essential perfections of our nature : and this was an instance of infinite condescension in him, and absolutely necessary to our redemption : nevertheless, this similitude of nature, abstracted from other considerations, accompanying or flowing from his incarnation, contains in it no other idea of union, between Christ and his people, than that which they have with one another ; nor is it a privilege peculiar to believers, since Christ took on him the same human nature that



all men have, though with a peculiar design of grace to those whom he came to redeem. This I the rather take notice of, because the Socinians, and others, that speak of this privilege, inasmuch as it is often mentioned in scripture, appear to have very low thoughts of it, when they suppose nothing more than this to be intended thereby.

Again, this union includes in it more than what is contained in that mutual love that is between Christ and believers, in that sense in which there is an union of affection between those who love one another; as it is said, *The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul*, 1 Sam. xviii. 1. In which respect believers are united to one another; or, as the apostle expressed it, their hearts are *knit together in love*, Col. ii. 2. *being like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind*, Phil. ii. 2. or, as he adds, *Let this mind also be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*, ver. 5. I say it includes more than this, which is rather the fruit and consequence of our union with Christ, than that wherein it principally consists.

Moreover we must take heed that we do not, in explaining this union between Christ and believers, include more in it than what belongs to creatures infinitely below him, to whom they are said to be united: therefore we cannot but abhor the blasphemy of those who speak of an essential union of creatures with God; or, as though they had hereby something derived to them in common with Christ the great Mediator.\*

But passing by this method of accounting for the union between Christ and believers, there are two senses in which it is taken in scripture; one is, that which results from Christ's being their federal head, representative, or surety; having undertaken to deal with the justice of God in their behalf, so that what he should do, as standing in this relation to them, should be placed to their account, as much as though it had been done

\* *The first that seems to use this unavoury mode of speaking, is Gregory Nazianzen; who did not consider how inconsistent some of those rhetorical ways of speaking, he seems fond of, are with that doctrine, which, in other parts of his writings, he maintained. Those words Χρηστωσιν, and Συνομοσιν, which he sometimes uses to express the nature, or consequence of this union between Christ and believers, are very disagreeable. In one place of his writings, (Vid. ejusd. Orat. 41.) exhorting Christians to be like Christ, he says, That because he became like unto us, γαρμεθα Θεω δι αυτου, efficiamur Dii propter ipsum; and elsewhere, (in Orat. 35. de Falso.) he says, Hic homo Deus effectus postea quam cum Deo coaluit in γαρμασιν τοσωνδου θεου ενωσιν εν Ανωσιν ενωσιν, ut ipse quoque tantum Deus efficiar quantum ipse homo. And some modern writers have been fond of the same mode of speaking, especially among those who, from their mysterious and unintelligible mode of expressing themselves, have rather exposed than defended the doctrines of the gospel. We find expressions of the like nature in a book put forth by Luther, which is supposed to be written by Taulerus, before the Reformation, called Theologia Germanica; and some others, since that time, such as Paracelsus, Swenckfeld, Weigelius, and those enthusiasts, that have adhered to their unintelligible and blasphemous modes of speaking.*

by them in their own persons: this is what contains in it their concern in the covenant of grace, made with him in their behalf; of which something has been said under a foregoing answer; \* and it is the foundation of their sins being imputed to him, and his righteousness to them; which will be farther considered, when we treat of the doctrine of justification under a following answer. †

Therefore this union with Christ, which is mentioned in the answer we are now explaining, is of another nature, and, in some respects, may be properly styled a *vital union*, as all spiritual life is derived from it; or a *conjugal union*, as it is founded in consent, and said to be by faith. Now there are two things observed concerning it.

1. It is expressed by our being spiritually and mystically joined to Christ: it is styled a *spiritual union*, in opposition to those gross and carnal conceptions which persons may entertain concerning things being joined together in a natural way; and, indeed, whatever respects salvation is of a spiritual nature.

It is moreover called a *mystical union*, which is the word most used by those who treat on this subject; and the reason is, because the apostle calls it a *great mystery*, Eph. v. 32. by which we are not to understand the union there is between man and wife, as contained in the similitude by which he had before illustrated this doctrine, as the Papists pretend, ‡ but the union that there is between Christ and his church. And it is probably styled a *mystery*, because it could never have been known without divine revelation: and as Christ's condescension, expressed herein, can never be sufficiently admired; so it cannot be fully comprehended by us. This is such a nearness to him, and such a display of love in him as *passeth knowledge*. However, there are some similitudes used in scripture to illustrate it. As,

(1.) The union that there is between the *vine* and the *branches*, John xv. 1, 2, 5. whereby life, nourishment, growth and fruit-

\* See Vol. II. Quest. 51. page 167.

† Quest. 70.

‡ This is the principal, if not the only scripture, from which they pretend to prove marriage to be a sacrament, and they argue thus. The Greek church had no other word to express what was afterwards called a sacrament by the Latin church, but *μυστήριον*, a mystery: therefore since the apostle calls marriage, as they suppose, a mystery, they conclude that it is a sacrament; which is a very weak foundation for inserting it among those sacraments which they have added to them that Christ had instituted; for the sacraments are no where called mysteries in scripture: and therefore we are not to explain doctrines by words which were not used till some ages after the apostles' time: and if there were any thing in their argument, viz. that that which is called a mystery in scripture, must needs be a sacrament, it does not appear that the apostle calls marriage a great mystery, but the union that there is between Christ and his church; as he expressly says in the following words; I speak concerning Christ and the church.

fulness are conveyed to them: in like manner all our spiritual life together, with the exercise and increase of grace, depend on our union with, abiding in, and deriving what is necessary thereunto, from him.

(2.) It is also compared to the union there is between the *head and members*, as the apostle farther illustrates it, when he styles *him the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*, Col. ii. 19. which is a very beautiful similitude, whereby we are given to understand, that as the head is the fountain of life and motion to the whole body, as the nerves and animal spirits take their rise from thence, so that if the communication that there is between them and it, be stopped, the members would be useless, dead, and insignificant: so Christ is the fountain of spiritual life and motion, to all those who are united to him.

(3.) This union is farther illustrated, by a similitude taken from that union which there is between the foundation and the building; and accordingly Christ is styled, in scripture, *the chief corner stone*, Eph. ii. 20. and a *sure foundation*, Isa. xxviii. 16. And there is something peculiar in that phrase which the apostle uses, which is more than any similitude can express; when he speaks of Christ as *the living stone*, or rock, on which the church is built; and of believers, as *lively stones*, 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. to denote, that they are not only supported and upheld by him, as the building is by the foundation, but enabled to put forth living actions, as those whose life is derived from this union with him.

(4.) There is another similitude taken from that nourishment which the body receives, by the use of food; and therefore our Saviour styles himself *the bread of life*, or *the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die*; and proceeds to speak of his *giving his flesh for the life of the world*; and adds, *he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him*, John vi. 48—56.

(5.) There is another similitude, by which our being united to Christ by faith, is more especially illustrated, taken from the union which there is between man and wife; accordingly this is generally styled, a conjugal union, between Christ and believers. Thus the prophet says, *Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel*, Isa. liv. 5. And the apostle, speaking of a man's *leaving his father and mother, and being joined unto his wife, and they two being one flesh*, Eph. v. 31, 32. applies it, as was before observed, to the union that there is between Christ and the church; and adds, that *we are members of his body*,

of his flesh, and of his bones, ver. 30. which expression, if not compared with other scriptures, would be very hard to be understood; but it may be explained by the like phraseology, used elsewhere. Thus, when God formed Eve at first, and brought her to Adam, and thereby joined them together in a conjugal relation: he says upon this occasion, *This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*, Gen. ii. 23. And we find also, that other relations, which are more remote than this, are expressed by the same mode of speaking. Thus Laban says to Jacob, *Surely thou art my bone and my flesh*, Gen. xxix. 14. And Abimelech pleading the relation he stood in to the men of Shechem, as a pretence of his right to reign over them, tells them, *I am your bone and your flesh*, Judges ix. 2. Therefore the apostle makes use of the same expression, agreeably to the common mode of speaking used in scripture, to set forth the conjugal relation which there is between Christ and believers.

The apostle, indeed, elsewhere alters the phrase, when he says, *He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. which is so difficult an expression, that some who treat on this subject, though concluding that there is in it something that denotes the intimacy and nearness of this union, and more than what is contained in the other phrase, of their *being one flesh*, nevertheless, reckon it among those expressions which are inexplicable; though I cannot but give into the sense in which some understand it; namely, that inasmuch as the same Spirit dwells in believers that dwelt in Christ, though with different views and designs, they are hereby wrought up, in their measure, to the same temper and disposition; or as it is expressed elsewhere, *The same mind is in them that was in Christ*, Phil. ii. 5. which is such an effect of this conjugal relation that there is between him and them, as is not always the result of the same relation amongst men. The reason why I call this our being united to Christ, by faith, is because it is founded in a mutual consent; as *the Lord avouches them* on the one hand, *to be his people*, so they, on the other hand, *avouch him to be their God*, Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. the latter of which is, properly speaking, an act of faith; whereby they give up themselves to be his servants, to all intents and purposes, and that for ever.

It is farther observed in this answer. That union with Christ is a work of God's grace: this it must certainly be, since it is the spring and fountain from whence all acts of grace proceed; and indeed, from the nature of the thing, it cannot be otherwise: for if there be a wonderful instance of condescending grace in God's conferring those blessings that accompany salvation; this may much more be deemed so. If Christ be pleased to *dwell* with, and *in* his people, and to *walk in* them, 2

Cor. vi. 16. or as it is said elsewhere, to *live in them*, Gal. ii. 20. as a pledge and earnest of their being forever with him in heaven; and if, as the result hereof, they be admitted to the greatest intimacy with him; we may from hence take occasion to apply what was spoken by one of Christ's disciples, to him, with becoming humility and admiration; *how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*

John xiv. 22. Is it not a great instance of grace, that the Son of God should make choice of so mean an habitation, as that of the souls of sinful men; and not only be present with, but united to them in those instances which have been before considered?

2. It is farther observed in this answer, that we are united to Christ in effectual calling; which leads us to consider what is contained in the two following answers.

**QUEST. LXVII.** *What is effectual calling?*

**ANSW.** Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace; whereby, out of his free and special love to his elect, and from nothing in them moving him thereunto, he doth, in his accepted time, invite and draw them to Jesus Christ by his word and Spirit, savingly enlightening their minds, renewing, and powerfully determining their wills; so as they, although in themselves dead in sin, are hereby made willing and able, freely to answer his call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein.

**QUEST. LXVIII.** *Are the elect effectually called?*

**ANSW.** All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and have some common operations of the Spirit; who, for their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ.

**WE** have, in these answers, an account of the first step that God takes, in applying the redemption purchased by Christ; which is expressed, in general, by the word *calling*; whereby sinners are invited, commanded, encouraged, and enabled, to come to Christ, in order to their being made partakers of his benefits: the apostle styles it an *high, holy, and heavenly calling*, Phil. iii. 14. 2 Tim. i. 9. Heb. iii. 1. and a being *called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, 1 Cor. i.

8. Herein we are called out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. and to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, chap. v. 10. And, indeed, the word is very emphatical: For,

1. A call supposes a person to be separate, or at a distance from him that calls him; and it contains an intimation of leave to come into his presence. Thus, in effectual calling, he who was departed from God, is brought nigh to him. God, as it were, says to him, as he did to Adam, when flying from him, and dreading nothing so much as his presence, when apprehending himself exposed to the stroke of his vindictive justice, *Where art thou?* Gen. iii. 9. which is styled, *God's calling unto him*. Or, it is like as when a traveller is taking a wrong way, and in danger of falling into some pit, or snare; and a kind friend calls after him to return, and sets him in the right way: thus God calls to sinners, or says, as the prophet expresses it; *Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

2. Herein God deals with men as reasonable creatures; which is by no means to be excluded from our ideas of the work of grace; though this work contain in it some superior, or supernatural methods of acting, in order to bring it about; yet we may be under a divine influence, as turning to God, or effectually called by him, and accordingly acted by a supernatural principle; and at the same time our understandings, or reasoning powers, not rendered useless, but enlightened or improved thereby; by which means, every thing that we do, in obedience to the call of God, appears to be most just and reasonable. This gives no ground for any one to conclude, that, according to our method of explaining this doctrine, we lay ourselves open to the absurd consequence fastened upon it; as though God dealt with us as stocks and stones: but more of this may be considered under a following head.

We now proceed, more particularly, to consider the subject-matter of these two answers; wherein we have an account of the difference between the *external* call of the gospel, which is explained in the latter of them, and the *internal*, saving, and powerful call, which is justly termed *effectual*; and is considered in the former of them. And,

*First*, Concerning the outward and common call, together with the persons to whom it is given; the design of God in giving it, and also the issue thereof, with respect to a great number of those who are said to be called.

The reason why we choose to insist on this common call, in the first place, is because it is antecedent, and made subservient to the other in the method of the divine dispensation;

inasmuch as we are first favoured with the word and ordinances, and then they are made effectual to salvation.

1. Therefore we shall consider what we are to understand by this common call.

It is observed, that it is by the ministry of the word, in which Christ is set forth in his person and offices, and sinners are called to come to him; and in so doing, to be made partakers of the blessings which he has purchased. This is the sum and substance of the gospel-ministry; and it is illustrated Matt. xxii. 1, & *seq.* by the parable of the *marriage-feast*, which the *king made for his son, and sent his servants*; by which is signified gospel-ministers; to call or invite, and therein to use all persuasive arguments to prevail with persons to come to it: this is styled their being *called*. And the observation made on persons refusing to comply with this call, when it is said, *Many are called, but few are chosen*, ver. 14. plainly intimates, that our Saviour here means no other than a common or ineffectual call. And in another parable it is illustrated by an *householder's hiring labourers into his vineyard*, Matt. xx. 1, & *seq.* at several hours of the day: some were hired early in the morning; at the *third hour*; others at the *sixth* and *ninth*; which denotes the gospel-call, that the Jewish church had to come to Christ before his incarnation, under the ceremonial law; and others were hired at the *eleventh* hour, denoting those who were called, at that time, by the ministry of Christ and his disciples: that this was only a common and external call, is evident, not only from the intimation that they, who had *borne the burden and heat of the day*; that is, for many ages had been a professing people, *murmured*, because others, who were called at the eleventh hour, had an equal share in his regard; but also from what is expressly said, (the words are the same with those wherewith the other parable before-mentioned, is closed) *Many are called, but few are chosen*, ver. 16.

Moreover, the apostle intends this common call, when he speaks of some who have been *called into the grace of Christ*; not called by the power and efficacious grace of Christ, as denoting that the call was effectual; but called, or invited to come and receive the grace of Christ; or called externally, and thereby prevailed on to embrace the doctrine of the grace of Christ: these are said to be *soon removed unto another gospel*, Gal. i. 6. And elsewhere, chap. v. 7. he speaks of some, who, when the *truth*, or the doctrines of the gospel, were first presented to them, expressed, for a time, a readiness to receive it; upon which account he says, *Ye did run well*, or, ye began well; but yet they did not afterwards yield the obedience of faith, to that truth which they seemed, at first, to have a very great regard:

upon which occasion the apostle says, *This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you, ver. 8.*

They who express some regard to this call, are generally said to have *common grace*, as contradistinguished from others, who are under the powerful, and efficacious influences of the Spirit, which are styled *special*. The former of these are oftentimes under some impressive influences by the common work of the Spirit, under the preaching of the gospel; who, notwithstanding, are in an unconverted state; their consciences are sometimes awakened, and they bring many charges and accusations against themselves; and from a dread of the consequences thereof, abstain from many enormous crimes, as well as practise several duties of religion; they are also said to be made partakers of some great degrees of restraining grace; and all this arises from no other than the Spirit's common work of conviction; as he is said, to *reprove the world of sin, John xvi. 8.*

These are styled, in this answer, the common operations of the Spirit: they may be called operations, inasmuch as they contain in them something more than God's sending ministers to address themselves to sinners, in a way of persuasion or arguing; for, the Spirit of God deals with their consciences under the ministry of the word. It is true, this is no more than common grace; yet it may be styled the Spirit's work: for though the call be no other than common, and the Spirit considered as an external agent, inasmuch as he never dwells in the hearts of any but believers, yet the effect produced, is internal in the mind and consciences of men, and, in some degree, in the will; which is almost persuaded to comply with it. These operations are sometimes called the Spirit's *striving with man*, Gen. vi. 3. but inasmuch as many of these internal motions are said to be resisted and quenched, when persons first act contrary to the dictates of their consciences, and afterwards wholly extinguish them; therefore the Spirit's work in those whom he thus calls, is not effectual or saving; these are not united to Christ by his Spirit, nor by faith; and this is generally styled common grace, in speaking to which, we shall consider,

(1.) That there are some things presented to us, in an objective way, which contain the subject matter of the gospel, or that call, which is given to sinners to pursue those methods, which, by divine appointment, lead to salvation. As *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Rom. x. 17.* so do common convictions, and whatever carries in it the appearance of grace in the unregenerate. In this respect God deals with men as intelligent creatures, capable of making such improvement of those instructions and intimations, as may tend,



in many respects, to their advantage. This must be supposed, or else the preaching of the gospel could not be reckoned an universal blessing to them who are favoured with it, abstracting from those saving advantages which some are to receive hereby. This is here called the grace which is offered to them, who are outwardly called, by the ministry of the word.

Offers of grace, and invitations to come to Christ, are words used by almost all who have treated on this subject: though some, of late, have been ready to conclude, that these modes of speaking tend to overthrow the doctrine we are maintaining; for they argue to this purpose; that an overture, or invitation, supposes a power in him to whom it is given to comply with it. Did I think this idea necessarily contained in these words, I should rather choose to substitute others in the room of them: however, to remove prejudices, or unjust representations, which the use thereof may occasion, either here or elsewhere, I shall briefly give an account of the reason why I use them, and what I understand thereby. If it be said, This mode of speaking is not to be found in scripture; this, it is true, should make us less tenacious of it. Nevertheless, it may be used without just offence given, if it be explained agreeably thereunto. (a) Therefore let it be considered,

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(a) That the invitations of the gospel are not restricted to a few amongst a larger number who hear them, is clear, from various considerations.

The term evangel, or gospel, importing good tidings, evinces, that it is designed not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance and salvation.

The blessings, which it announces, lead to the same conclusion; liberty is offered to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; those who labour and are heavily laden, are invited to seek, and obtain rest: those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, are assured that they shall be filled; the riches of grace and of glory are promised to the poor in Spirit; sight is offered to the blind; and howsoever diseased, those who are afflicted are invited to come to the great Physician; and even those who are dead in sin are revived by his life-giving word. Such are the circumstances of the worst of men, who are consequently the objects of the mercies proffered in the gospel.

The unregenerate elect, who stand amongst those who will not be saved, are like them, possessed of prevailing inclinations to sin, and equally impotent to good: they are all equally guilty of an aversion of heart from God, and so possess in themselves nothing which can evidence a right to gospel blessings more than others.

The invitations of the gospel are in universal terms, and although such terms are sometimes restricted by the sense, yet where no such restriction appears, they are to be taken in their own unlimited extent; the ransom is asserted to have been rendered for all; the Lord willeth not the destruction of any, but that all should turn and live; Christ proclaimed to sinners, *if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*; and directed his disciples to go and *teach all nations*; and it is his will, that the gospel should be preached *unto every creature*.

If in the day of final account, the abominable crimes of Sodom and Gomorrah shall evince less guilt than the impenitency of Chorazin and Bethsaida; the aggravation of guilt, which the gospel produces, demonstrates that its messages are directed unto the worst of men, as well as others.

Those who are guided by the light of nature, are guilty, because they violate the rule of conscience: such as possessed the law of God were still more guilty;

(2.) That the presenting an object, whatever it be, to the understanding and will, is generally called, an *offering* it; as Gad says to David, from the Lord; *I offer thee three things, choose thee one of them, &c.* 1 Sam. xxiv. 12. So if God sets before us life and death, blessing and cursing, and bids us choose which we will have; this is equivalent to what is generally called, an offer of grace.

And as for invitations to come to Christ, it is plain, that there are many scriptures that speak to that purpose; namely, when it is said, *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink,* John vii. 37. And, *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,* Isa. lv. 1. And elsewhere Christ says, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,* Matt. xi. 28. And, *Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely,* Rev. xxii. 17.

(3.) When an offer, or invitation to accept of a thing, thus objectively presented to us, is made, it always supposes the valuableness thereof; and how much it would be our interest to accept of it; and that it is our indispensable duty so to do; which are the principal ideas that I intend, in my sense of the word, when I speak of offers of grace in the gospel, or invitations to come to Christ. Nevertheless, taking them in this sense, does not necessarily infer a power in us to accept them, without the assistance of divine grace: thus it may be said, that Christ came into the world to save sinners; and that he will certainly apply the redemption, which he has purchased, to all, for whom this price was given; and also, that a right to salvation is inseparably connected with faith and repentance; and that these, and all other graces are God's gifts; and that we are to pray, wait, and hope for them, under the ministry of the word; and if we be, in God's own time and way, enabled to exercise these graces, this will be our unspeakable advantage: and therefore it cannot but be our duty to attend upon God in all his holy institutions, in hope of saving blessings: these things may be done; and consequently the gospel may be thus preached, without supposing that grace is in our own

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but sinners under the light of the gospel, who trample under foot the blood of Christ, and despise and reject the mercies of the gospel, are guilty in the highest degree. It is just that they should not receive the offered pardon, but remain under the condemnation of the law, the dominion of iniquity, the slavery of Satan, and be left in their beloved darkness until they sink in despair. Yet nothing but their own aversion rejects the invitation, or prevents their salvation: they are straitened in their own bowels, and are the causes of their own destruction. Thus salvation is offered in general, and God is just, though the application of it is plainly special.

power: and this is what we principally intend by gospel-overtures or invitations.

(4.) Nevertheless we cannot approve of some expressions subversive of the doctrine of special redemption, how moving and pathetic soever they may appear to be; as when any one, to induce sinners to come to Christ, tells them, that God is willing, and Christ is willing, and has done his part, and the Spirit is ready to do his; and shall we be unwilling, and thereby destroy ourselves? Christ has purchased salvation for us: the Spirit offers his assistances to us; and shall we refuse these overtures? Christ invites us to come to him, and leaves it to our free-will, whether we will comply with, or reject these invitations: he is, at it were, indeterminate, whether he shall save us or no, and leaves the matter to our own conduct; we ought therefore to be persuaded to comply with the invitation. This method of explaining offers of grace, and invitations, to come to Christ, is not what we intend when we make use of these expressions.

2. We are now to consider the persons to whom this common call is given. It is indefinite, not directed only to the elect, or those, with respect to whom God designs to make it effectual to their salvation; for, according to the commission which our Saviour gave to his apostles, the gospel was to be preached to all nations, or to every creature in those places to which it was sent: and the reason of this is obvious; namely, because the counsel of God, concerning election, is secret, and not to be considered as the rule of human conduct; nor are they, whom God is pleased to employ in preaching the gospel, supposed to know whether he will succeed their endeavours, by enabling those who are called, to comply with it.

3. We shall now shew how far the gospel-call may, without the superadded assistance of special grace, be improved by men, in order to their attaining some advantage by it, though short of salvation: this may be done in two respects.

(1.) Gross enormous crimes may hereby be avoided: this appears in many unconverted persons, who not only avoid, but abhor them; being induced hereunto by something in nature that gives an aversion to them. And it may be farther argued, from the liableness of those who commit them, to punishment in proportion to their respective aggravations; which must either suppose in man, a power to avoid them: or else, the greatest degree of punishment would be the result of a necessity of nature, and not self-procured by any act of man's will; though all suppose the will to be free, with respect to actions that are sinful. It would be a very poor excuse for the murderer to allege, that he could not govern his passion, but was under an unavoidable necessity to take away the life of ano-

ther. Shall the man that commits those sins, which are contrary to nature, say, That his natural temper and disposition is so much inclined thereunto, that he could, by no means, avoid them? If our natural constitution be so depraved and vitiated, that it leads us, with an uncommon and impetuous violence, to those sins that we were not formerly inclined to: whence does this arise, but from the habits of vice, being increased by a wilful and obstinate continuance therein, and many repeated acts which they have produced? and might not this, at least, in some degree, have been avoided? We must distinguish between habits of sin, that immediately flow from the universal corruption of nature; and those that have taken deeper root in us, by being indulged, and exerting themselves, without any endeavours used, to restrain and give a check to them.

And if it be supposed that our natures are more habitually inclined to sin than once they were, might we not so far use the liberty of our wills, as to avoid some things, which, we are sensible, will prove a temptation to those particular acts thereof; whereby the corruption of nature, that is so prone to comply with it, might be in some measure, restrained, though not overcome: this may be done without converting grace; and consequently some great sins may be avoided. To deny this, would be not only to palliate, but open a door to all manner of licentiousness.

(2.) Man has a power to do some things that are materially good; though not good in all those circumstances in which actions are good that accompany or flow from regenerating grace. Ahab's humility, 1 Kings xxi. 29. and Nineveh's repentance, Jonah iii. 5. and seq. arose from the dread they had of the divine threatenings; which is such an inducement to repentance and reformation, as takes its rise from nothing more than the influence of common grace. Herod himself, though a vile person, feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy: and when he heard him, did many things, and heard him gladly, Mark vi. 20. And the Gentiles are said to do by nature, the things; that is, some things contained in the law; inasmuch that they are a law unto themselves, Rom. ii. 14. Therefore they did them by the influence of common grace. And these things, namely, abstaining from grosser sins, and doing some actions materially good, have certainly some advantage attending them; as thereby the world is not so much like hell as it would otherwise be: and as to what respects themselves, a greater degree of punishment is hereby avoided.

3. We are now to consider the design of God in giving this common call in the gospel, which cannot be the salvation of all who are thus called: this is evident; because all shall not be saved; whereas, if God had designed their salvation, he would

certainly have brought it about; since his purpose cannot be frustrated. To say that God has no determinations relating to the success of the gospel, reflects on his wisdom: and to conclude that things may happen contrary to his purpose, argues a defect of power; as though he could not attain the ends he designed: but this having before been insisted on, under the heads of election and special redemption, I shall pass it by at present, and only consider, that the ends which God designed in giving the gospel, were such as were attained by it, namely, the salvation of those who shall eventually be saved, the restraining of those who have only common grace, and the setting forth the glorious work of redemption by Jesus Christ; which, as it is the wonder of angels, who desire to look into it; so it is hereby designed to be recommended as worthy of the highest esteem, even in those who cast contempt on it: and hereby they are convicted, who shut their eyes against, and neglect to behold that glorious light which shines so brightly therein.

*Object.* To this it is objected, that if Christ invites and calls men to come to him, as he often does in the New Testament; and when they refuse to do it, mentions their refusal with a kind of regret; as when he says, *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*, John v. 40. this, they suppose, is no other than an insult on mankind, a bidding them come without the least design that they should; as if a magistrate should go to the prison door, and tell the unhappy man, who is not only under lock and key, but loaded with irons, that he would have him leave that place of misery and confinement, and how much he should rejoice, if he would come out; and upon that condition, propose to him several honours that he has in reserve for him: this, say they, is not to deal seriously with him. And if the offer of grace in the gospel, answers the similitude, as they suppose it exactly does, then there is no need for any thing farther to be replied to it; the doctrine confutes itself; as it argues the divine dealings with men illusory.

*Ans.* This similitude, how plausible soever it may appear to be to some, is far from giving a just representation of the doctrine we are maintaining: for when the magistrate is supposed to signify his desire that the prisoner would set himself free, which he knows he cannot do; hereby it is intimated, that though God knows that the sinner cannot convert himself, yet he commands him to do it, or to put forth supernatural acts of grace, though he has no principle of grace in him: but let it be considered, that this God no where commands any to do. (a) Our Saviour intends as much as this, when he speaks of the *tree's being made good*, before the fruit it produces can be so, Matt. xii. 33. or that it is impossible for *men to gather grapes*

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(a) Vide Fuller's "Gospel worthy of all Acceptation."

*of thorns, or figs of thistles*, chap. vii. 17. implying, that there must be an internal disposition wrought, before any acts of grace can be put forth: this is supposed in the preaching of the gospel, or the call to sinners to repent and believe, which they have no reason to conclude that they can do without the aids of divine grace, and these they are to wait, pray and hope for, in all God's instituted methods.

Moreover, as for those promises which are made to us, if we would release ourselves from the chains of sin, and the account given, how much God would rejoice in our being set free, when the thing is, in itself, impossible; this is no otherwise true than as it contains a declaration of the connexion there is between conversion and salvation, or freedom from the slavery of sin, and God's conferring many spiritual honours and privileges on those who are converted; not that it does, in the least, denote that it is in our own power to convert ourselves: but that this may be more clearly understood, we shall consider it with relation to the two branches before mentioned, and so speak of God, either as commanding, calling, and inviting men to do what is out of their power, namely, to repent, and believe; or else, as holding forth promises of that salvation which they shall not attain; because these graces are out of their power, which contains the substance of what is usually objected against the doctrine we are maintaining, by those who are on the other side of the question; who suppose that this method of procedure is illusory, and therefore unbecoming the divine perfections. And,

1. Concerning God's commanding, calling, and inviting men to do what is out of their own power; as for instance, bidding a dead man to arise, or one that is blind to see, or those that are shut up in prison, to come out from thence. This is to be explained, and then, perhaps, the doctrine we are maintaining, will appear to be less exceptionable. We have, elsewhere, in defending the head of particular redemption, against an objection not much unlike to this, considered how Christ is said to be offered in the gospel,\* or in what sense the overture may be said to be made to all that are favoured with it; and yet the efficacy thereof, only extend to those whom Christ has redeemed, and shall be effectually called. But that we may a little farther explain this matter, let us consider,

(1.) That the gospel contains a declaration, that God designs to save a part of this miserable world; and, that in subserviency thereunto, he has given them a discovery of Christ, as the object of faith, and the purchaser and author of salvation.

(2.) He does not therein give the least intimation to any, while in a state of ungeneracy, that they shall be enabled to believe; and, as the consequence thereof, be saved. Their

\* See Vol. II. page 333.

names, characters, or places of abode, or their natural embellishments, who shall attain this privilege, are no where pointed at in scripture; nor is the book of God's secret purpose, concerning election to eternal life, opened, so as that any one can discern his name written in it, before he be effectually called; for we have no warrant to look any farther than God's revealed will; which assigns no evidence of our interest in the saving blessings of the gospel, till they are experienced by us, in this effectual call.

(3.) God plainly discovers to men, in the gospel, that all those graces, which are inseparably connected with salvation, are his work and gift, and consequently out of their own power; or that *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*, Rom. ix. 16. Therefore he no where tells the man, who *is tied and bound with the chain of his sin*, that he is able to set himself free; but puts him upon expecting and praying for it, from the *pitifulness of his great mercy*. He no where tells him, that he can implant a principle of spiritual life and grace in himself; or that he ought so much as to attempt to do any thing to atone for his sins, by his obedience and sufferings, but suggests the contrary, when he says, *Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*, Isa. xlv. 24.

(4.) He gives none the least ground to expect, or lay claim to salvation, till they believe; and as faith and salvation are both his gifts, he puts them upon seeking, and desiring them, in their respective order; first grace, and then glory.

(5.) The gospel-call is designed to put men upon a diligent attendance on the ordinances, as means of grace, and to leave the issue and success thereof to God, who *waits that he may be gracious*; that so his sovereignty may appear more eminently in the dispensing this privilege; and, in the mean time, assigns it as their duty to *wait for him*, chap. xxx. 18. And while we are engaged in this duty, we are to acknowledge, that we have nothing that can give us any right to this privilege: So that God might justly deny success to his ordinances. Nevertheless, if he is pleased to give us, while we are attending on them, those earnest desires of their being made effectual to our conversion and salvation, we may conclude this to be a token for good, that he designs us some special advantage thereby; and we do not know but that even this desire of grace may be the beginning of the Spirit's saving work, and therefore an earnest of his carrying it on.

(6.) When God commands persons, in the gospel, to do those things which cannot be performed without his special grace, he sometimes supposes them, when he gives forth the command, to have a principle of spiritual life and grace, which

is, in effect to bid one that is made alive, to put forth living actions; which respect, more especially, the progress of grace after the work is begun; in which sense I understand those words of the apostle, *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh; that is, hath wrought, in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 12.

2. If we consider the gospel as holding forth promises of salvation, when, at the same time, it is not in our power to exercise those graces that accompany it; which gives farther occasion to those that except against the doctrine we are maintaining, to conclude, that it represents God as offering those blessings which he does not design to bestow: This may give us occasion to explain what we mean, when we consider salvation as offered in the gospel; whereby we understand nothing else but a declaration, that all who repent and believe, shall be saved; which contains a character, or description of the persons who have ground to expect this privilege: not that salvation is founded on dubious and uncertain conditions, which depend upon the power and liberty of our will; or impossible conditions; as though God should say, if man will change his own heart, and work faith, and all other graces in himself, then he will save him: but all that we mean by it is, that those graces, which are inseparably connected with salvation, are to be waited for in our attendance on all God's ordinances, and when he is pleased to work them, then we may conclude, that we have a right to the promise of salvation. Thus concerning the gospel-call, what it is, how far it may be improved by those who are destitute of special grace, and what is God's design in giving it: we now proceed to consider,

3. The issue and consequence thereof, as it is farther observed in this answer, that many wilfully neglect, contemn, or refuse to comply with it, with respect to whom it is not made effectual to their salvation. This appears from the report that Christ's disciples brought to him, concerning the excuses that many made when called to come to the marriage feast, in the parable: One pretended, that he had *bought a piece of ground, and must needs go see it*; and another, that he had *bought five yoke of oxen, and must go to prove them*; and another *had married a wife, and therefore could not come*. It is elsewhere said, that *they all made light of it, and went their ways; one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them*, Luke xiv. 18—20. compared with Matt. xxii. 5, 6.

And the prophet introduces our Saviour himself as complaining, *I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought*, Isa. xlix. 4, 5. And the reason hereof is, because Israel is *not gathered*; which words are to be understood in a



comparative sense, as denoting the fewness of those who complied with his gracious invitations, to come to him, or were convinced, by the miracles which he wrought to confirm his doctrine.

This is also farther evident, from the small number of those who are effectually prevailed upon under the gospel dispensation, which the apostle calls *the grace of God that brings salvation, that hath appeared to all men, teaching them to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.* And also, from the great opposition and hatred, which many express to the person of Christ, who is the subject matter thereof; which the prophet not only relates, as what was observed in his day, but foretells, that in after-ages, a great part of mankind would not believe the report made concerning him; but that he should be *despised and rejected of men, who would hide, as it were, their faces from him, and not esteem him*, Isa. liii. 1, 3. This is certainly the highest contempt of the gospel; for it is an undervaluing the greatest privileges, as though they were not worthy to be embraced, desired, or sought after; and inasmuch as this is wilful, arising from the enmity of the will of man against God, and the method of salvation which he has prescribed therein, it has a tendency to provoke his wrath; so that being justly left in their unbelief, they will not come to Christ, that they may have life. And as they are judicially left to themselves, they contract a greater degree of alienation from, and averseness to God, and so never truly come to Jesus Christ; which is an awful and tremendous consideration.

This is the consequence of it, with respect to those who have only this common call; and therefore we must not conclude, that it is sufficient to salvation, unless there be an internal effectual call; and what this is, will be considered under our next head: but before we enter thereon, it is necessary for us to enquire, whether all, at least, those who sit under the sound of the gospel, have sufficient grace given them, so as that, by their own conduct, without the internal powerful influences of the Spirit, they may attain to salvation. This argument is much insisted on by those who adhere to the Pelagian scheme; and therefore we cannot wholly pass it over: and for our setting this matter in a just light, let it be considered; that every one must allow, that all who sit under the sound of the gospel, have sufficient objective grace, or sufficient external means, to lead them in the way of salvation; for to deny this, would be to deny that the gospel is a perfect rule of faith: this therefore is allowed on both sides; and we think nothing more is intended, when God says, concerning the church of the Jews, *What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it*, Isa. v. 4,

But the question is, whether there be a sufficiency of power, or ability in man ; so that without the internal efficacious grace of God, determining and inclining the will, to make a right improvement of it, it may be sufficient to the salvation of those to whom it is given ? This is what we cannot but deny. Now, that the external means of grace are not rendered effectual to the salvation of all who are favoured with them, is evident ; because, as was but now observed, many neglect and contemn the gospel : and as to others who improve it, so that the means of grace become effectual, it must be enquired ; what it is that makes them so ? How comes it to pass, that the preaching thereof is styled, to some, a savour of life, to others, a savour of death ? The answer which the Pelagians give to this, is, that they, in whom it is effectual, render it so, by their improving the liberty of their will ; so that they choose what is represented in the gospel, as eligible, and refuse the contrary. And if the question be asked, who maketh thee to differ from another ? they have, when disposed to speak agreeably to their own scheme, this answer ready at hand, I make myself to differ ; that is as much as to say, I have a natural power of improving the means of grace, without having recourse to God for any farther assistance, in a supernatural way.

It may easily be observed, that this supposition is greatly derogatory to the glory of God ; and renders all dependance on him, both to will and to do, unnecessary : It supposes that we have sufficient ability to work those graces in ourselves that accompany salvation ; otherwise it is not sufficient to salvation ; and therefore it is contrary to all those scriptures which speak of them as the work, or the effect of the exceeding greatness of the power of God : which leads us to consider,

*Secondly,* The doctrine of effectual calling, as contained in the former of the answers, which we are explaining ; in which we may observe,

I. The character of those who are effectually called antecedent thereunto. They have nothing that can recommend them to the divine favour ; for being considered as fallen, guilty creatures, they are not only unable to make atonement for sin, but to do what is spiritually good : thus the apostle represents them, *as without strength*, Rom. v. 6. which is the immediate consequence of man's first apostacy from God ; and universal experience, proves that we have a propensity to every thing that is evil, which daily increases : And to this we may add, that the mind is blinded, the affections stupified, the will full of obstinacy, the conscience disposed to deal treacherously, whereby we deceive ourselves ; so that the whole soul is out of order. The apostle speaks of man *by nature, as dead in*

*transgresses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; having their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind,* Eph. ii. 1—3. And the prophet speaks of the heart of man, as being *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,* Jer. xvii. 9. And the apostle describes some as ‘walking in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness,’ Eph. iv. 17—19. and others, as being ‘filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful,’ Rom. i. 29—31. This, indeed, is spoken of the Gentiles, who were destitute of the means of grace, and had contracted greater degrees of impiety than many others; but they, who are effectually called, would have run into the same abominations, their natures being equally inclined thereunto, without preventing grace; as some of the church of Corinth are said to have done before their conversion, whom he speaks of as once having been ‘unrighteous, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners,’ 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. And elsewhere he says, ‘We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another,’ Tit. iii. 3. And the obstinacy and perverseness of men, going on in a course of sin, is so great, that God reproveth a professing people, by telling them, that *their neck was as an iron sinew, and their brow brass,* Isa. xlvi. 4. Thus they were, before he *refined and chose some of them, in the furnace of affliction,* ver. 10. From hence it evidently appears, that men are not naturally inclined to comply with the gospel-call; but this is a privilege conferred on them, when, by the Spirit, it is made effectual to their salvation.

*Objec.* It is objected, to what has been said concerning persons being dead in sin, before they are effectually called; that that is no other than a metaphorical expression; and therefore the sense thereof is not to be strained so far as to suppose from hence, that they are altogether without a power to do that which is spiritually good.

*Ans.* When the state of men, before they are effectually called, is styled, a death in sin, which is a metaphorical expression, we must suppose, that there is a sense affixed to it, which, in some respects, is adapted to those ideas that we have of the word. If scripture-metaphors prove nothing, because the words are transferred from their literal sense to some other that is intended thereby, we shall be at the greatest loss to understand many important doctrines contained in the sacred writings, which abound very much with such modes of speaking. We do not suppose the metaphor to be extended so far, as that a person, dead in sin, is incapable of acting, as though he was a stock or a stone, the contrary to which is evident, from what has been before said concerning the power which they, who are in an unregenerate state, have of doing things materially good; but we are now considering men as unable to do what is good in all its circumstances, which may render their actions the object of the divine approbation, as agreeable to God's revealed will; and this, we suppose, an unregenerate person is as unable to do, as a dead man is to put forth living actions; and the reason is, because he is destitute of a supernatural principle of spiritual life. Scripture and experience, not only evince the weakness, blindness, and disinclination of such, to what is good, but their averseness to it: So that whatever we do, either in the beginning or progress of the life of faith, must proceed from a renewed nature, or a supernatural principle implanted in the soul; which is sometimes called, a *new heart*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. a *divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. as well as a quickening, or being raised from the dead. This leads us to consider,

II. The change that is wrought in this effectual calling, together with the grounds we have to conclude, that it is a supernatural work, or, as it is styled in this answer, the work of God's almighty power and grace. Those whom we more especially oppose in this head of argument, are the Pelagians, and others; who, though in some things they seem to recede from them, yet cannot support their cause without giving into their scheme, when treating on the subjects of free-will, nature and grace: these all allow that there is a change made in conversion or effectual calling; but they suppose that it is a change in man's natural temper and disposition, rather than what arises from a supernatural principle, which, according to them, consists in overcoming those habits of sin, which we have contracted, and acquiring habits of virtue, a ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well; and that it is in their own power supposing the concurrence of God as a God of nature, or at least, some superadded assistances, from the external dispensations of providence, which have an influence on the minds of men,

to produce this change; by this means they think that grace is first attained, and we disposed to comply with the external call of the gospel, whereby it is rendered effectual.

They sometimes indeed, use the word conversion, and speak of the power and grace of God herein; and that they may not seem to detract from the glory thereof, they profess themselves to adore and magnify God as the author of this work; but all this amounts to no more than nature acting under the influence of common providence. Something, indeed, they ascribe to God; but much less than what we think the scripture does.

That which they ascribe to him therein, is,

1. That he has made man an intelligent creature, having a power capable of choosing whatever seems advantageous, or refusing what appears to be destructive to him; and in order hereunto, he is able to discern what is his duty and interest; and when the will duly attends to these dictates of the understanding, it has a power inclining it to be influenced thereby, and embrace whatever overtures are made conducive to his future happiness.

2. Whereas the understanding and reasoning powers and faculties, are oftentimes impaired and hindered, in their method of acting, by some accidental inconveniences of nature, such as the temperament of the body, or those diseases which it is sometimes liable to, which affect the mind; these God, by his powerful providence, removes, or fences against, that the work may go on successfully.

3. Sometimes our outward circumstances in the world, give a different turn to our passions, and hinder us from entertaining any inclinations to religion; therefore, they suppose, that there is a farther hand of providence in ordering the various changes or conditions of life, as to what concerns the prosperous or adverse circumstances thereof, whereby a sanguine temper is changed to that which has more of a melancholy or thoughtful disposition in it, more inclined to be afraid of those sins that are like to be prejudicial to him; an angry and choleric temper, changed to another that has a greater mixture of meekness and humility; and whatever hinderance may arise from his conversing with those who tempt him to lay aside all thoughts about religion, or by loading it with reproach, to make him ashamed to pretend to it, the providence of God so orders circumstances and things, as to make them unacceptable to him, or him disinclined to converse with them: by this means there arises a congruity, as they call it, between men's natural dispositions and that grace which they are called, by the gospel, to exert, when they are persuaded to comply with it, without which the overture would be in vain.

4. Providence farther performs its part, by over-ruling some

concurring circumstances external to, and thought of, by him, in casting his lot among those who are able and desirous to persuade him to alter his sentiments, in matters of religion, whose industry and zeal for his good, accompanied with their skilfulness in managing those persuasive arguments used to convince him, have a great tendency to prevail upon him; hereby he is persuaded to give the hearing to that which before he despised, and made the subject of ridicule; and sometimes the motives and inducements that are used, accompanied with the pathetic way of address, in those whose ministry he attends on, is very conducive to answer the end attained thereby, namely, his conviction and altering his conduct of life, pursuant thereunto; all which is under the unforeseen direction of providence.

5. They add, that there is a kind of internal work in exciting the passions, by a general influence upon them, leaving it, notwithstanding, in man's power to determine them, with respect to their proper objects; and as for the will, that still remains free and unbiassed; but by this moral suasion, or these rational arguments, it is prevailed upon to comply with that which is for its advantage. According to this method of accounting for the work of conversion, what they attribute to the grace of God, is nothing more than what is the result of common providence; and it is supposed to act no otherwise than in an objective way; and that which gives the turn to all is, the influence of moral suasion, whereby men are prevailed on; but in all these respects, they are only beholden to God, as the God of nature: and when this is called, by them, a display of divine grace, nature and grace, in this matter, are made to signify the same thing, without scripture warrant.

Moreover, since, it is plain, all this may be done, and yet persons remain in an unconverted state, and the gospel-call be ineffectual, they suppose there is something to be performed on man's part, which gives a sanction to, and completes the work: accordingly he must rightly use and improve the power of reasoning, which God has given him, by diligently observing and attending to his law; and he must persuade himself, that it is highly reasonable to obey it; and must also duly weigh the consequence of his compliance or refusal, and endeavour to affect himself with the consideration of promised rewards and punishments, to excite his diligence, or awaken his fears; and must make use of those motives that are proper to induce him to lead a virtuous life; and when he is brought to conclude this most eligible, then he must add hereunto, the force of the strongest resolutions, to avoid occasions of sin, perform several necessary duties, and associate himself with those whose conversation and example may induce him to be virtuous; he must at-

tend on the word preached, with intenseness of thought, and a disposition to adhere, with the greatest impartiality, to what is recommended to him therein, as conducive to his future happiness: by this means he is persuaded; and from thence proceed those acts of grace, which afterwards, by being frequently repeated, arrive to a habit, which, if it be not lost by negligence, stupidity, and impenitency, or adhering to the temptations of Satan, being brought into a state of conversion, he is in a fair way to heaven, which, notwithstanding this, he may of by apostasy, since the work is to be carried on by him, as it was at first begun, by his own conduct.

This account of effectual calling or conversion, supposes it to be little more than a work of common providence; and all the grace they seem to own, is nothing more than nature exerting itself under the conduct of those reasoning powers which God has given it. None pretend to deny that our reasoning powers are herein to be exerted and improved; or that those arguments, which tend to give conviction, and motives to enforce obedience, must be duly attended to: neither do we deny that there is a kind hand of providence seen in over-ruling our natural tempers and dispositions, in giving a check to that corruption that is prevalent in us; and in rendering our condition of life, some way or other conducive to a farther work, which God designs to bring about. We also assert, that providence greatly favours us in bringing us under the means of grace, or casting our lot in such places where we have the advantages of the conversation and example of others, who are burning and shining lights in their generation; nor is it less seen in adapting a suitable word to our condition, or in raising our affections, while attending to it: but all this falls very short of effectual calling, as it is a display of God's power and grace. This work is no more than natural; whereas conversion is a supernatural work. Hitherto we may be led by common grace; but effectual calling is a work of special grace; the effect of this is only a change of life: but we assert, and have scripture-ground for it, that there is in that a change of heart. This scheme supposes the very principle and spring of grace to be acquired by man's improving his natural powers, under the conduct of God's providence: whereas, we suppose, and shall endeavour to prove, under a following head, that it is not acquired, but infused, and is the effect of divine power. This supposes the work to be brought about by moral suasion; and that the understanding, taking in the arguments that are made use of in an objective way, the will is induced to compliance, by choosing that which is good, and refusing that which is evil: whereas, we assert, that the will of man is bowed and

subjected to Christ, its enmity overcome; and accordingly we are said to be made willing in the day of his power.

But since that which bears the greatest share in this work, according to them, is the will and power of man, determining itself, by proper motives and arguments, to what is good; which supposes, that it acts freely therein. This may give us occasion to consider the nature of human liberty; we do not deny, in general, that man is endowed with a free will, which exerts itself in things of a lower nature, to that which we are speaking of, for this is as evident, as that he is endowed with an understanding: we shall therefore, in speaking concerning the liberty of the will of man, (1.) Consider what are the essential properties of liberty,\* without which, an action would cease to be free. And, (2.) How far the power of man's free-will may be extended, with a particular view to the matter, under our present consideration.

1. Concerning the nature and essential properties of human liberty. They, whose sentiments of free-will and grace we are opposing, suppose that it is essential to a free action, or otherwise it could not be denominated free, that it be performed with indifferency, that is, that the will of man should be so equally poised, that as it determines itself to one extreme, it might as well have determined itself to the other: therefore, he that loves God freely, might, by a determination of his will, as well have inclined himself to hate him; and on the other hand, he that hates God, might, by an act of his will, have determined himself to love him: the balance is supposed to be equal, and it is the method that the person uses to determine his will, that gives a turn to it. And from hence they infer, that they who persevere in grace, which they do freely, may, for the same reason, apostatize; yea, they proceed farther, at least some of them, who have maintained, that our Saviour might have sinned, and consequently the work of our redemption have miscarried in his hands; because, according to this notion of liberty, he acted freely in all those exercises of grace; which, we suppose, were no less free, because they were necessary; and also, from this account they give of liberty, they infer that the angels and glorified saints might sin, and so lose that state of blessedness, which they are possessed of; otherwise their obedience is not free; which absurdities are so apparently gross, that they who duly weigh them, will not easily give into this notion of liberty. And there is another absurdity, which the Pelagians dare not assert; for it would be the greatest blasphemy that could be contained in words, though it equally flows from this method of explaining the nature of liberty; that either God must not act freely, or else he might

\* This is what is generally called the formalis ratio of liberty.



act the contrary, with respect to those things in which he acts, like himself, as a God of infinite perfection; and accordingly, if he loves or delights in himself freely, or designs his own glory, as the highest end of all that he does, and uses means to bring about those ends which are most conducive thereunto; wherein his holiness, wisdom, justice, and faithfulness appear, I say, it will follow from their scheme, and I cannot but tremble to mention it, that he might do the contrary; and what is this but to say, that he might cease to be God.

The arguments which they who attempt to support this notion of liberty, insist on, are taken from the ideas which we generally have of a person's acting freely; as for instance, if a man performs any of the common actions of life, such as walking, sitting, standing, reading, writing, &c. freely, he may do the contrary.

But to this I answer, That there is a vast difference between asserting, that many of the actions of life are arbitrary or indifferent, so that we might do the contrary; and saying that indifferency is essential to liberty; for that which is essential to an action must belong to every individual action of the same kind.\* Thus concerning their notion of liberty, whom we oppose.

But on the other hand, that which we acquiesce in, is, that its essential property or nature, consists in a person's doing a thing without being laid under a natural necessity to do it; † or doing it of his own accord, without any force laid on him. ‡ Others express it by a person's doing a thing out of choice, as having the highest reason to determine him so to do.\* This is that notion of liberty which we cannot but approve of; and we are now to shew,

(2.) How far the power of man's free-will may be extended, with a particular view to the matter under our present consideration. Here let it be observed,

1st, That the power of man's will extends itself to things within its own sphere, and not above it; all actions and powers of acting, are contained within certain limits, agreeable to the nature and capacity of the agent. Creatures below man,

\* We generally say, that whatever is essential to a thing, belongs to it as such. And there is a known rule in logic, *A quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*; and the then absurd consequences, above mentioned, would necessarily follow from it.

† In this respect divines generally consider liberty as opposed to co-action: but here we must distinguish between a natural co-action and a moral one. Liberty is not opposed to a moral co-action, which is very consistent with it. Thus an honest man cannot allow himself in a vile action; he is under a moral constraint to the contrary; and yet he abstains from sin freely. A believer loves Christ freely, as the apostle Paul certainly did; and yet, at the same time, he was under the constraint of the love of Christ; as he himself expresses it, 2 Cor. v. 14.

‡ This divines generally call spontaneity.

\* *Nulli sunt cœli lubentia rationalis.*

cannot put forth rational actions: and man cannot put forth supernatural actions, if he be not made partaker of a divine or spiritual nature, as being endowed with a supernatural principle, such as that which is implanted in regeneration. Consider him as an intelligent creature, and it is agreeable to his nature to put forth free actions, under the conduct and direction of the understanding; but if we consider him as renewed, converted, or effectually called, and acting agreeably thereunto, then he is under the influence of an higher principle, which I call a *divine nature*, according to the phrase which the apostle uses, 2 Pet. i. 4. The former of these supposes no more than the concurrence of common providence, which at first gave, and then maintains our reasoning faculties; whereas the latter supposes, that we are under the influence of the Spirit; whereby we are enabled to act in a supernatural way, our natures being renewed and disposed thereunto, in which we are not divested of the liberty of our wills; but they are improved and enabled to do what before they were averse and disinclined to.

That man acts freely in those things which are agreeable to his nature, as an intelligent creature, all will allow. Moreover, we consider the understanding and will, as both concurring in actions that are free, and that one of these is subservient to the other; as for instance, we cannot be said to desire, delight in, choose, or refuse a thing unless we have some idea of it, as an object, which we apprehend meet to be desired or rejected.

And if it be farther enquired, Whether the will has, in itself, a power to follow the dictates of the understanding, in things that are agreeable to our nature, and be generally disposed to do it, unless biassed by the passions, inclining and determining it another way? This, I think, is not to be denied; but in our present argument, we are to consider the will of man as conversant about things supernatural, and accordingly, must give a different account of Christian liberty, from that which is merely human, as before described. The Pelagians will allow what has been said concerning the nature of liberty in general; but the difference between us and them is, that we confine it within its own sphere; whereas they extend it farther, and apply it to regeneration, effectual calling; and conversion; in which respect it discovers itself no otherwise than as enslaved to, or a servant of sin;\* and the powers and faculties of the soul, with relation hereunto, are weakened by the prevalency of corruption, so that we are not able to put forth those actions which proceed from, and determine a person to be *renewed in the spirit of his mind*; or to have *put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*.

Again, if it be farther enquired; whether the will necessa-

\* *This some divines call voluntas serva.*

rily follows the dictates of the understanding, so that the grace of God takes its first rise from thence? that which I would say in answer thereunto is, That the understanding, indeed, represents things spiritual and heavenly to us, as good and desirable, and worthy of all acceptation; and gives us an undeniable conviction, that all the motives used in scripture, to choose and embrace them, are highly probable; but yet it does not follow from hence, that the will of man is always overcome thereby;\* and the reason is, because of that strong propensity and inclination that there is in corrupt nature to sin, which bids defiance to all those arguments and persuasions that are used to the contrary, till we are brought under the influence of a supernatural principle, implanted in the soul in effectual calling.

And this leads us farther to enquire: Whether, supposing a man has this principle implanted in effectual calling, he then acts freely; or, what is the liberty of man's will, when internally moved and influenced by divine grace? In answer to which, we must consider, that special grace does not destroy, but improve the liberty of man's will: when there is a new nature implanted in him, it discovers its energy, and makes a change in all the powers and faculties of the soul; there is a new light shining in the understanding, vastly different from, and superior to that which it had before; and it may truly be called, *The light of life*, John viii. 12. not only as it leads to eternal life; but as it proceeds from a principle of spiritual life: and this is what we generally call *saving knowledge*; as it is said, *This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*, chap. xvii. 13. Now this light in the understanding, being attended with power in the will, it is hereby induced to comply with its dictates, not barely as being prevailed on by rational arguments, but as there is a divine power accompanying them; it is not indeed prevailed on without arguments; for the Spirit makes use of the word to persuade, as well as to direct; though we do not, with the Pelagians, say, that the will is overcome only by arguments,

\* *The question between us and the Pelagians, is not whether the will sometimes follows the dictates of the understanding, but, whether it either always does so? or, if it be otherwise, whether that which hinders it does not arise from a defect in these dictates of the understanding? Accordingly they speak of the dictates of the understanding as practical, and not barely speculative, and with a particular application to ourselves. They also consider the will as having been before in some suspense; but that dictate of the understanding which it follows, is the last, after mature deliberation; and it is supposed to have compared things together; and therefore presents a thing, not only as good, but more eligible than any thing else, which they call a comparative dictate of the understanding; and by this means the will is persuaded to a compliance. But though this may be true in many instances that are natural; yet daily experience proves, that it does not hold good with respect to things divine and supernatural.*

as though the victory was owing to our power of reasoning; yet we freely own, that we act with judgment, and see the highest reason for what we do: we are enabled to use our reasoning powers indeed; but these are sanctified by the Spirit, as well as the will renewed; and both concur together, in order to our receiving and improving the doctrines contained in the gospel; and the Spirit of God also removes those rooted prejudices which we had entertained against the way of salvation by Christ: so that upon the whole, the gospel has its use, as it directs and excites our faith; our reasoning powers and faculties have their use also, as we take in, and are convinced, by what is therein contained; all this would be to no purpose, if there were not a superior power determining the will to a thorough compliance therewith. We do not deny that moral suasion oftentimes has a tendency to incline a man to the performance of moral duties; but it is what I rather choose to call evangelical persuasion, or the Spirit of God setting home upon the heart and conscience, what is contained in the gospel, that makes it effectual to salvation. (a) Thus concerning the na-

(a) The manners and maxims of the world accord with the inclinations of the human mind, because they spring from them: the dispositions and the pursuits of men are at variance with the laws of God, the doctrines of the gospel, and the practice of the saints, this will appear by comparing them. That the human mind should be brought to submit to the self-denial requisite to the character of a true christian, its bias or bent must be changed. Because men are moral agents, various motives are addressed to them to induce such change, when not attended to, they aggravate their guilt: when they are followed by the change, which they have a tendency to produce, those who yield are said to be "born of the word." Were it not for the information we derive from the scriptures we should probably look no further than the proximate cause, and give man the glory; but these teach us, that the Spirit of God is always in such change, if it be real, the efficient cause: "God sanctifies by the truth," he "opens the heart to attend" to the word, and when any have learned from and been taught or drawn by the Father they come unto Christ; they are therefore also in a higher sense *born of the Spirit*.

This work of God immediately upon the mind, is possible to him, who formed, sustains, and knows the secrets of the heart; if we are unconscious of our creation, support in existence, and the access of the Searcher of hearts to our minds, we may be unconscious of his influence to change them. If this were sensible, it might be a motive incompatible with the safety and moral government of beings, who at best, whilst here, are imperfectly holy.

The communication of the knowledge of saving truths immediately is unnecessary: we have the sacred scriptures, which are competent to make us wise unto salvation. The inspiration anciently given, is distinct from the change of bias, or disposition necessary to a preparation for heaven, might exist without, and is therefore inferior to it.

It is not the sole effect of moral suasion, it is a work of the spirit not the letter, of power not the word: it is a birth, not by "blood, nor by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but of God," and those only "who are of God, hear," believe, and obey his word.

This influence is sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, riches to the poor, health to the sick, and life to the dead. It is not incompatible with moral agency, for the holy disposition is as free in its operation, as the former sinful inclinations had been in theirs. The necessity of it to salvation, is no excuse for the impeni-

ture and extent of human liberty ; but inasmuch as this is not to be assigned as that which renders the gospel-call effectual, let it be farther considered,

III. That this is brought about by the almighty power of God, as it is observed in this answer, that it is a work of God's almighty power and grace : this is that which enhances the excellency and glory of it, above all the works of common providence : however, when we say that it is a divine work, this is hardly sufficient to distinguish it from what the Pelagians often call it, by which they intend nothing more, than the powerful work of God, as the God of nature and providence ; therefore we must farther consider it as a work of divine power, exerting itself in a supernatural way and not only excluding the agency of creatures, as bearing a part therein, but as opposed to those works which are brought about by the moral influence of persuasive arguments, without any change wrought in the will of man ; in this sense we understand effectual calling to be a work of God's almighty power.

And that this may appear, let it be premised, that it is not inconsistent with God's dealing with men as intelligent creatures, endowed with liberty of will, for him to exert this power, since special providence, or efficacious grace, does no more destroy man's natural powers, by its internal influence, enabling and exciting them to do what is supernaturally good, than common providence's being conversant about the free actions of men, makes them cease to be free ; only the former exerts itself in a different and superior way, producing effects much more glorious and excellent.

This being supposed, we shall, without pretending fully to explain the manner of the divine agency, which is principally known by its effects, endeavour to shew,

1. That effectual calling is, in a way of eminency, the work of divine power as distinguished from other works, which are, in their kind, the effects of power in a natural way.

2. We shall also observe what effects are produced thereby, and in what order.

3. Consider it, as it is, in a peculiar manner, attributed to the Spirit of God ; and also shew, that it is a wonderful instance of his grace.

tent ; grace is not necessary to the vindication of Divine justice : the preponderancy of inclinations to evil is the essence of, not an apology for sin. It is very strange if, because a man is so intent upon sinning that nothing can change him but the almighty power of the Divine Spirit, he is on this very account innocent. —It does not render the preaching of the word unnecessary, for besides that it is commanded, and important to call men to repentance and faith, when the grace has been given, God also usually accompanies his ordinances with his Spirit's influences, and seems in most cases, to direct in his providence the blessings of his instructions to those whom he makes the subjects of his grace.

4. We shall consider this divine power as irresistible, and consequently such as cannot but be effectual to produce what is designed to be brought about thereby. And,

5. Speak something concerning the season in which this is done, which is called God's accepted time.

1. Effectual calling is eminently a work of divine power; for the proof hereof, we have not only many express texts of scripture that sufficiently establish it, but we may appeal to the experience of those who are made partakers of this grace. If they compare their former and present state together, they may easily perceive in themselves, that there is such a change wrought in them, as is contrary to the inclinations of corrupt nature; whereby the stubbornness and obstinacy of their wills have been subdued, and such effects produced in them, as they never experienced before; and the manner of their production, as well as the consequences thereof, give them a proof of the agency of God herein, and the glory of his power exerted, so that they who deny it must be unacquainted with themselves, or not duly observe that which carries its own evidence with it. (a)

(a) "I have seen it objected, that to suppose a change effected in the heart of man, otherwise than by the power of moral means, is palpably absurd; as implying an evident impossibility in the nature of things. It has been said, by a divine of advanced age, and good sense; "The moral change of the mind in regeneration, is of an essentially different kind from the mechanical change of the body, when that is raised from the dead; and must be effected by the exertion of a different kind of power. Each effect requires a power suited to its nature: and the power proper for one can never produce the other. To argue from one to the other of these effects, as the apostle has been misunderstood to do, in Eph. i. 20, is therefore idle and impertinent.—The Spirit of God is possessed of these two kinds of power, and exerts the one or the other, accordingly as he wills to produce a change of the moral or physical kind, in moral beings or inanimate matter."

But to this philosophical objection, however plausible and unanswerable it may appear, I think the reply of our Saviour to the difficulty started by the Sadducees, respecting the resurrection and a future state, is neither idle nor impertinent: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." The Almighty is not limited, as men are, to these two modes of operation, by moral and mechanical means. The Spirit of God is possessed of a power of working in a manner different from either of these; that is, supernaturally. The means by which effects are brought to pass in a natural way, must indeed be different; according to the nature of those effects, and of the subjects on which the operations are performed: but when once we admit the idea of a work properly supernatural—an effect produced not by the power of any means at all, we instantly lose sight of all distinctions in the kind of power, or manner of working, adapted to things of different natures. When God, by his omnipotent word alone, called all nature into being at first, are we to suppose that he exerted different powers, according to the natures of the things designed to be created; and that the power proper to create inanimate matter, could never create a thinking mind! Are we to conceive that angels and the souls of men were persuaded into being, by arguments and motives; and that the material world was forced out of nothing, by the power of attraction! So, in regard to quickening the dead, are we to imagine that God can give new life to a soul dead in sin, only by moral suasion; and that, if he will reanimate bodies which have slept thousands of years in the dust

But we shall principally take our proofs from scripture, in which we have an account of the beginning of this work, which is styled the new birth; wherein we are said to be made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. that is, a nature that is produced by divine power: and we are said to be *born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*, John i. 13. And the gospel, which is the instrument that he makes use of in calling effectually, is styled, *The rod of his strength*, Psal. cx. 2. the effect thereof, ascribed to the *revelation of his arm*, Isa. liii. 1. the season in which this is done, is called, *The day of his power*, Psal. cx. 3. and it is, by a metonymy, called, *His power*, 1 Cor. i. 18. Rom. i. 16. The cross of Christ is also, when preached, and made effectual for the answering this valuable end, styled, *The power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. Moreover, the progress of this work is ascribed to the *power of God*, 1 Thess. i. 5. it is this that *keeps* those who are effectually called *through faith unto salvation*, 1 Pet. i. 5. And that this power may appear to be extraordinary, the apostle uses an uncommon emphasis of expression, when he calls it, *The exceeding greatness of his power*, and, *the working of his mighty power*, Eph. i. 19, 20. which words \* can hardly be translated without losing something of their force and beauty; and, indeed, there is not an expression used in scripture, to signify the efficacy of divine power, that exceeds, or, I may say, that equals them. And that it may appear more strong, the apostle, in the following words, represents it as being no less than *that power which wrought in Christ, when God raised him from the dead*.

And to all this let me add, that something to the same purpose may be inferred from those metaphorical expressions, by which it is set forth, as it is called a *creation*: thus, when we are made partakers of this privilege, we are said to be *created in righteousness and true holiness*, Eph. iv. 24. And the apostle seems to compare this with the creation of man at first, after the image of God, which consisted principally in righteous-

\* ἡ υπερβαλλουσα μεγαλοτης της δυναμειως αυτης—κατα την ευαγγελιαν ην κηρυξας της ισχυου αυτου.

of the earth, he has no other way to do it than by a physical operation! The body of Christ was raised to life, I should suppose, not by any mechanical power, but supernaturally. In this manner God always works, when he quickeneth the dead, and calleth things that are not, as though they were. And what absurdity can there be in supposing Him able to give a new principle of action, as well as to give existence to any thing else, in this immediate manner?

Some sound and sensible divines, it must be granted, in order to guard against the notion of regeneration's being effected by moral suasion, have called it a *physical work*, and a *physical change*; but very needlessly, I apprehend, and with very evident impropriety. The change is moral: the work producing it, is neither moral nor physical; but supernatural.<sup>29</sup>

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ness and true holiness, and accordingly considers this image as restored, when a principle of grace is implanted, whereby we are again disposed to the exercise of righteousness and holiness: and elsewhere he says, *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that we should walk in them*, chap. ii. 16. where he supposes, that this creating power must be exerted before we can put forth good works; and therefore it can be nothing less than the power of God; and it would not have been styled a *creation*, if it had not been a supernatural work, and therefore it is, in that respect, more glorious than many other effects of the divine power.

It is also styled, *a resurrection from the dead*: thus the apostle says, *You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins*, chap. ii. 1, 5. in this respect it certainly exceeds the power of men. A physician, by his skill, may mend a crazy constitution, or recover it from the confines of death; but, to raise the dead, exceeds the limits of finite power. This mode of speaking our Saviour makes use of to signify the conversion or effectual call of sinners, when he says, *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live*, John v. 25. He had, in the foregoing verse been speaking of their *having eternal life, and not coming into condemnation, and being passed from death to life*, who hear his words and believe; and then it follows, that *the hour is coming*, that is, the time is near at hand, to wit, when the Spirit shall be poured forth, and the gospel-dispensation be begun, and it *now is*, in some degree, namely, in those who were converted by his ministry, *when the dead shall hear his voice and live*, or pass from a state of spiritual death to life, as a means for their attaining eternal life. This is much more agreeable to the context, than to conclude, as some do, to evade the force of this argument; that our Saviour speaks concerning some who were then, or should hereafter be raised from the dead, in a miraculous manner; which, they suppose, contains the sense of the words, *now is*, and that *the hour is coming*, refers to the general resurrection; but this seems not to be the sense of the text; because our Saviour supposes them, in a following verse, to be astonished at this doctrine; as though it was too great an instance of power for him to implant a principle of spiritual life in dead sinners; and therefore he proves his assertion from his raising the dead at the last day: *Marvel not, for the hour is coming*, that is, at the end of the world, *when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice*, John v. 28. This cannot well agree with the sense before given, of Christ's raising the dead, as referring to the general resurrection; for that would be to answer their objection, or put a stop to their wonder at what he had said concerning it, by



asserting the same thing in other words; whereas, if you suppose the dead's *hearing his voice*, to imply a spiritual resurrection; and *the dead raised out of their graves*, to be an argument to convince them that his power was sufficient to bring about this great effect; there is much more beauty in the expression, and strength in the reasoning, than to take it otherwise.

This is so plain a proof of the argument, we are endeavouring to defend, that nothing farther need be added: however, I cannot but mention another scripture, in which our Saviour says, that *no one can come to him, except the Father draw him*, chap. vi. 44. where Christ, by *coming to him*, does not mean attending on his ministry, which did not require any power to induce them to it; but *believing on him*, so as to *have everlasting life*, in which sense, *coming to him*, is often taken in the gospels, ver. 47. and this is the immediate consequence of effectual calling. Now when our Saviour says, that *none can thus come to him*, without being *drawn by the Father*, we may understand what he means here, by what is said in a following verse, namely, their being *taught of God*, and having *heard and learned of the Father*, ver. 45. such, says he, *Come unto me*. Now this *teaching* certainly implies more than giving a rule of faith contained in divine revelation, for Christ is not here proving the necessity of divine revelation, as elsewhere; but is speaking concerning the saving efficacy thereof; and none can deny that many have been objectively taught, and instructed by the word, who have not come to Christ, or believed in him to everlasting life: the words are a quotation from the prophets, to which he refers; who intimate, that they should be *all taught of God*; which certainly implies more than an objective teaching and instructing; for in this sense, they, having divine revelation, were always taught of God: and it is a special privilege, which the prophet Isaiah mentions, when he foretels this matter, as appears by his connecting it with that great peace which they should have, or the confluence of saving blessings, which should attend it, Isa. liv. 13. And the prophet Jeremiah, who speaks to the same purpose, says, *They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for they shall all know me from the least of them, even to the greatest*, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. that is, they shall not only have an objective revelation, or that which some call moral suasion; but this shall be made effectual to their salvation; and in order thereunto, God promises that he would *put his law in the inward part, and write it in the heart*; and elsewhere, to *give them a new heart, and to put a new spirit within them*, and hereby to *cause them to walk in his statutes*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. So that it is not barely a rectifying some

mistakes which they were liable to ; but producing in them something, which they had not before ; not building upon the old foundation, but laying a new one, and so working a change in the powers and faculties of the soul ; and as they were before, obdurate and hardened in sin, he promises to *take away the heart of stone, and give them an heart of flesh* ; and by his word, which is compared to an hammer, to *break the rock in pieces*, Jer. xxiii. 29. This is certainly a work of power ; but that it is so, will farther appear from what follows, in considering the work itself ; which leads us to shew,

2. What effects are produced by the power of God, when we are thus called.

(1.) The first step that he is pleased to take in this work, is in his implanting a principle of spiritual life and grace, which is absolutely necessary for our attaining to, or receiving advantage by the external call of the gospel ; this is generally styled regeneration, or the new birth ; or, as in the scripture but now referred to, *a new heart*.

If it be enquired, What we are to understand by this principle ? We answer, that since principles are only known by the effects which they produce ; springs of acting, by the actions themselves, we must be content with this description ; that it is something wrought in the heart of man, whereby he is habitually and prevailingly biassed and inclined to what is good : so that by virtue hereof, he freely, readily, and willingly chooses those things which tend to the glory of God ; and refuses, abhors, and flees from what is contrary thereunto ; and, as this more immediately affects the understanding, whereby it is enabled to discern the things which God reveals in the gospel in a spiritual way, it is styled, his *shining in the heart*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. *to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory*, or, his *giving an eye to see, and an ear to hear*, Deut. xxix. 4. As it respects the will, it contains in it a power, whereby it is disposed and enabled to yield the obedience of faith, to whatever God is pleased to reveal to us as a rule of duty, so that we are made willing in the day of his power ; and, as it respects the affections, they are all inclined to run in a right channel, to desire, delight and rejoice in every thing that is pleasing to God, and flee from every thing that is provoking to him. This is that whereby a dead sinner is made alive, and so enabled to put forth living actions.

Concerning this principle of grace let it be observed, that it is infused and not acquired. The first principle or spring of good actions, may, with equal reason, be supposed to be infused into us, as Christians, as it is undoubtedly true, that the principle of reasoning is infused into us as men : none ever supposed that the natural power of reasoning may be acquired,

though a greater facility or degree thereof is gradually attained; so that power, whereby we are enabled to put forth supernatural acts of grace, must be supposed to be implanted in us; which, were it acquired, we could not, properly speaking, be said to be born of God.

From hence I am obliged to infer, that the regenerating act, or implanting this principle (a) of grace, which is, at least, in order of nature, antecedent to any act of grace, put forth by us, is the immediate effect of the power of God, which none who speak of regeneration as a divine work, pretend to deny:

(a) The change in regeneration has been often called the communication of a *principle of spiritual life*. It is described as life, in the scriptures. Sensible objects make no impressions on dead bodies, because insensible; and those, who receive no impressions from divine truths, but remain unaffected by the charms of holiness, are figuratively denominated *dead*. Life being the opposite of death, such as are sensible of the Divine excellencies, and receive the impressions which religious truths are calculated to make, may, in the same manner, be termed *living*. Such also are called *spiritual*, because this holy activity is communicated by the Spirit of God. "You hath he quickened;" and, because it has for its object the things which have been revealed by the Holy Spirit.

These terms are derived from the scriptures, but the word *principle* is destitute of such support. It is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews: there it is used for those fundamental doctrines, which are the *beginnings* of the doctrine of the gospel; but this is not the meaning of the term in the above description. This change is the immediate work of God, and not the communication of some operative axiom of truth. There are natural principles of action; as habit, affection, and passion: and there are moral; as sense of duty, fear of God, and love of holiness. These are all termed principles, because they excite to action, and so are the beginnings, or causes of it. But it is scarcely in this sense, that the term principle is used in the description of regeneration; for it is said to be communicated, and so must mean something distinct from, and the effect of the work of the Spirit. Accordingly it has been called "a fixed impression of some spiritual truth upon the heart." But there is no truth, or other motive, sufficient to prevail against the obduracy of the unrenewed heart; or to become a principle of action to a soul dead in sin. Whatever that is in fallen man, which repels such motives, and prevents their influence until some more worthy motive is thrown into the scale, it is the work of the Spirit to remove it, and to give the soul an activity towards holy things. No intervention of mediate causes seems necessary; the Spirit of God is the agent; the soul of the man is the subject of influence; and He is said to *open the heart, to give a new heart, to create anew, to enlighten the mind in the knowledge of the truth, to work in us to will and to do, or to give sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf*. From such scriptural expressions it may be gathered that sight, knowledge, new dispositions, and a change of inclinations, are the effects of regeneration, and not the thing itself.

This change is more important than all the gifts of providence, if man therefore be the author of it, he is his own greatest benefactor, and must have the highest glory. If the Holy Spirit acts no otherwise on the human soul, than by addressing motives, angelic natures do also this; and no more power is ascribed to the Searcher of hearts, than to them. Then also it will follow, that all professing christians are of the same kind; and that it was improperly said, that they "were not of us," who afterwards have "departed from us." Then also the advice to those who are in the visible church "to examine," and "prove themselves," whether Christ be "in them," is without meaning, or utility; because the thing to be inquired for is notorious, that is, their visible profession. And to "be born again," is but "to see the" visible "kingdom" of Christ: and so the proposition spoken to Nicodemus was merely identical.

and therefore, I cannot but conclude, that it is wrought in us without the instrumentality of the word, or any of the ordinary means of grace: my reason for it is this; because it is necessary, from the nature of the thing, to our receiving, improving, or reaping any saving advantage by the word, that the Spirit should produce the principle of faith; and to say, that this is done by the word, is in effect, to assert that the word produces the principle, and the principle gives efficacy to the word; which seems to me little less than arguing in a circle. The word cannot profit, unless it be mixed with faith; and faith cannot be put forth, unless it proceeds from a principle of grace implanted; therefore this principle of grace is not produced by it: we may as well suppose, that the presenting a beautiful picture before a man that is blind, can enable him to see; or the violent motion of a withered hand, produce strength for action, as we can suppose that the presenting the word in an objective way, is the instrument whereby God produces that internal principle, by which we are enabled to embrace it. Neither would this so well agree with the idea of its being a new creature, or our being *created unto good works*; for then it ought rather to be said, we are created by faith, which is a good work: this is, in effect, to say, that the principle of grace is produced by the instrumentality of that which supposes its being implanted, and is the result and consequence thereof.

I am sorry that I am obliged, in this assertion, to appear, at least, to oppose what has been maintained by many divines of great worth; who have, in all other respects, explained the doctrine of regeneration, agreeably to the mind and will of God, and the analogy of faith.\* It may be, the principal difference between this explication and theirs is, that they speak of regeneration in a large sense, as including in it, not barely the implanting the principle, but the exciting it, and do not sufficiently distinguish between the principle, as implanted and deduced into act; for, I readily own, that the latter is by the instrumentality of the word, though I cannot think the former so; or, it may be, they consider the principle as exerted; whereas I consider it as created, or wrought in us; and therefore can no more conclude, that the new creation is wrought by an instrument, than I can, that the first creation of all things was.

And I am ready to conjecture, that that which leads many divines into this way of thinking, is the sense in which they understand the words of the apostle; *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. i. 23. and elsewhere, *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be*

\* See Charnock, Vol. II. page 220, 221, &c. and Cole on Regeneration.

*a kind of first-fruits of his creatures*, James i. 16. Whereas this does not so much respect the implanting the principle of grace, as it does our being enabled to act from that principle; and it is as though he should say, he hath made us believers, or induced us to love and obey him by the word of truth, which supposes a principle of grace to have been implanted: otherwise the word of truth would never have produced these effects. Regeneration may be taken, not only for our being made alive to God, or created unto good works, but for our putting forth living actions, proceeding from that principle which is implanted in the soul. I am far from denying, that faith, and all other graces, are wrought in us by the instrumentality of the word; and it is in this sense that some, who treat on this subject, explain their sentiments, when they speak of being born again by the word: therefore I persuade myself, that I differ from them only in the acceptation of words, and not in the main substance of the doctrine they maintain.\*

(2.) The principle of grace being implanted, the acts of grace in those who are adult, immediately ensue; which implies a change of our behaviour, a renovation of our lives and actions; which may properly be called conversion.

Having explained what we mean by regeneration, under our last head, it is necessary, in this, to consider how it differs from conversion; in which I shall take leave to transcribe a few passages from that excellent divine, but now mentioned. "Regeneration is a spiritual change; conversion is a spiritual motion; in regeneration there is a power conferred; conversion is the exercise of this power; in regeneration there is given us a principle to turn; conversion is our actual turning: in the covenant, the new heart, and God's putting the Spirit into them, is distinguished from their walking in his statutes, from the first step we take, in the way of God, and is set down as the cause of our motion: in renewing us, God gives us a power; in converting us, he excites that power. Men are naturally dead, and have a stone upon them; regeneration is a rolling away the stone from the heart, and a raising to newness of life; and then conversion is as natural to a regenerate man, as motion is to a lively body: a principle of activity will produce action. The first reviving us is wholly the act of God, without any concurrence of the creature; but, after we are revived, we do actively and voluntarily live in his sight. Regenera-

\* See Charnock, Vol. II. page 252, who speaking concerning its being an instrument, appointed by God, for this purpose, says, That God hath made a combination between hearing and believing; so that believing comes not without hearing, and whereas he infers from hence, that the principle of grace is implanted, by hearing and believing the word, he must be supposed to understand it, concerning the principle deduced into act, and not his implanting the principle itself.

“tion is the motion of God in the creature; conversion is the motion of the creature to God, by virtue of that first principle; from this principle all the acts of believing, repenting, mortifying, quickening, do spring. In all these a man is active; in the other, he is merely passive.”\* This is what we may call the second step, which God takes in effectual calling; and it is brought about by the instrumentality of the word. The word before this, was preached to little or no purpose; or, it may be, was despised, rejected, and disregarded; but now a man is enabled to see a beauty, and a glory in it, all the powers and faculties of the soul, being under the influence of that spiritual life implanted in regeneration, and inclined to yield a ready and cheerful obedience to it; and this work is gradual and progressive; and as such, it is called the work of sanctification; of which more under a following answer,† and is attended with repentance unto life, and all other graces that accompany salvation; and in this respect we are drawn to Christ by his word and Spirit, or by his Spirit making use of his word, our minds savingly enlightened, our wills renewed, and determined to what is good, so that hereby we are made willing and able freely to answer the call of God, and to accept of, and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein; as it is expressed in the answer we are explaining.

The first thing in which that change, which is wrought in effectual calling, manifests itself is, in our understandings’ being enlightened to receive the truths revealed to us in the word of God; and accordingly we see things with a new and different light; behold a greater beauty, excellency and glory in divine things, than ever we did before: we are also led into ourselves, and convinced of sin and misery, concluding ourselves, by nature, to be in a lost and undone condition; and then the soul sees the glory of Christ, the greatness of his love, who came to seek and save those that were lost, who is now precious to him, as he is said to be to them that believe; and pursuant hereunto the will, being determined, or enabled so to do, by the Spirit of God exciting the principle of grace, which he had implanted, accepts of him on his own terms; the affections all centre in, and desire to derive all spiritual blessings from him; Thus the work of grace is begun in effectual calling, which is afterwards carried on in sanctification.

And inasmuch as we are considering the beginning of the work of grace in effectual calling, I cannot but take notice of a question, which frequently occurs under this head, namely, Whether man, in the first moment thereof, viz. in regeneration, be merely passive, though active in every thing that follows after it? This we cannot but affirm, not only against the

\* See Charnock on Regeneration, Vol. II. page 70, 71. † See Quest. lxxv

Pelagians, but others, whose method of treating the doctrine of divine grace, seems to agree with theirs. And here, that we may obviate a popular objection, usually brought against our assertion, as though hereby we argued, that God dealt with men as though they were machines, and not endowed with understanding or will let it be observed; that we consider the subjects of this grace no otherwise than as intelligent creatures, capable of being externally excited and disposed to what is good; or else God would never work this principle in them. Nor do we suppose, however men are said to be passive in the first moment in which this principle is implanted, that they are so afterwards, but are enabled to act under the divine influence; even as when the soul of Adam was created at first, it could not be said to be active in its own creation, and in the implanting those powers which were concreate with it; yet it was active, or those powers exerted themselves immediately after it was created. This is the state of the question we are now debating; and therefore we cannot but maintain, that men do not concur to the implanting the principle of grace; for then they would be active in being created unto good works; which are the result, and not the cause of that power which is infused into them, in order thereunto.

This is sufficiently evident, not only from the impotency of corrupt nature, as to what is good, but its utter averseness thereunto, and from the work's being truly and properly divine; or (as has been before observed) the effect of almighty power. This is not a controversy of late date; but has been either defended or opposed, ever since Augustine's and Pelagius's time. Many volumes have been written concerning the aids and assistances of divine grace in the work of conversion. The School-men were divided in their sentiments about it, as they adhered to, or receded from Augustine's doctrine: both sides seem to allow that the grace of God affords some assistance hereunto; but the main thing in debate, is, Whether the grace of God only bears one part in this work, and the will of man the other; like two persons lifting at the same burden, and carrying it between them. Some have allowed the divine concurrence as necessary hereunto, who yet have not been willing to own that man bears no part in this work; or, that *it is God that works in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 13. which, the apostle asserts in so plain terms, that the most known sense thereof, cannot well be evaded; and, indeed, were it otherwise, it could hardly be said, that *we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves*; which, though it be immediately applied to ministers, is certainly, by a parity of reason, applicable to all Christians, 2 Cor. iii. 5. nor would it be, in all respects, true, that we are *born of*

God; or, that we, who before were dead in sin, are raised to a spiritual life, or made, with respect to the principle of spiritual actions, new creatures; all which is done in regeneration. (a)

We might also take occasion, under this head, to observe, what we often meet with in practical discourses and sermons, concerning preparatory works, or previous dispositions, which facilitate and lead to the work of conversion. Some assert, that we must do what we can, and by using our reasoning powers and faculties, endeavour to convert, or turn ourselves, and then God will do the rest, or finish the work which we have begun: and here many things are often considered as the steps which men may take in the reformation of their lives, the abstaining from gross enormities, which they may have been guilty of,

(a) When it is said "no man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me, draw him," the negation must be understood as expressive of moral impotency, and as if it had been said "ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;" but nevertheless as direct proof of the absolute necessity of divine grace to the salvation of every person who is saved. That the aid is not merely necessary to the understanding is evident from the guilt of unregeneracy, and from the supposition of the Saviour whose reproof implies that it was the carnality of the heart which created the impotency to come unto or believe on him.

The propriety of exhortations to turn, repent, believe, and work out our own salvation, is obvious; because such impotency is chiefly an aversion of heart. When such motives are ineffectual, they prove the inveteracy of the opposition to God, and argue the greater guilt. They are no evidence that grace is unnecessary, because they have an important effect in the change of the man's views, and pursuits, when the Spirit of God has "opened the heart" to receive the necessary impressions; and because these motives are rendered effectual by the Divine Spirit. He grants us repentance, turns us, helps our unbelief, strengthens our faith, and works in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

Because it is charged upon the evil that they "resist" the grace of God, and therefore his Spirit will not always "strive" with men, it by no means follows, that the success of grace depends merely upon our yielding; as often as men yield to the strivings of the Spirit, a victory is obtained; for the carnal heart inclines to evil until subdued by him: we are "made willing in a day of his power." Were it otherwise the glory of man's salvation would belong to himself, at least in part; but the language of the believer is "not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the glory given." Nor is there any need to suppose man's salvation thus imputable to himself in order that the evil may be charged with the blame of his destruction; for nothing excludes him but his own evil heart, and this is his sin.

It does not result that the man, who is thus "made willing," is in such manner constrained as that his holiness, being the effect of compulsion, possesses no moral beauty; because he acts as freely as the evil man does; and even more so, for the latter is a slave to his preponderating evil inclinations. The believer chooses holiness, and though he has nothing to boast of before God, his good works may well justify him before men.

If it be yet objected, that this is a discouraging representation of the way of obtaining happiness; it may be answered, that it can discourage only those, who wish for happiness, at the same time that they more strongly incline to sensuality; and such ought to be discouraged in their vain expectations: but it is highly consolatory to such as prefer holiness and heaven; for it not only discovers to them, that God has wrought in them to will and to do, but that he is engaged for them, and will accomplish their salvation.



thinking on their ways, and observing the tendency of their present course of life, and setting before themselves those proper arguments that may induce them to repent and believe; and then they may be said to have prepared themselves for the grace of God, so that it will ensue hereupon. And if there be any thing remaining, which is out of their power, God has engaged to succeed their endeavours, so that he will bring them into a state of regeneration and conversion.

This method of accounting for the work of grace, is liable to many exceptions, particularly as it supposes man to be the first mover in his own conversion, and the divine energy to be dependent upon our conduct; the contrary to which, is not only agreeable to scripture, but the divine perfections; as well as to the doctrine we have been maintaining, concerning effectual calling's, being a divine work in the most proper sense thereof. But that we may impartially consider this matter, and set, what some call a preparatory work, in a just light, let it be observed,

1. That these preparatory works must either be considered as good in all those circumstances that are necessary to denominate them good, and particularly they must proceed from a good principle, that is to say, a principle of regeneration; or else they are only such works as are materially good, such many perform who are never brought into a state of conversion; or if, on the other hand, they are supposed to proceed from such a principle, then they are not, from the nature of the thing, works preparatory to the first grace, but rather consequent upon it.

2. It is one thing for us to assert, that it is our duty to perform all those works which some call preparatory, for conversion; such as meditation, attendance on the ordinances, duly weighing those arguments, or motives, that should lead us to repentance, and the exercise of all other graces; and another thing to say, that every one who performs these duties, shall certainly have regenerating grace; or, it is one thing to apply ourselves to the performance of those duties, as far as it is in our own power, and, at the same time, to wait, pray, and hope for success to attend them; and another thing to assert, that it shall always attend them, as though God had laid himself under an obligation to give special grace to those, who, in this respect, improve that which is common, the contrary whereunto may be observed in many instances. And when we have done all, we must conclude, that the grace of God, if he is pleased to give success to our endeavours, is free and sovereign.

3. They who say, That if we do all we can, God will do the rest, advance very little to support their argument, since there is no one who can pretend that he has done what he could: and may we not farther suppose, that God, in a judicial way,

as punishing us for the many sins we commit, may deny this success: therefore, how can it be said, that it will necessarily ensue.

4. When we perform any of those duties, which some call preparatory to conversion, these are to be considered as the Spirit's preparing his own way thereby, rather than corrupt nature's preparing itself for grace. We are far from denying that there is a beautiful order in the divine dispensations; the Spirit of God first convinces of sin, and then shews the convinced sinner where his help is to be had; and enables him to close with Christ by faith. He first shews the soul its own corruption and nothingness, and then leads him to see Christ's fulness; or that all his salvation is reposed in his hands, and enables him to believe in him to the saving the soul; one of these works, indeed, prepares the way for the other: nevertheless, none of them can be said to prepare the way for regeneration, which is the work of the Spirit of God; and without it, no other can be said to be a saving work.

*Object.* It is objected, that there are several scriptures which seem to speak of common grace, as being preparatory for special. Thus the scribe, mentioned in the gospel, who expressed himself *discreetly*, in asserting, that *to love God with all the heart, and with all the understanding, soul, and strength; and to love our neighbour as ourselves, is better than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices*, is said not to be *far from the kingdom of God*, Mark xii. 34. And elsewhere, we are exhorted *to ask*, and a promise is annexed thereunto, that *it shall be given us, to seek and we shall find*, Matt. vii. 7. And in another place, *to turn at God's reproof, and he will pour out his Spirit unto us, and make known his words unto us*, Prov. i. 25. And several other scriptures, in which super-added grace is connected with duty enjoined, which duty is supposed to be in our own power, and to be preparatory for it.

*Answ.* (1.) As to the first of these scriptures, in which our Saviour tells the scribe, that he was not *far from the kingdom of God*; he intends nothing else hereby, but that the profession he made, which he calls, his *answering discreetly*, was not very remote from that which was made by them, who were the subjects of his kingdom: it was the doctrine he mentions, that Christ commends; and therefore it must not be inferred from hence, that he had regard to his state, as though his inward temper of mind, or moral conduct of life, was such as more immediately disposed him for a state of grace, so that he was, at the same time, hovering between a state of unregeneracy and conversion.

(2.) As for that instance, in which persons are supposed to prepare themselves for that grace which God gives in answer

to prayer, by performing that duty, as though he had obliged himself to give whatever they ask for, relating to their own salvation; this cannot be the sense of the scripture but now mentioned, or any other, to the like purpose; unless it be understood of the prayer of faith, under the influence of the Holy Spirit; but this supposes regenerating grace; and therefore it is foreign to the argument, in which man is considered as preparing himself for the grace of God, and not as expecting farther degrees of grace, upon his being inclined, by the Spirit of God, to seek them.

(3.) As for the other instance in the objection, relating to God's engaging to *give the Spirit*, and to *make known his words* to those that *turn at his reproof*; this, I conceive, contains in it nothing else but a promise of the Spirit, to carry on the work of grace, in all those in whom it is begun. Though *turning*, in scripture, be sometimes taken for external reformation, which is in our own power, as it is our indispensable duty; yet, whenever a promise of saving blessings is annexed to it, as in this scripture, it is to be understood as denoting the grace of repentance. And if it be said, that this is God's gift, and therefore cannot be the subject of an exhortation, it may be replied hereunto; that saving grace is often represented, in scripture, as our act, or duty, in order to the performance whereof we ought to say, as the church is presented speaking, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned*, Jer. xxxi. 18. that is, *I shall return unto thee with my whole heart, and not feignedly*, chap. iii. 10.

The same reply might be given to their sense of several other scriptures brought to maintain the doctrine of preparatory works, performed by us, as necessarily inferring our obtaining the special grace of God. But I shall close this head with a few hints taken from that excellent divine before mentioned. "Man cannot prepare himself for the new birth: he hath, indeed, a subjective capacity for grace, above any other creature in the inferior world; and this is a kind of natural preparation, which other creatures have not; a capacity, in regard of the powers of the soul, though not in respect of the present disposition of them. He hath an understanding to know, and when it is enlightened, to know God's law; a will to move and run, and when enlarged by grace, to run the ways of God's commandments; so that he stands in an immediate capacity to receive the life of grace, upon the breath and touch of God, which a stone doth not; for in this it is necessary, that rational faculties should be put as a foundation of spiritual motions. Though the soul be thus capable, as a subject, to receive the grace of God, yet it is not therefore capable, as an agent, to prepare itself for it, or produce

“ it. It is capable to receive the truths of God ; but, as the  
 “ heart is stony, it is incapable to receive the impressions of  
 “ those truths. Though some things, which man may do by  
 “ common grace, may be said to be preparations, yet they are  
 “ not formally so ; as that there is an absolute, causal connexion  
 “ between such preparations, and regeneration ; they are not  
 “ disposing causes of grace : grace is all in a way of reception  
 “ by the soul, not of action from the soul : the highest morali-  
 “ ty in the world is not necessary to the first infusion of the  
 “ divine nature : if there were any thing in the subject that  
 “ was the cause of it, the tenderest, and softest dispositions  
 “ would be wrought upon ; and the most intelligent men would  
 “ soonest receive the gospel. Though we see them sometimes  
 “ renewed, yet many times the roughest tempers are seized  
 “ upon by grace. Though morality seems to set men at a  
 “ greater nearness to the kingdom of God, yet, with all its own  
 “ strength it cannot bring it into the heart, unless the Spirit  
 “ open the lock : yea, sometimes it sets a man farther from the  
 “ kingdom of God, as being a great enemy to the righteous-  
 “ ness of the gospel, both imputed and inherent ; and other  
 “ operations upon the soul, which seem to be nearer prepara-  
 “ tions ; such as convictions, &c. do not infer grace ; for the  
 “ heart, as a field, may be ploughed by terrors, and yet not  
 “ planted with any good seed ; planting and watering are pre-  
 “ parations, but not the cause of fruit ; the increase depends  
 “ upon God :” \* thus this learned author. And he also farther  
 proves, that there is no obligation on God, by any thing that  
 may look like a preparation in men ; and adds, that if any pre-  
 parations were our own, and were pure, which they are not :  
 yet they cannot oblige God to give supernatural grace : which  
 leads us,

3. To consider that this work is, in a peculiar manner, at-  
 tributed to the Spirit of God ; the only moving cause whereof,  
 is his grace. That the Spirit is the author of this work, is not  
 to be proved by experience, as the expressions of divine power  
 therein are, but by scripture ; and the scripture is very express  
 as to this matter. Thus, when God promises to *give a new  
 heart ; to take away the heart of stone, and to give an heart of  
 flesh, and to cause his people to walk in his statutes*, Ezek.  
 xxxvi. 26, 27. he would *put his Spirit within them* ; and else-  
 where they are said to have *purified their souls in obeying the  
 truth, through the Spirit*, 1 Pet. i. 22. And our Saviour as-  
 serts the necessity of our being *born of the Spirit*, John iii. 5.  
 in order to our entering into the kingdom of God : so that from  
 these, and several other scriptures, that might be referred to,

\* See Charnock on Regeneration, Vol. II. page 147, 148, &c. •

it appears, that effectual calling is the internal powerful work of the Holy Ghost.\*

*Obj.* 1. It is objected, by some, that this doctrine savours of enthusiasm; since it supposes that there is no difference between the Spirit's internal influences, and inspiration; and to pretend to this, now the miraculous dispensation, which was in the apostle's days, is ceased, is vain and enthusiastic.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, That the charge of enthusiasm is very unjustly deduced from this doctrine; for we must distinguish between the extraordinary, and the ordinary influence of the Holy Ghost; the former is allowed by all, to be now ceased; and therefore they who pretend to it, are liable to this charge; but it is a very great dishonour cast upon the Holy Ghost to deny his powerful influence or agency in the work of grace; and it renders the condition of the church, at present, in a very material circumstance, so much inferior to what it was of old, that it is incapable of attaining salvation; unless it could be proved that salvation might be attained without the divine energy.

But, that we may farther reply to this objection, let it be considered; that the Spirit's influence, as subservient to the work of grace, is evidently distinguished from imputation: the latter of these was a peculiar honour which was conferred upon some persons, who were either to transmit to the church a rule of faith, by the immediate dictates of the Holy Ghost; or else they were favoured with it to answer some extraordinary ends, which could not be attained without it, namely, their being furnished with wisdom, as well as courage and boldness, to maintain the cause, which they were not otherwise furnished to defend, against the opposition that it met with from their persecuting and malicious enemies, that so it might not suffer through their weakness; as when our Saviour bids his disciples *not to take thought what they should say*, when brought before rulers, &c. but promises, that *the Spirit should speak in them*, Matt. x. 18—20. And in some other particular instances we read, especially in the church at Corinth, that when ministers had not those advantages to qualify themselves to preach the gospel, which they afterwards were favoured with, some had this extraordinary gift, so that they spake by the Spirit; but this was only conferred occasionally, and for some special reasons: and therefore, those scriptures that speak of

\* *When we speak of effectual calling's being the work of the Spirit, the agency of the Father and Son is not excluded, since the divine power, by which all effects are produced, belongs to the divine essence, which is equally predicated of all the persons in the Godhead; but when any work is peculiarly attributed to the Spirit, this implies his personal glory's being demonstrated thereby, agreeably to what is elsewhere called the oeconomy of the divine persons; which see further explained in Vol. I. page 292, 293, &c.*

the influences of the Spirit, which were more common, and immediately subservient to the work of grace in the souls of those who were the subjects thereof, were, at that time, the same with them that we are pleading for, which were designed to continue in the church, in all the ages thereof: thus when persons are said, *through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body*, Rom. viii. 13. this does not respect any extraordinary dispensation, which they were then under, since it is the duty of all men, in all ages, without the extraordinary influences of the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body; and therefore we may expect this powerful energy as well as they, or else our condition would be very deplorable.

And besides, we never find that extraordinary gifts were immediately subservient to the subduing corruption, or, at least, that every one that had them, did mortify sin, and so appear to be internally sanctified: whereas, this is a character of those who are so; and not to have these influences, determines a person to be in an unregenerate state, or to *live after the flesh*, which is opposed to it, and so to be liable to death, ver. 12. No one can suppose, the apostle intends, in the foregoing verse, when he says, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*; that if ye are not under inspiration, ye shall die, as living after the flesh: but the method of reasoning is strong and conclusive, if we understand the divine influence, as what is distinct from inspiration, and consequently a privilege necessary for the beginning and carrying on the work of grace, and so belongs to believers in all ages.

Again, when the Spirit is said to *help our infirmities*, ver. 26. in prayer: is not prayer as much a duty now as it was when they had extraordinary gifts? therefore, ought we not to hope for the assistance of the Spirit, in all ages? and consequently the Spirit's help, in this respect is not confined to that age, when there was a miraculous dispensation, or extraordinary inspiration.

And when it is elsewhere said, *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*, ver. 14. can we suppose, that none were the sons of God but such as had extraordinary gifts? Does not this privilege belong to us, as well as unto them? If therefore we are the sons of God, as well as they, we have this evidence hereof, according to this scripture; namely, our *being led by the Spirit of God*; though we pretend not to be led by him, as a Spirit of inspiration.

And to this we may add, that the apostle elsewhere speaks of some who were *scaled with that Holy Spirit of promise; which is the earnest of our inheritance*: and these are described as *trusting in Christ after they had heard the word of salvation*, and *believing in him*, Eph. i. 13, 14. But this belongs

to the church in all ages ; therefore sealing is not a privilege confined to those who had the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost ; but to believers as such.

Moreover, it is said, *The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God*; Rom. viii. 16. Therefore, some persons may know themselves to be the children of God, in a way of self-examination, by the witness of the Spirit, which is common to all believers ; without pretending to be inspired therein ; which would be to know this matter without the concurring testimony of our own spirits. Many things, of the like nature, might be observed, concerning the other scriptures, that are generally brought to prove, that believers, in our day, are made partakers of the powerful influences of the Holy Ghost ; though they pretend not to the Spirit of inspiration ; which is a sufficient answer to this objection.

*Object. 2.* If it be farther objected, that if the Spirit does work internally in the souls of men, we are not to suppose, that he works a change in their wills, but only presents objects to them, which they by their own power, improve, and make use of, for their good ; even as a finite Spirit may suggest good or bad thoughts, without disposing us to comply with them ; or, as the devil is said to work in men, who is called, *The Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2.

*Answ.* To this it may be replied, that an objective influence, properly speaking, is no influence at all ; much less is it becoming the dignity of the Holy Ghost, to say, That he hath no more an hand in the work of conversion, than that which a mere creature might have. I will not deny that the Greek word,\* which signifies energy, or internal working, is sometimes taken for such a kind of influence as is not properly the effect of power, as in the instance contained in the objection ; yet, let it be considered, that the same word is often used, in various other instances, in senses very different, when applied to God and the creature ; where the word, in itself, is indeterminate ; but the application of it sufficiently determines the matter ; so as to leave no doubt, as to the sense of it. Thus to make, form, or produce, when applied to God, and the thing made, formed, or produced, is represented as an instance of his almighty power, which exceeds the limits of finite power, this determines the sense to be very different from making, forming, or producing, when applied to men, acting in their own sphere : so the apostle speaks of building, in a very different sense, as applied to God and the creature, which no one is at a loss to understand, who reads the words ; *Every house is builded by some man ; but he that built all things is God*, Heb. iii. 4. Now, to apply this to our present purpose, we do not

\* Ενέργεια.

deny, that a finite spirit has an energy, in an objective way; but when the same word is applied to God's manner of acting; and is represented as has been before observed, as an instance of his almighty power, producing a change in the soul; and not only persuading, but enabling him to perform good works, from a principle of spiritual life, implanted, this may easily be understood as having a very different sense from the same word, when applied to the internal agency of a finite spirit; and therefore this objection does not overthrow the argument we are maintaining.

*Object. 3.* It is farther objected against what has been said concerning this powerful work of the Spirit, as being illustrated by the similitude of a person's being raised from the dead; that this contains in it nothing supernatural, or out of the power of man; since the apostle says, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give the light*, Eph. v. 14. If arising from the dead be the effect of almighty power, when applied to the work of grace, it seems preposterous for this to be recommended as our duty: and if it be not a work of almighty power, then those scriptures that illustrate effectual calling by the resurrection of the dead, are nothing to the argument for which they have been brought.

*Answer.* Some suppose, that its being assigned as a matter of duty for sinners to rise from the dead, does not infer, that it is in their own power; but, that it only signifies, that none can expect eternal life but those who rise from the death of sin; and accordingly, as the promise, here mentioned, relating to our *having light*, is said to be *Christ's gift*, so the power to perform that duty, which is inseparably connected with it, to wit, *rising from the dead*, is to be sought for at his hand. But if this answer be not reckoned sufficient, I see no absurdity in supposing, that these two expressions, *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead*, import the same thing. Sleep is, as it were, the image of death; and therefore, by a metaphorical way of speaking, it may be here called *death*; and if so, the apostle commands believers to awake out of their carnal security, or shake off their stupid frames, as they expect the light of eternal life: however, if it be taken in this sense here; yet when we meet with the words *quickened*, or *raised from the dead*, elsewhere, they may be understood in a different sense, as denoting the implanting a principle of grace in regeneration, as will appear by the context: thus when God is said to *quicken those who were dead in trespasses and sins; who walked according to the course of this world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were, by nature, the children of wrath; and to do this with a design to shew the exceeding riches of his grace, and kindness towards them; and as the consequence*



thereof, to work that faith which accompanies salvation, which is not of themselves, but his gift: I say, if these things are mentioned when we are said to be *quickened*, or *raised from the dead*, certainly it argues more than a stupid believer's awaking from that carnal security, which he is under, who is supposed to have a principle of spiritual life, whereby he may be enabled so to do.

*Object. 4.* It is also objected to what has been said, concerning effectual calling's being a work of divine power, that those scriptures, which speak of it as such, denote nothing else but the power of working miracles; whereby they to whom the gospel was preached, were induced to believe; as when the apostle says, *His preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*, 1 Cor. ii. 4. that is, the doctrines he preached, were confirmed, and the truth thereof demonstrated by the power of the Holy Ghost, enabling them to work miracles: and *the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*, chap. iv. 20. that is, the gospel is not only preached, but confirmed by miracles: *Our gospel came to you in power, and in the Holy Ghost*, 1 Thes. i. 5. that is, as some understand it, the gospel which we preach, was confirmed by the power and miraculous works of the Holy Ghost; which has no reference to the internal efficacious influences of the Spirit put forth in effectual calling.

*Ans.* Though we often read that the gospel was confirmed by miracles: nevertheless, I cannot see that this is the principle, much less the only sense of these scriptures, and some others that might have been produced to the same purpose.

As to the first of them in which the apostle speaks of *his preaching, being in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*; it may be observed, that in the preceding chapter he had been speaking concerning Christ preached, and his glory set forth among them, as the power of God; that is to say, the power of God rendered the preaching thereof effectual to the conversion of them that believed; which he concludes to contain in it no less a conviction of the truth of the Christian religion, than if he had wrought signs or miracles, which the Jews demanded, and which he had no design to work among them: therefore, why should we suppose, that when he speaks of *his preaching being in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*, that he intends the confirming his doctrine by miracles, and not in the same sense as he had before signified Christ to be the power of God.

And as for the other scripture, in which it is said, *The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*; that is to be understood by comparing it with what immediately goes before, in which he says, that *I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will*,

and know not the speech of them who are puffed up, but the power. If we suppose, that by them who are puffed up, he means some of their teachers, who swelled either with pride or envy, and probably were sowing some seeds of error among them; it does not seem to be a just sense of the text, to explain the words when he says, *I will know not the speech of them who are puffed up, but the power*, q. d. I will not so much regard the doctrines they deliver, as I will enquire and be convinced, that they have confirmed them by miracles. For he would rather regard their doctrine than their pretence to miracles; or have said, I will not enquire whether ever they have wrought any miracles or no, but what efficacy their doctrine has had: and therefore the apostle, by *knowing the power*, does not mean that of working miracles, but he intimates that he would know, not only what doctrines these persons taught, but what success attended their preaching; and then he adds, that *the kingdom of God*, that is, the gospel-state is advanced and promoted, not barely by the church's enjoying the means of grace, such as the preaching of the word; but *by the power of God*, which makes the word preached effectual to salvation, whereby sinners are converted, and many added to the church, such as shall be saved.

As to the last scripture mentioned, in which the apostle says, *Our gospel came to you, not in word only, but in power*, I cannot think that he has any reference in that place, to the confirming the gospel by miracles; because this is assigned as a mark of their election, *knowing, brethren, your election of God; for our gospel came unto you, not only in word, but in power.* &c. Now, whether we take election for God's eternal design to save them, or for the execution thereof, in his applying the graces of the Spirit to them; or if we take it in the lowest sense, which they, on the other side of the question, generally give into, for their being a choice, religious unblameable society of Christians, excelling many others in piety: this could not be evinced by the gospel's being confirmed by miracles; and therefore this sense seems not agreeable to the apostle's design; and consequently the objection taken from those scriptures, that speak of the power of God in conversion, as implying nothing else but his power, exerted in working miracles, will not, in the least, be sufficient to weaken the force of the argument we are maintaining. Thus concerning effectual calling's being a work of power, attributed, in particular, to the Holy Spirit.

There is one thing more observed, in the answer we are explaining, which must be briefly considered; namely, that it is a work of grace, which was the internal moving cause thereof; or, the reason of God's exerting his divine power therein. Effectual calling must be a work of grace, without any motive

taken from them, who are the subjects thereof; inasmuch as they had before this, nothing in them, that could render them the objects of divine love, being described as *dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God, and enmity itself against him*: so that their condition, antecedent hereunto, cannot be supposed to be the moving cause hereof; for that which is in itself, altogether unlovely, cannot afford a motive for love to any one that weighs the circumstances of persons and things, and acts in pursuance thereof.

*Object.* But whereas it is objected, that though the present condition of unregenerate persons cannot afford any motive inducing God thereunto, yet the foresight of their future conduct might.

*Ans.* To this we answer, That all the good which shall be found in believers, is God's gift; he is the finisher as well as the author of faith; and therefore it cannot be said, that any thing out of himself, was the moving cause hereof. And to this we may add, That God foresaw the vile and unworthy behaviour of believers, proceeding from the remainders of corrupt nature in them, as well as those graces which he would enable them to act: so that there is as much in them that might induce him to hate them, as there is to move him to love them; and therefore we must conclude, that his love proceeds from another cause; or that it is by the gract of God alone, that we are what we are: which leads us to consider,

4. That the power and grace of God, displayed in effectual calling, is irresistible, and consequently such as cannot but be effectual to produce that which is designed to be brought about thereby. To deny this, would be to infer, that the creature has an equal, if not a superior, force to God: for, as, in nature, every thing that impedes or stops a thing that is in motion, must have an equal force to resist with that which is affected by it; so, in the work of grace, if the will of man can render the power of God of none effect, or stop the progress of divine grace, contrary to his design or purpose, this must argue the creature's power of resisting, equal to that which is put forth by God, in order to the bringing this work to perfection. This consequence is so derogatory to the divine glory, that no one who sees it to be just, will maintain the premises from whence it is deduced.

If it be said, that God may suffer himself to be resisted; and his grace, that would otherwise have been effectual, to be defeated; this will not much mend the matter; but only, in order to the avoiding one absurd consequence, bring in another; for if every one would have, what he purposes to be done brought to pass, and would not be disappointed, if he could help it, the same must be said of the great God. Now if God

could have prevented his purpose from being defeated, but would not, this argues a defect of wisdom; if his own glory was designed, by purposing to do that which the creature renders in effectual, then he misses of that end, which cannot but be the most valuable, and consequently most desirable: therefore, for God to suffer a purpose of this nature, to be defeated, supposing he could prevent it, is to suffer himself to be a loser of that glory which is due to his name. Moreover, this is directly contrary to what the apostle says, *Who hath resisted his will*, Rom. ix. 19. or who hath rendered the grace, which he designed should take effect, ineffectual, or, which is the same thing, who can do it?

The ground on which many have asserted, that the grace of God may be resisted, is taken from some scriptures, that speak of man's being in open hostility against him. Thus we read of a bold daring sinner, as *stretching out his hand against God, and strengthening himself against the Almighty, running upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers*, Job xv. 25, 26. And Stephen reproves the Jews as having *always resisted the Holy Ghost, both they and their fathers*, Acts vii. 51, 52. and the Pharisees are said to *have rejected*, Luke vii. 30. or, as the word \* might have been rendered, *disannulled the counsel of God against themselves*. And elsewhere, the prophet speaks of God's *stretching out his hand all the day unto a disobedient and gainsaying people*, Rom. x. 21. These, and such like scriptures give occasion to some to suppose, that the power and grace, as well as the purpose of God, may be resisted.

But that we may understand the sense of these scriptures, and, at the same time not relinquish the doctrine we are maintaining, and thereby infer the consequence above-mentioned; we must distinguish between our opposition to God's revealed will, contained in his word, which is the rule of duty to us; and resisting his secret will, which determines the event. Or, as it may be otherwise expressed, it is one thing to set ourselves against the objective grace of God, that is, the gospel, and another thing to defeat his subjective grace, that when he is about to work effectually in us, we should put a stop to his proceedings. The former no one denies; the latter we can, by no means, allow of. Persons may express a great deal of reluctance and perverseness at that time, when God is about to subdue their stubborn and obstinate wills; but the power of God will break through all this opposition; and the will of man shall not be able to make his work void, or without effect. The Jews, as above-mentioned, might *resist the Holy Ghost*, that is, oppose the doctrines contained in scripture, which were given by the Spirit's inspiration; and they might make this re-

\* *ἠνεκέσθη*.

velation of no effect, with respect to themselves; but had God designed that it should take effect, then he would have prevented their resisting it. Israel might *be a gainsaying people*, that is, they might oppose what God communicated to them by the prophets, which it was their duty and interest to have complied with; and so the offers of grace in God's revealed will, might be in vain with respect to them; but it never was so with respect to those whom he designed to save: and if the hardened sinner, *stretching out his hand against God*, may be said hereby to express his averseness to holiness, and his desire to be exempted from the divine government; he may be found in open rebellion against him, as hating and opposing his law; but he cannot offer any real injury to his divine perfections, so as to detract from his glory, to render his purpose of no effect. Moses speaking concerning God's works of providence, says, *They are perfect; for all his ways are judgment*, Deut. xxxii. 4. And elsewhere, God, by the prophet Isaiah, says, *I will work, and who shall let it*, Isa. xliii. 13. From whence he argues, his eternal Deity, and uncontrollable power, when he says, *before the day was, I am he, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand*; so that if a stop might be put to his works of providence, he would cease to be a God of infinite-perfection; and may we not from hence infer, that his works of grace are not subject to any controul; so that when he designs to call any effectually, nothing shall prevent this end's being answered, which is what we intend, when we speak of the power and grace of God as irresistible; which leads us to consider,

5. The season or time in which persons are effectually called; which in this answer, is said to be God's accepted time. If the work be free and sovereign, without any motive in us, the time in which he does it, must be that which he thinks most proper. Here we may observe,

(1.) That some are regenerate in their infancy, when the word can have no instrumentality, in producing the least acts of grace; these have therefore the seeds thereof, which spring up, and discover themselves, when they are able to make use of the word. That persons are capable of regeneration from the womb, is no less evident, than that they are capable of having the seeds or principle of reason from thence, which they certainly have; and if it be allowed, that regeneration is connected with salvation, and that infants are capable of the latter, as our Saviour says, *that of such is the kingdom of God*; then they must be certainly capable of the former; and not to suppose some infants regenerate from the womb, would be to exclude a very great part of mankind from salvation, without scripture-warrant.

(2.) Others are effectually called in their childhood, or riper years, and some few in old age; that so no age of life may be an inducement to despair, or persons be thereby discouraged from attending on the means of grace. Thus it is said concerning Josiah, *That in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David, his father*, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1. and David was converted when he was a youth, *a stripling of a ruddy and beautiful countenance*, 1 Sam. xvi. 12. compared with chap. xvii. 56, 58. And Moses seems to have been effectually called, when he left Pharaoh's court; and *it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel*; at which time he was *forty years old*, Acta vii. 23. And Abraham seems to have been made partaker of this grace, when he was called to leave his country, when he was seventy-five years old; before which, it is probable, that he, together with the rest of his father's family, served other gods, Josh. xxiv. 2. compared with Gen. xii. 4. And we read, in one single instance, of a person converted in the very agonies of death, *viz. the thief upon the cross*, Luke xxiii. 43.

(3.) Sometimes, when persons seem most disposed hereunto, and are under the greatest convictions, and more inclined to reform their lives, than at other times, the work appears, by the issue thereof, to be no more than that of common grace, which miscarries and leaves them worse than they were before; and, it may be, after this, when they seem less inclined hereunto, that is, God's accepted time, when he begins the work with power, which he afterwards carries on and completes. Some are suffered to run great lengths in sin, before they are effectually called; as the apostle Paul, *in whom God was pleased to shew forth all long suffering, as a pattern to them which should hereafter believe*, 1 Tim. i. 16. So that the time and means being entirely in his hand, as we ought not to presume, but wait for the day of salvation in all his ordinances; so, whatever our age and circumstances are, we are still encouraged to hope for the mercy of God, unto eternal life; or, that he will save and call us, with an holy calling.

QUEST. LXIX. *What is the communion in grace, which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?*

ANSW. The communion in grace, which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is, their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him.

**H**AVING considered the vital union which the members of the invisible church have with Christ in their effectual calling, we are now led to speak concerning that communion in grace, which they have with him.

Communion with Christ doth not, in the least, import our being made partakers of any of the glories or privileges which belong to him as Mediator; but it consists, in our participation, of those benefits which he hath purchased for us; and it implies, on his part, infinite condescension, that he will be pleased to communicate such blessings on us, and on our's, unspeakable honours and privileges, which we enjoy from him: it is sometimes called *fellowship*, 1 John i. 3. which is the result of friendship, and proceeds from his love: thus our Saviour speaks of his *loving them, and manifesting himself unto them*, John xiv. 21. It also proceeds from union with him, and is the immediate effect and consequence of effectual calling: therefore God is said to *have called us unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. i. 9.

And it is farther said in this answer, to be a manifestation of our union with him. He has received those blessings for us, which he purchased by his blood; and, accordingly is the treasury, as well as the fountain of all grace; and we are therefore said to *receive of his fulness, grace for grace*, John i. 16. And the blessings which we are said to receive, by virtue of his mediation, are justification, adoption, and sanctification, with all other benefits that either accompany or flow from them; which are particularly explained in the following answers.

**QUEST. LXX.** *What is justification?*

**ANSW.** Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

**QUEST. LXXI.** *How is justification an act of God's free grace?*

**ANSW.** Although Christ, by his obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice, in the behalf of them that are justified; yet, inasmuch as God accepteth the satisfaction from a surety, which he might have demanded of them, did provide this surety, his own only

Son, imputing his righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification, but faith; which also is his gift; their justification is, to them, of free grace.

**H**ITHERTO we have been led to consider that change of heart and life which is begun in effectual calling; whereby a dead sinner is made alive, and one that was wholly indisposed for, and averse to the performance of good works, is enabled to perform them by the power of divine grace: and now we are to speak concerning that change of state which accompanies it; whereby one, who being guilty before God, was liable to the condemning sentence of the law, and expected no other than an eternal banishment from his presence, is pardoned, received into favour, and has a right to all the blessings which Christ has, by his obedience and sufferings, purchased for him. This is what we call justification; and it is placed immediately after the head of effectual calling, as being agreeable to the method in which it is insisted on in that golden chain of salvation, as the apostle says, *Whom he called, them he also justified*, Rom. viii. 30.

This is certainly a doctrine of the highest importance, inasmuch as it contains in it the way of peace, the foundation of all our hope, of the acceptance both of our persons and services, and beholding the face of God, at last, with joy. Some have styled it the very *basis* of Christianity; and our forefathers thought it so necessary to be insisted on and maintained, according to the scripture-account thereof, that they reckoned it one of the principal doctrines of the reformation. And, indeed, the apostle Paul speaks of it as so necessary to be believed, that he concluded that the denying or perverting of it was the ground and reason of the Jews being rejected; *who being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God*: and when they shall be called, if their call be intended, in that account which we have, of *the marriage of the Lamb, and his wife having made herself ready*, Rev. xix. 7. as many suppose, it is worth observing, that she is described as *arrayed in fine linen, which is the righteousness of saints*, or Christ's righteousness, by which they are justified: this is that in which they glory; and therefore are represented as being convinced of the importance of that doctrine which, before, they were ignorant of. This we have an account of in these two answers, which we are now to explain, and shall endeavour to do it in the following method.

I. We shall consider what we are to understand by the word *justify*.

II. What are the privileges contained therein, as reduced to



two heads, to wit, pardon of sin; and God's accounting them who are justified, righteous in his sight? And,

III. What is the foundation of our justification? namely, a righteousness wrought out for us.

IV. The utter inability of fallen man to perform any righteousness, that can be the matter of his justification in the sight of God.

V. That our Lord Jesus Christ has wrought out this righteousness for us, as our surety, by performing active and passive obedience; which is imputed to us for our justification.

VI. We shall consider it as an act of God's free grace. And,

VII. Shew the use of faith in justification, or in what respects faith is said to justify.

I. We shall consider in what sense we are to understand the word *justify*. As there are many disputes about the method of explaining the doctrines of justification; so there is a contest between us and the Papists, about the sense of the word; they generally supposing, that *to justify*, is to make inherently righteous and holy; because righteousness and holiness sometimes import the same thing; and both of them denote an internal change in the person who is so denominated; and accordingly they argue, that as to *magnify* signifies to make great; to *fortify*, to make strong; so *to justify* is to make just or holy: and they suppose, that whatever we do to make ourselves so, or whatever good works are the ingredients of our sanctification, these must be considered as the matter of our justification. And some Protestant divines have supposed, that the difference between them and us, is principally about the sense of a word; which favourable and charitable construction of their doctrine, would have been less exceptionable, if the Papists had asserted no more than that justification might have been taken in this sense, when considered, not as giving us a right to eternal life, or being the foundation of that sentence of absolution, which God passes upon us: but since this is the sense they give of it, when they say that we are justified by our inherent holiness, we are bound to conclude, that it is very remote from the scripture sense of the word.

We do not deny that justification is sometimes taken in a sense different from that which is intended by it, when used to signify the doctrine we are explaining. Sometimes nothing more is intended hereby, than our vindicating the divine perfections from any charge which is pretended to be brought against them. Thus the Psalmist says, *That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest*, Psal. li. 4. And our Saviour is said to be justified, that is, his person or character vindicated or defended from the reproaches that were cast on him; as it is said, *Wisdom is justified of her children*,

Matt. xi. 19. Luke vii. 35. Also we frequently read of the justification of the actions or conduct of persons, in scripture ; in which sense their own works may be said to justify or vindicate them from the charge of hypocrisy or unregeneracy. Again, to justify is sometimes taken, in scripture, for using endeavours to turn many to righteousness : and therefore our translators have rendered the words, in the prophecy of Daniel, which signify, *they who justify many, they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars*, Dan. xii. 3.\*

There are various other senses which are given of this word, which we pass over as not applicable to the doctrine we are maintaining, and therefore shall proceed to consider the sense in which it is used, when importing a sinner's justification in the sight of God ; wherein it is to be taken only in a forensick sense, and accordingly signifies a person's being acquitted or discharged from guilt, or a liableness to condemnation, in such a way as is done in courts of judicature : thus we read in the judicial law, that *if there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked*, Deut. xxv. 1. where *to justify the righteous*, is to be understood for acquitting or discharging one that appears to be righteous, or not guilty, from condemnation ; whereas *the wicked*, that is, they who appear to be guilty, are to be *condemned* : and in this sense the word is used, when applied to the doctrine of justification, in the New Testament, and particularly in Paul's epistles ; who largely insists on this subject.

Now that we may understand how a sinner may expect to be discharged at God's tribunal, let us consider the methods of proceeding used in human courts of judicature : herein, it is supposed, that there is a law that forbids some actions which are deemed criminal ; and also, that a punishment is annexed to this law, which renders the person that violated it, guilty ; and then persons are supposed to be charged with the violation thereof ; which charge, if it be not made good, they are said to be justified, that is, cleared from presumptive, not real guilt : but if the charge be made good, and he that fell under it, liable to punishment ; if he suffer the punishment he is justified, as in crimes that are not of a capital nature ; or if he be any otherwise cleared from the charge, so that his guilt be removed, then he is deemed a justified person : and so the law has nothing to lay to his charge, with respect to that which he was before accused of. Thus when a sinner, who had been charged with the violation of the divine law, found guilty before God, and exposed to a sentence of condemnation, is freed

from it, then he is said to be justified; which leads us to consider,

II. The privileges contained in justification; which are forgiveness of sin and a right and title to eternal life. These are sufficiently distinguished, though never separated; so that when we find but one of them mentioned in a particular scripture, which treats on this subject, the other is not excluded. Forgiveness of sin is sometimes expressed in scripture, by a not imputing sin; and a right to life, includes in it our being made partakers of the adoption of children, and a right to the inheritance prepared for them. The apostle mentions both these together, when he speaks of our having *redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins*; and being *made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, Col. i. 12. 14. And elsewhere he speaks of Christ's *redeeming them that were under the law*; which includes the former branch of justification, and of their *receiving the adoption of children*, which includes the latter. And again he considers a justified person as *having peace with God*, which more especially respects pardon of sin, and of their *having access to the grace wherein they stand*, and their *rejoicing in hope of the glory of God*, Rom. v. 1, 2. which is what we are to understand by, or includes in it, their right to life.

That justification consists of both these branches, we maintain against the Papists, who suppose that it includes nothing else but forgiveness of sin, which is founded on the blood of Christ; whereas, according to them, our right to life depends on our internal qualifications, or sincere obedience. And besides these, there are some Protestant divines, who suppose that it consists only in pardon of sin; and this is asserted, by them, with different views; some do it as most consistent with the doctrine of justification by works, which they plead for; whereas, others do it as being most agreeable to another notion which they advance, namely, that we are justified only by Christ's passive obedience; which will be considered under a following head. Again, there are others, whose sentiments of the doctrine of justification are agreeable to scripture, who maintain, that it includes both forgiveness of sins, and a right to life; but yet they add, that the former is founded on Christ's passive obedience, and the latter on his active: whereas, we cannot but think, that the whole of Christ's obedience, both active and passive, is the foundation of each of these; which will also be considered, when we come to speak concerning the procuring cause of our justification.

All that we shall observe at present, is, that these two privileges are inseparably connected; therefore, as no one can have a right to life, but he whose sins are pardoned; so no

one can obtain forgiveness of sin, but he must, as the consequence hereof, have a right to life. As by the fall, man first became guilty, and then lost that right to life which was promised in case he had stood; so it is agreeable to the divine perfections, provided the guilt be removed, that he should be put in the same state as though it had not been contracted, and consequently, that he should not only have forgiveness of sins, but a right to life. Forgiveness of sin, without a right to eternal life, would render our justification incomplete; therefore, when any one is pardoned by an act of grace, he is put in possession of that which, by his rebellion, he had forfeited, he is considered, not only as released out of prison, but as one who has the privileges of a subject, such as those which he had before he committed the crime. Without this he would be like Absalom, when, upon Joab's intercession with David, the guilt of murder, which he had contracted, was remitted so far, as that he had liberty to return from Geshur, whither he was fled: nevertheless, he reckons himself not fully discharged from the guilt he had contracted, and concludes his return to Jerusalem, as it were, an insignificant privilege; unless, by being admitted to see the king's face, and enjoy the privileges which he was possessed of before, he might be dealt with as one who was taken into favour, as well as forgiven, 2 Sam. xiv. 2. which was accordingly granted. This leads us to consider these two branches of justification in particular. And,

1. Forgiveness of sin. Sin is sometimes represented as containing in it moral impurity, as opposed to holiness of heart and life; and accordingly is said, *to defile a man*, Matt. xv. 19, 20. and is set forth by several metaphorical expressions in scripture, which tend to beget an abhorrence of it as of things impure; in which sense it is removed in sanctification rather than in justification; not but that divines sometimes speak of Christ's redeeming us from the filth and dominion of sin, and our deliverance from it in justification: but these are to be understood as rendering us guilty; inasmuch as all moral pollutions are criminal, as contrary to the law of God; otherwise our deliverance from them would not be a branch of justification; and therefore, in speaking to this head, we shall consider sin as that which renders men guilty before God, and shew what we are to understand by guilt.

This supposes a person to be under a law, and to have violated it; accordingly sin is described as the *transgression of the law*, 1 John iii. 4. The law of God, in common with all other laws, is primarily designed to be the rule of obedience; and in order thereunto, it is a declaration of the divine will, which, as creatures and subjects, we are under a natural obligation to comply with; and God, as a God of infinite holiness and so-

vereynty, cannot but signify his displeasure in case of disobedience; and therefore he has annexed a threatening to his law, or past a condemning sentence, as that which is due for every transgression: this divines sometimes call the sanction of the law, or a fence, with which it is guarded, that so, through the corruption of our nature, we may not conclude, that we may rebel against him with impunity: this the scripture styles, *The curse of the law*, Gal. iii. 10. So that guilt is a liableness to the curse or condemning sentence of the law, for our violation of it: this is sometimes called a debt of punishment, which we owe to the justice of God, for not paying that debt of obedience which was due from us to his law. Thus, when our Saviour advises us to pray, that our sins may be forgiven; he expresses it by *forgiving us our debts*, Luke xi. 4. Matt. vi. 12. so that forgiveness, as it is a freeing us from guilt, discharges us from the guilt of punishment which we were liable to.

There is a twofold debt which man owes to God; one he owes to him as a creature under a law; this is that debt of obedience, which he cannot be discharged from; and therefore, a justified person is, in this sense, as much a debtor as any other. There is also a debt which man contracts as a criminal, whereby he is liable to suffer punishment; this alone is removed in justification.

Moreover, we must carefully distinguish between the demerit of sin, or its desert of punishment; and the sinner's obligation to suffer punishment for it. The former of these is inseparable from sin, and not removed, or, in the least lessened, by pardoning mercy; for sin is no less the object of the divine detestation; nor is its intrinsic evil, or demerit, abated by its being forgiven; and therefore, a justified person, remaining still a sinner, as transgressing the law of God, has as much reason to condemn himself, in this respect, as though he had not been forgiven. The Psalmist speaking concerning a person that is actually forgiven or justified, says, notwithstanding, that *if thou Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* Psal. cxxx. 3. He was, at the same time, in a justified state; but yet he concludes, that there is a demerit of punishment in every sin that he committed; though, when it is pardoned, the obligation to suffer punishment is taken away: \* and therefore, the apostle speaking of such, says, *There is no condemnation to them*, Rom. viii. 1. We must farther distinguish between our having matter of condemnation in us; this a justified person has; and there being no condemnation to us; that is, the immediate result of being pardoned.

\* *The former of these divines call reatus potentialis, the latter, reatus actualis; the former is the immediate consequence of sin, the latter is taken away by justification.*

There are several expressions in scripture, whereby forgiveness is set forth, namely, God's covering sin: thus the Psalmist says, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered*, Psal. xxxii. 1. or, his hiding his face from it, and blotting it out; or, *when it is sought for*, Psal. li. 9. *its not being found*, Jer. l. 20. and, *casting our sins into the depths of the sea*, Micah vii. 19. And elsewhere it is said, That when God had pardoned the sins of his people, *he did not behold iniquity in Jacob, nor see perverseness in Israel*, Numb. xxiii. 21. which amounts to the same thing as the foregoing expressions of its being covered, hid, blotted out, &c.

I am sensible there have been many contests about the sense of this scripture; which might, without much difficulty, have been compromised, had the contending parties been desirous to know each others sense, without prejudice or partiality. It is not to be thought, that when God forgives sin, he does not know, or suppose that the person forgiven, had, before this, contracted guilt by sins committed; for without this, he could not be the object of forgiveness. When God is said not to look upon, or hide his face from their sins, it is not to be supposed, that he knows not what they have done, or what iniquities they daily commit against him; for that would be subversive of his omniscience: and when he is said not to mark our iniquities, we are not to understand it, as though he did not look upon the sins we commit, though in a justified state, with abhorrence; for the sinner may be pardoned, and yet the crime forgiven be detested. But God's not seeing sin in his people, is to be taken in a forensic sense; and accordingly, when an atonement is made for sin, and the guilt thereof taken away, the criminal, in the eye of the law, is as though he had not sinned; he is as fully discharged from the indictment, that was brought in against him, as though he had been innocent, not liable to any charge founded upon it; and therefore the apostle says, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth*, Rom. viii. 33. and it is the same, as for God *not to enter into judgment*, as the Psalmist elsewhere expresses it; or to *punish us less than our iniquities have deserved*, Psal. cxliiii. 2. In this sense the indictment that was brought against him, is cancelled, the sentence reversed, and prosecution stopped; so that whatever evils are endured as the consequence of sin, or with a design to humble him for it, as bringing sin to his remembrance, with all its aggravating circumstances, he is, nevertheless, encouraged to hope, that these are not inflicted in a judicial way, by the vindictive justice of God demanding satisfaction; but to display and set forth the holiness of his nature, as infinitely opposite to all sin, and the

dispensations of his providence agreeably thereunto; and that with a design to bring him to repentance for it.

And, that this privilege may appear to be most conducive to our happiness and comfort, let it be considered; that wherever God forgives sin, he forgives all sin, cancels every debt that rendered him liable to punishment, otherwise our condition would be very miserable, and our salvation impossible; our condition would be like that of a person who has several indictments brought in against him, every one of which contain an intimation that his life is forfeited; it would avail him very little for one indictment to be superseded, and the sentence due to him for the others, executed: thus the apostle speaks of the *free gift*, being of *many*, that is, of the multitude of our *offences unto justification*, Rom. v. 16. And elsewhere he speaks of God's forgiving his people *all trespasses*, Col. ii. 13. And as he forgives all past sins, so he gives them ground to conclude, that iniquity shall not be their ruin; and therefore, the same grace that now abounds towards them herein, together with the virtue of the atonement made for sin, shall prevent future crimes being charged upon them to their condemnation. Thus concerning forgiveness of sin.

2. The other privilege, which they who are justified are made partakers of, is the acceptance of their persons, as righteous in the sight of God: thus they are said to be *made accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. and as their persons are accepted, so are their performances, notwithstanding the many defects that adhere to them. Thus God is said to have *had respect unto Abel, and to his offering*, Gen. iv. 4. And, together with this, they have a right and title to eternal life; which is that inheritance which Christ has purchased for, and God, in his covenant of grace, has promised to them. This is a very comprehensive blessing; for it contains in it a right to all those great and precious promises, which God has made, respecting their happiness both here and hereafter. But since we shall have occasion to insist on this in a following answer, under the head of adoption, which some divines, not without good reason, conclude to be a branch of justification, or, at least, to contain in it those positive privileges, which they, who are justified, partake of, either here or hereafter, we shall proceed to consider,

III. What is the foundation of our justification; and that must be either some righteousness wrought out by us; or for us. Since justification is a person's being *made righteous*, as the apostle styles it, Rom. v. 29. we must consider what we are to understand hereby; and accordingly a person is said to be righteous who never violated the law of God, nor exposed himself to the condemning sentence thereof: in this respect

man, while in a state of innocency, was righteous; his perfect obedience was the righteousness which, according to the tenor of the covenant he was under, gave him a right to eternal life; especially it would have done so, had it been persisted in, till he was possessed of that life; but such a righteousness as this, cannot be the foundation of our justification, as the apostle says, *By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified*, Gal. ii. 16. Therefore, the righteousness we are now speaking of, must be something wrought out for us, by one who stood in our room and stead, and was able to pay that debt of obedience, and endure those sufferings that were due for sin, which the law of God might have exacted of us, and insisted on the payment of, in our own persons, which, when paid by Christ for us, is that, (as will be considered under a following head,) which we generally call Christ's righteousness, or what he did and suffered in our stead, in conformity to the law of God; whereby its honour was secured and vindicated, and justice satisfied; so that God hereby appears to be, as the apostle says, *Just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*, Rom. iii. 26. (a)

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(a) Righteousness is taken ordinarily to signify a conformity to laws, or rules of right conduct. Actions, and persons may respectively be denominated righteous. The moral law, which is both distinguishable by the moral sense, and expressly revealed, requires perfect and perpetual rectitude in disposition, purpose, and action. Because none are absolutely conformed to this law, none can fairly claim to be in themselves, simply, and absolutely righteous. Men are said therefore to be righteous comparatively, or because the defects of many of their actions are few, or not discernible by their fellow men. *To be made*, (or constituted) *righteous*, or, *to be justified*, in the sight of God, in scriptural language cannot mean, *to be made inherently righteous*. It is God who justifies, he cannot call evil good, and cannot be ignorant of every man's real demerit. This righteousness of the saint has not consisted, under any dispensation, in his own conformity to the Divine law; "*In the Lord have I righteousness;*" "*That I may win Christ and be found in him, not having my own righteousness.*" If it did, there would be no necessity for the aid of God's Spirit to sanctify the nature of the justified person. To be justified or constituted righteous, is therefore to be *treated and accepted as righteous*. If God *justifies the ungodly*, his truth and justice must be clear. He cannot be induced to depart from perfect rectitude, and strict propriety. When the ungodly are justified, or treated as if righteous, it is not on their own account, for their righteousness is defective; but *by the obedience of one*, (that is Christ), *many are made righteous*." The term *obedience* excludes the essential righteousness of Christ as God. And his righteousness which he rendered in our nature can neither be transfused into, nor transferred unto his people, so as to be theirs inherently. Nor can an infinitely wise God consider the righteousness of one man to be the personal righteousness of another. But one person may receive advantages from the righteousness of another. Sodom would have been spared if there could have been found ten holy men in it. Millions may be treated kindly, because of favour or respect had for one of their number espousing the cause of the whole. One man may become the surety of, and perform conditions for many, or pay a ransom for them, and purchase them from slavery. If it be said that one may not lay down his life, especially if it be important, for the preservation of another's; yet Christ was the *Lord of life* and possessed what no mere creature can, the right to lay



IV. We are now to consider the utter inability of fallen man to perform any righteousness that can be the matter of his justification in the sight of God; whereby it will appear, as it is observed in this answer, that we are not accounted righteous in his sight; for any thing wrought in us, or done by us. That we cannot be justified by suffering the punishment that was due for sin, appears from the infinite evil thereof; and the eternal duration of the punishment that it deserves; as our Saviour observes in the parable concerning the debtor, who did *not agree with his adversary while in the way, but was delivered to the officer, and cast into prison; from whence he was not to come out till he had paid the uttermost farthing*, Matt. v. 25, 26. that is to say, he shall never be discharged. A criminal who is sentenced to endure some punishments short of death, or which are to continue but for a term of years, when he has suffered them, is, upon the account hereof, discharged, or justified: but it is far otherwise with man, when fallen into the hands of the vindictive justice of God; therefore the Psalmist says, *enter not into judgment with thy servant, or do not punish me according to the demerit of sin; for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified.*

Neither can any one be justified by performing active obedience to the law of God; for nothing is sufficient to answer that end, but what is perfect in all respects; it must be sinless obedience, and that not only as to what concerns the time to come, but as respecting the time past; and that is impossible, from the nature of the thing, to be said of a sinner; for it implies a contradiction in terms. This farther appears from the holiness of God, which cannot but detest the least defect; and therefore will not deal with a sinful creature, as though he had been innocent: and as for sins that are past, they render us equally liable to a debt of punishment, with those which are committed at present, or shall be hereafter, in the sight of God. Moreover, the honour of the law cannot be secured, unless it be perfectly fulfilled; which cannot be done if there be any defect of obedience.

As for those works which are done by us, without the assistance of the Spirit of God, these proceed from a wrong principle, and have many other blemishes attending them, upon the account whereof, they have only a partial goodness; and for that reason Augustine gives them no better a character

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down his life, and power to take it up again. The importance of the satisfaction should be adequate to the honour of the law. But that every objection to such substitution might be removed, it is shewn that, this was the very condition upon which the restoration of the saints was suspended in the purposes of God before man was created; and was promised us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Justice therefore can neither object to the substitution, nor withhold the rewards.

than shining sins\*: but whatever terms we give them, they are certainly very far from coming up to a conformity to the divine law. And as for those good works which are said to be wrought in us, and are the effect of the power and grace of God, and the consequence of our being regenerated and converted, these fall far short of perfection; there is a great deal of sin attending them, which, if God should mark, none could stand. This is expressed by Job, in a very humble manner; *How should man be just with God? if he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. And, if I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me: for he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment,* Job ix. 2, 3, 30—32. when God is said to *work in us that which is well pleasing in his sight,* Heb. xiii. 21. we are not to understand, that the grace which he works in us, renders us accepted in his sight, in a forensic sense, or, that it justifies us; for in this respect we are only *made accepted in the Beloved,* that is, in Christ, Eph. i. 3.

Moreover, as what is wrought in us, has many defects attending it; so it is not from ourselves, and therefore cannot be accepted as a payment of that debt of obedience which we owe to the justice of God; and consequently we cannot be justified thereby. Some, indeed, make the terms of acceptance, or justification in the sight of God, so very low, as though nothing were demanded of us but our sincere endeavours to yield obedience, whatever imperfections it be chargeable with. And others pretend, that our confessing our sins will be conducive hereunto; and assert, that our tears are sufficient to wash away the guilt of sin. The Papists add, that some penances, or acts of self-denial, will satisfy his justice, and procure a pardon for us; yea, they go farther than this, and maintain, that persons may perform works of supererogation, or pay more than the debt that is owing from them, or than what the law of God requires, and thereby not only satisfy his justice, but render him a debtor to them; and putting them into a capacity of transferring these arrears of debt, to those that stand in need of them, and thereby lay an obligation on them, in gratitude, to pay them honours next to divine. Such absurdities do men run into, who plead for human satisfactions, and the merit of good works, as the matter of our justification: and, indeed, there is nothing can tend more to depreciate Christ's satisfaction, on the one hand, and stupify the conscience on the other; and therefore, it is so far from being an expedient for justification, that it is destructive to the souls of men.

\* *Splendida peccata.*

As for our sincere endeavours, or imperfect obedience, these cannot be placed by the justice of God, in the room of perfect; for that is contrary to the nature of justice: We cannot suppose, that he who pays a pepper-corn, or a few mites, instead of a large sum, really pays the debt that was due from him; justice cannot account this to be a payment; therefore, a discharge from condemnation, upon these terms, cannot be styled a justification. And if it be said that it is esteemed so by an act of grace: this is to advance the glory of one divine perfection, and, at the same time, detract from that of another; nothing therefore can be our righteousness, but that which the justice of God may, in honour, accept of for our justification: and our own righteousness is so small and inconsiderable a thing, that it is a dishonour for him to accept of it in this respect; and therefore we cannot be justified by works done by us, or wrought in us.

This will farther appear, if we consider the properties of this righteousness; and in particular, that it must not only be perfect, and therefore, such as a sinful creature cannot perform; but it must also be of infinite value, otherwise it could not give satisfaction to the infinite justice of God; and consequently cannot be performed by any other than a divine person. And it must also bear some resemblance to that debt which was due from us, inasmuch as it was designed to satisfy for the debt which he had contracted; and therefore must be performed by one who is really man. But this having been insisted on elsewhere, under the head of Christ's Priestly office \*, we shall not farther enlarge on it; but proceed to consider,

V. That our Lord Jesus Christ has wrought out this righteousness for us, as our Surety, by performing active and passive obedience; which is imputed to us for our justification. We have before considered that it is impossible that such a righteousness, as is sufficient to be the matter of our justification, should be wrought out by us in our own persons; it therefore follows; that it must be wrought out for us, by one who bears the character of a surety, and performs every thing that is necessary to our justification; such an one is our Lord Jesus Christ. In considering this head, we must,

1. Shew what we are to understand by a *surety*, since it is the righteousness of Christ, under this relation to us, which is the matter of our justification. A surety is one who submits to be charged with, and undertakes to pay a debt contracted by another, to the end that the debtor may hereby be discharged: thus the apostle Paul engages to be surety to Philemon, for Onesimus, who had fled from him, whom he had wronged or

\* See Vol. II. Page 275.

injured, and was hereby indebted to him; concerning whom, he says, *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it*, Philem. ver. 18. And elsewhere, we read of Judah's overture to be surety for his brother Benjamin, that he should return to his father, as a motive to induce him to give his consent that he should go with him into Egypt: *I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever*, Gen. xliiii. 9. This is so commonly known in civil transactions of the like nature, between man and man, that it needs no farther explication; however, it may be observed,

(1.) That a person's becoming surety for another, must be a free and voluntary act: for to force any one to bind himself to pay a debt, which he has not contracted, is as much an act of injustice, as it is in any other instance to exact a debt where it is not due.

(2.) He that engages to be surety for another must be in a capacity to pay the debt, otherwise he is unjust to the creditor, as well as brings ruin upon himself: therefore it is said, *Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts, if thou hast nothing to pay; why should he take away the bed from under thee?* Prov. xxiii. 26, 27.

(3.) He who engages to be surety for another, is supposed not to have contracted the debt himself; and therefore the creditor must have no demands upon him, as being involved together with the debtor, and so becoming engaged antecedent to his being surety: nevertheless, he is deemed, in the eye of the law, consequent thereunto, to stand in the debtor's room, and to be charged with his debt, and equally obliged to the payment thereof, as though he had contracted it, especially if the creditor be resolved to exact the payment of him, rather than of the original debtor\*.

(4.) As debts are of different kinds, so the obligation of a surety agreeably thereunto admits of different circumstances: thus there are pecuniary debts resulting from those dealings or contracts which pass between man and man in civil affairs; and there are debts of service or obedience; as also debts of punishment, as has been before observed, for crimes committed; in all which cases, as the nature of the debt differs, so there are some things peculiar in the nature of suretyship for it. In pecuniary debts the creditor is obliged to accept of payment at the hand

\* The distinction often used in the civil law between fide-jussor and expromissor, or a person's being bound together with the original debtor, and the creditor's being left to his liberty to exact the debt of which of the two he pleases, which is called fide-jussor; and the surety's taking the debt upon himself, so as that he who contracted it is hereby discharged, which is what we understand by expromissor, has been considered elsewhere. See Vol. II. Page 174. 186.

of any one, who at the request of the debtor is willing to discharge the debt which he has contracted, especially, if what he pays be his own; but in debts of service or punishment, when the surety offers himself to perform or suffer what was due from another, the creditor is at his liberty to accept of, or refuse satisfaction from him, but might insist on the payment of the debt by him in his own person, from whom it was due.

2. Christ was such a surety for us, or substituted in our room, with a design to pay the debt which was due to the justice of God from us. Here, that we may assume the ideas of a surety but now-mentioned, and apply them to Christ, as our surety, let it be considered;

(1.) That what he did and suffered for us was free and voluntary; this appears from his readiness to engage therein, expressed by his saying, *Lo, I come to do thy will*, Heb. x. 9. And therefore whatever he suffered for us did not infer the least injustice in God that inflicted it\*.

(2.) He was able to pay the debt, so that there was not the least injury offered to the justice of God by his undertaking. This is evident, from his being God incarnate; and therefore in one nature he was able to do and suffer whatever was demanded of us, and in the other nature to add an infinite value to what he performed therein.

(3.) He was not rendered incapable of paying our debt, or answering for the guilt which we had contracted by any debt of his own, which involved him in the same guilt, and rendered him liable to the same punishment with us, as is evident from what the prophet says concerning him, who speaks of him, as charged with our guilt, though *he had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth*, Isa. liii. 9. That which the prophet calls *doing no violence*, the apostle Peter referring to, and explaining it, styles *doing*, or committing *no sin* of any kind. He was not involved in the guilt of Adam's sin, which would have rendered him incapable of being a surety to pay that debt for us; neither had he the least degree of the corruption of nature, being conceived in an extraordinary way, and sanctified from the womb †. Nor did he ever commit actual sin, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

(4.) Another thing observed in the character of a surety, which is very agreeable to Christ, is; that what he engaged to pay was his own, or at his own disposal, he did not offer any injury to justice, by paying a debt that was before due to it, or by performing any service which he had no warrant to do. It is true, he gave his life a ransom, but consider him as a di-

\* *Volenti non fit injuria.*

† See Vol. II. Page 281.

vine Person, and he had an undoubted right to dispose or lay down that life which he had as man. Did he consent, in the eternal transaction between the Father and him, to be incarnate, and in our nature to perform the work of a Surety? this was an act of his sovereign will; and therefore whatever he paid as a ransom for us, was, in the highest sense, his own. The case was not the same as though one man should offer to lay down his life for another, who has no power to dispose of his life at pleasure. We are not lords of our own lives; as we do not come into the world by our own wills, we are not to go out of it when we please; but Christ was as God, if I may so express myself, lord of himself, of all that he did and suffered as man; by which I understand that he had a right as God to consent or determine to do, and suffer whatever he did and suffered as man; therefore the debt which he paid in the human nature was his own.

(5.) As it has been before observed, that in some cases he that is willing to substitute himself as a surety in the room of the debtor, must be accepted, and approved by him to whom it was due; and in this respect our Saviour's substitution as our surety in our room, had a sanction from God the Father; who gave many undeniable evidences that what he did and suffered for us, was accepted by him as really as though it had been done by us in our own persons, which, as was before observed, might have been refused by him, it being the payment of a debt of obedience and sufferings. Now that God the Father testified his acceptance of Christ as our surety, appears,

1. From his well-pleas'dness with him, both before and after his incarnation; before he came into the world, God seems to speak with pleasure in the fore-thought of what he would be, and do, as Mediator, when he says, *Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth*, Isa. xlii. 1. And he is also said to be *well pleased for his righteousness sake*, ver. 21. or in his determining before hand that he should, as Mediator, bring in that righteousness which would tend to magnify the law, and make it honourable.

Moreover, his having anointed him by a previous designation to this work, as the prophet intimates, speaking of him before his incarnation, Isa. lxi. 1. 2. is certainly an evidence of his being approved to be our surety. And when he was incarnate, God approved of him, when engaged in the work which he came into the world about: thus, when he was solemnly set apart, by baptism to the discharge of his public ministry, we read of a voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matt. iii. 17. And to this we may add, that there was the most undeniable proof of God's well pleasedness with him, as having accomplished this

work, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in heavenly places.

2. This may be farther argued from his justifying and saving those for whom he undertook to be a surety, before the debt was actually paid; and his applying the same blessings to his people, since the work of redemption was finished. The application of what Christ undertook to purchase, is an evidence of the acceptableness of the price. And this may be considered, either as respecting those that were saved before his incarnation and death; or those who are, from that time, in all succeeding ages, made partakers of the saving benefits procured thereby. Before the actual accomplishment of what he undertook to do and suffer, as our surety, God the Father trusted him, and, by virtue of his promising to pay the debt, discharged the Old Testament saints from condemnation, as effectually as though it had been actually paid. There are some cases in which a surety's undertaking to pay a debt, is reckoned equivalent to the actual payment of it; namely, when it is impossible that he should make a failure in the payment thereof, either though mutability, or a fickleness of temper, inducing him to change his purpose; or from unfaithfulness, which might render him regardless of his engagement to pay it: or from some change in his circumstances whereby, though he once was able to pay it, he afterwards becomes unable: I say, if none of these things can take place, and especially, if the creditor, by not demanding present payment, receives some advantage, which is an argument that he does not stand in need thereof: in these cases the promise to pay a debt is equivalent to the payment of it.

Now these things may well be applied to Christ's undertaking to pay our debt: it was impossible that he should fail in the accomplishment of what he had undertaken; or change his purpose, and so, though he designed to do it, enter into other measures; or, though he had promised to do it, be unfaithful in the accomplishment thereof, these things being all inconsistent with the character of his person who undertook it; and, though he suffered for us in the human nature, it was his divine nature that undertook to do it therein, which is infinitely free from the least imputation of weakness, mutability, or unfaithfulness: and, whereas the present payment was not immediately demanded, nor designed to be made till the fulness of time was come, his forbearance hereof was compensated by that revenue of glory which accrued to the divine name, and that honour that redounded to the Mediator, by the salvation of the elect, before his incarnation; and this was certainly an undeniable evidence of God's approving his undertaking.

And since the work of redemption has been completed, all those who are, or shall be brought to glory, have, in themselves, a convincing proof of God's being well pleased with Christ, as substituted in their room and stead, to pay the debt that was due from them to his justice, as the foundation of their justification. From hence it plainly appears, that Christ was substituted as a surety in our room and stead, to do that for us which was necessary for our justification; and we have sufficient ground to conclude, that he was so from scripture, from whence alone it can be proved, it being a matter of pure revelation. Thus he is said, in express terms, to have been *made a surety of a better testament*, Heb. vii. 22. and that as our surety, he has paid that debt of sufferings which was due from us, is evident, in that he is said to *offer himself a sacrifice for our sins*, ver. 27. and to have been *once offered to bear the sins of many*, chap. ix. 28. and from his being holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, the apostle argues, that he had no occasion to offer a sacrifice for himself, or that he had no sin of his own to be charged with, therefore, herein he bore or answered for our sins: thus the apostle Peter says, *He bare our sins in his own body, on the tree, by whose stripes we are healed*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. And elsewhere, we read of *his being made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. that is, he, who had no guilt of his own to answer for, submitted to be charged with our guilt, to stand in our room and stead, and accordingly to be made a sacrifice for sin; all this implies as much as his being made a surety for us. But this having been particularly insisted on elsewhere in speaking concerning Christ's satisfaction, which could not be explained without taking occasion to mention his being substituted in the room and stead of those for whom he paid a price of redemption; and having also considered the meaning of those scriptures that speak of his bearing our sins, we shall proceed to consider\*.

3. What Christ did, pursuant to this character, namely, as our surety, as he paid all that debt which the justice of God demanded from us, which consisted in active and passive obedience. There was a debt of active obedience demanded from man as a creature; and upon his failure of paying it, when he sinned, it became an out-standing debt, due from us; but such as could never be paid by us. God determines not to justify any, unless this out-standing debt be paid; Christ, as our surety, engages to take the payment of it on himself: and, whereas this defect of obedience, together with all actual transgressions, which proceeded from the corruption of our nature, render us guilty or liable to the stroke of vindictive justice, Christ, as

\* See Vol. II. page 288.



our surety, undertakes to bear that also: this we generally call the imputation of our sin to Christ, the placing our debt to his account, and the transferring the debt of punishment, which was due from us to him, upon which account he is said to yield obedience, and suffer in our room and stead, or to perform active and passive obedience for us; which two ideas the apostle joins in one expression, when he says, that he *became obedient unto death*, Phil. ii. 8. But this having been insisted on elsewhere, under the head of Christ's satisfaction\*, where we shewed, not only that Christ performed active as well as passive obedience for us, but endeavoured to answer the objections that are generally brought against Christ's active obedience, being part of that debt which he engaged to pay for us; we shall pass it by at present.

But that which may farther be added, to prove that our sin and guilt were imputed to him, may be argued from his being said to be *made a curse for us*, in order to his redeeming us from the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 13. and also from his *being made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. And also from other scriptures, that speak of him as suffering, though innocent; punished for sin, though he was at the same time the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish; dealt with as guilty, though he had never contracted any guilt, and being made a sacrifice for sin, though sinless, which could not have been done consistently with the justice of God, had not our sins been placed to his account, or imputed to him.

It is indeed a very difficult thing to convince some persons, how Christ could be charged with sin, or have sin imputed to him, in consistency with the sinless purity of his nature, which some think to be no better than a contradiction, though it be agreeable to the scripture mode of speaking, *viz. He was made sin for us*, and yet *knew no sin*, 2 Cor. v. 21. However, when we speak of sin's being imputed to him, we are far from insinuating, that he committed any acts of sin; or, that his human nature was, in the least, inclined to, or defiled thereby; we choose therefore to use the scripture phrase, in which he is said to have *borne our sins*, rather than to say, that he was a sinner; much less would I give countenance to that expression which some make use of, that he was the greatest sinner in the world; since I do not desire to apply a word to him, which is often taken in a sense not in the least applicable to the holy Jesus. We cannot be too cautious in our expressions, lest the most common sense in which we understand the greatest sinner, when applied to men, should give any one a wrong idea of him, as though he had committed, or were defiled with

\* See Vol. II. page 280—293.

sin. All that we assert is, that he was charged with our sins, when he suffered for them, not with having committed them; but with the guilt of them, which, by his own consent, was imputed to him; otherwise his sufferings could not have been a punishment for sin; and if they had not been so, our sin could not have been expiated, nor would his sufferings have been the ground of our justification. This leads us to consider,

4. The reference that Christ's suretyship-righteousness has to our justification. This is generally styled its being imputed; which is a word very much used by those who plead for the scripture-sense of the doctrine of justification, and as much opposed by them that deny it; and we are obliged to defend the use of it; otherwise Christ's righteousness, how glorious soever it be in itself, would not avail for our justification. Here it is necessary for us to explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

There are some who oppose this doctrine, by calling it a putative righteousness, the shadow or appearance of that which has in it no reality, or our being accounted what we are not, whereby a wrong judgment is passed on persons and things. However, we are not to deny it because it is thus misrepresented, and thereby unfairly opposed: it is certain, that there are such words used in scripture, and often applied to this doctrine, which, without any ambiguity or strain on the sense thereof, may be translated, to reckon, to account, or to place a thing done by another to our account; or, as we express it, to impute.\* And that, either respects what is done by us; or something done by another for us. The former of these senses our adversaries do not oppose; as when it is said, that Phinehas executed judgment, and it was counted unto him for righteousness, Psal. cvi. 31. that is, it was approved by God as a righteous action; which expression seems to obviate an objection that some might make against it; supposing, that Phinehas herein did that which more properly belonged to the civil magistrate; or, that this judicial act in him, was done without a formal trial, and, it may be, too hastily; but God owns the action, and, in a way of approbation, places it to his account for righteousness, that it should be reckoned a righteous action throughout all generations.

Again, sometimes that which is done by a person, is imputed to him, or charged upon him, so that he must answer for it, or suffer the punishment due to it: thus Shimei says to David, *Let not my Lord impute iniquity unto me*, 2 Sam. xix. 19, that is, do not charge that sin, which I committed, upon me, so as to put me to death for it, which thou mightest justly do, And Stephen prays, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*, Acts

\* וְשָׂא אֶת-חַטָּאתָם עָלָיו.

vii. 60. impute it not to them, or inflict not the punishment on them that it deserves. No one can deny that what is done by a person himself, may be placed to his own account; so that he may be rewarded or punished for it; or it may be approved or disapproved: but this is not the sense in which we understand it when speaking concerning the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us; for this supposes that which is done by another, to be placed to our account. This is the main thing which is denied by those who have other sentiments of the doctrine we are maintaining; and, they pretend, that for God to account Christ's righteousness ours, is to take a wrong estimate of things, to reckon that done by us which was not; which is contrary to the wisdom of God, who can, by no means, entertain any false ideas of things; and if the action be reckoned ours, then the character of the person performing it, must also be applied to us; which is to make us sharers in Christ's Mediatorial office and glory.

But this is the most perverse sense which can be put on words, or a setting this doctrine in such a light as no one takes it in, who pleads for it: we do not suppose, that God looks upon man with his all-seeing eye, as having done that which Christ did, or to sustain the character which belongs to him in doing it; we are always reckoned, by him, as offenders, or contracting guilt, and unable to do any thing that can make an atonement for it. Therefore, what interest soever we have in what Christ did, it is not reputed our action; but God's imputing Christ's righteousness to us, is to be taken in a forensic sense, which is agreeable to the idea of a debt being paid by a surety: it is not supposed that the debtor paid the debt which the surety paid; but yet it is placed to his account, or imputed to him as really as though he had paid it himself. Thus what Christ did and suffered in our room and stead, is as much placed to our account, as though we had done and suffered it ourselves; so that by virtue hereof we are discharged from condemnation, (a)

(a) "I am not without painful apprehension, said Peter to John, that the views of our friend James on some of the doctrines of the gospel, are unhappily diverted from the truth. I suspect he does not believe in the proper *imputation* of sin to Christ, or of Christ's righteousness to us; nor in his being our *substitute*, or representative.

*John.* Those are serious things; but what are the grounds, brother Peter, on which your suspicions rest?

*Peter.* Partly what he has published, which I cannot reconcile with those doctrines; and partly what he has said in my hearing, which I consider as an avowal of what I have stated.

*John.* What say you to this, brother James?

*James.* I cannot tell whether what I have written or spoken accords with brother Peter's ideas on these subjects: indeed I suspect it does not: but I never thought of calling either of the doctrines in question. Were I to relinquish the

This is the sense in which we understand the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us; and it is agreeable to the account we have thereof in scripture: thus we are said to be *made the*

one or the other, I should be at a loss for ground on which to rest my salvation. What he says of my avowing my disbelief of them in his hearing must be a misunderstanding. I did say, I suspected that *his* views of imputation and substitution were unscriptural; but had no intention of disowning the doctrines themselves.

*Peter.* Brother James, I have no desire to assume any dominion over your faith; but should be glad to know what are your ideas on these important subjects. Do you hold that sin was properly imputed to Christ, or that Christ's righteousness is properly imputed to us, or not?

*James.* You are quite at liberty, brother Peter, to ask me any questions on these subjects; and if you will hear me patiently, I will answer you as explicitly as I am able.

*John.* Do so, brother James; and we shall hear you not only patiently, but, I trust, with pleasure.

*James.* To impute,\* signifies in general, to charge, reckon, or place to account, according to the different objects to which it is applied. This word, like many others, has a proper, and an improper or figurative meaning.

First: It is applied to the charging, reckoning, or placing to the account of persons and things, THAT WHICH PROPERLY BELONGS TO THEM. This I consider as its proper meaning. In this sense the word is used in the following passages. "Eli thought she, (Hannah,) had been drunken—Hanan and Mattaniah, the treasurers were counted faithful—Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God—Let such an one think this, that such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also indeed when we are present—I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."† Reckoning or accounting, in the above instances, is no other than judging of persons and things according to what they are, or appear to be. To impute sin in this sense is to charge guilt upon the guilty in a judicial way, or with a view to punishment. Thus Shimei besought David that his iniquity might not be imputed to him; thus the man is pronounced blessed to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity; and thus Paul prayed that the sin of those who deserted him might not be laid to their charge.‡

In this sense the term is ordinarily used in common life. To impute treason or any other crime to a man, is the same thing as charging him with having committed it, and with a view to his being punished.

Secondly: It is applied to the charging, reckoning, or placing to the account of persons and things, THAT WHICH DOES NOT PROPERLY BELONG TO THEM, AS THOUGH IT DID. This I consider as its improper or figurative meaning. In this sense the word is used in the following passages—"And this your heave-offering shall be reckoned unto you as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor and as the fullness of the wine-press—Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy—If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision—If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account."§

It is in this latter sense that I understand the term when applied to justification. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness—To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The counting, or reckoning, in these instances, is not a judging of things as they are; but as they are not, as though they were. I do not think that faith here means the righteousness of the Messiah: for it is expressly called "believing." It means believing, however, not as a virtu-

\* צוּחַן; λογίζεσθαι.

† 1 Sam. i. 15. Neh. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. iv. 1. 2 Cor. x. 11. Rom. viii. 18.

‡ 2 Sam. xix. 19. Ps. xxxii. 2. 2 Tim. iv. 16.

§ Num. xviii. 27-30. Job xiii. 24. Rom. ii. 26. Philem. 18.

*righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. the abstract being put for the concrete; that is, we are denominated and dealt with as righteous persons, acquitted and discharged from con-

ous exercise of the mind which God consented to accept instead of perfect obedience, but *as having respect to the promised Messiah*, and so to his righteousness as the ground of acceptance.\* Justification is ascribed to faith, as healing frequently is in the New Testament; not as that from which the *virtus* proceeds, but as that which *receives* from the Saviour's fulness.

But if it were allowed that faith in these passages really means the object believed in, still this was not Abraham's *own* righteousness, and could not be properly *counted* by him who judges of things as they are, as being so. It was *reckoned* unto him *as if it were* his; and the effects, or benefits of it were actually imparted to him: but this was all. Abraham did not become meritorious, or cease to be unworthy.

"What is it to place our righteousness in the obedience of Christ, (says Calvin,) but to affirm that hereby only we are *accounted* righteous; because the obedience of Christ is imputed to us *as if it were our own*."†

It is thus also that I understand the imputation of sin to Christ. He was *accounted* in the divine administration *as if he were*, or *had been* the sinner, that those who believe in him might be *accounted as if they were*, or *had been* righteous.

Brethren, I have done. Whether my statement be just or not, I hope it will be allowed to be explicit.

*John*. That it certainly is; and we thank you. Have you any other questions, brother Peter, to ask upon the subject?

*Peter*. How do you understand the apostle in 2 Cor. v. 21. *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him?*

*James*. Till lately I cannot say that I have thought closely upon it. I have understood that several of our best writers consider the word *ἀμαρτία* (*sin*) as frequently meaning a *sin-offering*. Dr. Owen so interprets it in his answer to Biddle,‡ though it seems he afterwards changed his mind. Considering the opposition between the sin which Christ was made, and the righteousness which we are made, together with the same word being used for that which he was *made*, and that which he *knew not*, I am inclined to be of the doctor's last opinion; namely, that the sin which Christ was made, means *sin itself*; and the righteousness which we are made, means *righteousness itself*. I doubt not but that the allusion is to the sin-offering under the law; but not to its being *made a sacrifice*. Let me be a little more particular. There were two things belonging to the sin-offering. *First*: The imputation of the sins of the people, signified by the priest's laying his hands upon the head of the animal, and confessing over it their transgressions; and which is called "putting them upon it."§ That is, it was *counted* in the divine administration *as if the animal had been* the sinner, and the only sinner of the nation. *Secondly*: Offering it in sacrifice, or "killing it before the Lord for an atonement."¶ Now the phrase, *made sin*, in 2 Cor. v. 21. appears to refer to the *first* step in this process in order to the last. It is expressive of what was preparatory to Christ's suffering death rather than of the thing itself, just as our being *made righteousness* expresses what was preparatory to God's bestowing upon us eternal life. But the term *made* is not to be taken literally; for that would convey the idea of Christ's being really the subject of moral evil. It is expressive of a divine *constitution*, by which our Redeemer with his own consent, stood in the sinner's place, as though he had been himself the transgressor; just as the sin-offering under the law was, in mercy to Israel, reckoned or accounted to have the sins of the people "put upon its head," with this difference; that was only a shadow, but this went really to take away sin.

\* Expository Discourses on Gen. xv. 1—6. Also Calvin's Inst. bk. iii. ch. xi. § 7. † Inst. bk. iii. ch. xi. § 2. ‡ p. 510. § Lev. xvi. 21. ¶ Lev. i. 4, 5.

demnation in the virtue of what was done by him, who is elsewhere styled, *The Lord our righteousness*; and the apostle speaks of his *having Christ's righteousness*, Phil. iii. 9. that is,

*Peter.* Do you consider Christ as having been *punished, really and properly punished*?

*James.* I should think I do not. But what do you mean by punishment?

*Peter.* An innocent person may *suffer*, but, properly speaking, he cannot be *punished*. Punishment necessarily supposes *criminality*.

*James.* Just so; and therefore as I do not believe that Jesus was in any sense criminal, I cannot say he was really and properly punished.

*Peter.* Punishment is the infliction of natural evil for the commission of moral evil. It is not necessary, however, that the latter should have been committed by the party—Criminality is supposed: but it may be either personal or imputed.

*James.* This I cannot admit. Real and proper punishment, if I understand the terms, is not only the infliction of natural evil for the commission of moral evil; but the infliction of the one *upon the person who committed the other, and in displeasure against him*. It not only supposes criminality, but that the party punished was literally the criminal. Criminality committed by one party, and imputed to another, is not a ground for real and proper punishment. If Paul had sustained the punishment due to Onesimus for having wronged his master, yet it would not have been real and proper punishment *to him*, but *suffering* only, as not being inflicted in displeasure against him. I am aware of what has been said on this subject, that there was a more intimate *union* between Christ and those for whom he died, than could ever exist between creatures. But be it so, it is enough for me that the union was not such as THAT THE ACTIONS OF THE ONE BECAME THOSE OF THE OTHER. Christ, even in the act of offering himself a sacrifice, when, to speak in the language of the Jewish law, the sins of the people were put or laid upon him, gave himself nevertheless THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST.

*Peter.* And thus it is that you understand the words of Isaiah, *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*?

*James.* Yes, he bore the punishment due to our sins, or that which, considering the dignity of his person, was equivalent to it. The phrase "He shall bear his iniquity," which so frequently occurs in the Old Testament, means, he shall bear the punishment due to his iniquity.

*Peter.* And yet you deny that Christ's sufferings were properly *penal*.

*James.* You would not deny eternal life which is promised to believers to be properly a *reward*; but you would deny its being a *real and proper reward to them*.

*Peter.* And what then?

*James.* If eternal life, though it be a reward, and we partake of it, yet is really and properly the reward of Christ's obedience, and not our's; then the sufferings of Christ, though they were a punishment, and he sustained it, yet were really and properly the punishment of our sins, and not his. What he bore *was* punishment: that is, it was the expression of divine displeasure against transgressors. So what we enjoy *is* reward: that is, it is the expression of God's well-pleasement in the obedience and death of his Son. But neither is the one a punishment *to him*, nor the other, properly speaking, a reward *to us*.

There appears to me great accuracy in the scriptural language on this subject. What our Saviour underwent is almost always expressed by the term *suffering*. Once it is called a *chastisement*: yet there he is not said to have been chastised; but "the chastisement of our peace was *upon him*." This is the same as saying he bore *our* punishment. He was made a *curse* for us: that is, having been reckoned, or accounted the sinner, as though he had actually been so, he was treated accordingly, as one that had deserved to be an outcast from heaven and earth. I believe the wrath of God that was due to us was poured upon him: but I do not believe that God for one moment was angry or displeased *with him*, or that he smote him from any such displeasure.

There is a passage in Calvin's *Institutes*, which so fully expresses my mind,

having it imputed to him, or having an interest in it, or being dealt with according to the tenor thereof; in this respect he opposes it to that righteousness which was in him, as the result

that I hope you will excuse me if I read it. You will find it in Bk. ii. chap. xvi. § 10, 11. "It behoved him that he should, as it were, hand to hand, wrestle with the armies of hell, and the horror of eternal death. The chastisement of our peace was laid upon him. He was smitten of his Father for our crimes, and bruised for our iniquities: whereby is meant that he was put in the stead of the wicked, as surety and pledge, yea, and as the very guilty person himself, to sustain and bear away all the punishments that should have been laid upon them, save only that he could not be holden of death. Yet do we not mean that God was at any time either his enemy, or angry with him. For how could he be angry with his beloved Son, upon whom his mind rested? Or how could Christ by his intercession appease his Father's wrath towards others, if, full of hatred, he had been incensed against himself? But this is our meaning—that he sustained the weight of the divine displeasure; inasmuch as he, being stricken and tormented by the hand of God, DID FEEL ALL THE TOKENS OF GOD WHEN HE IS ANGRY AND PUNISHETH."

*Peter.* The words of scripture are very express—He hath made him to be sin for us—He was made a curse for us.—You may, by diluting and qualifying interpretations, soften what you consider as intolerable harshness. In other words, you may choose to correct the language and sentiments of inspiration, and teach the apostle to speak of his Lord with more decorum, lest his personal purity should be impeached, and lest the odium of the cross, annexed by divine law, remain attached to his death: but if you abide by the obvious meaning of the passages, you must hold with a commutation of persons, the imputation of sin and of righteousness, and a vicarious punishment, equally pregnant with execration as with death.

*John.* I wish brother Peter would forbear the use of language which tends not to convince, but to irritate.

*James.* If there be any thing convincing in it, I confess I do not perceive it. I admit with Mr. Charnock, "That Christ was "made sin" as if he had sinned all the sins of men; and we are "made righteousness," as if we had not sinned at all." What more is necessary to abide by the obvious meaning of the words? To go further must be to maintain that Christ's being made sin means that he was literally rendered wicked, and that his being made a curse is the same thing as his being punished for it according to his deserts. Brother Peter, I am sure, does not believe this shocking position: but he seems to think there is a medium between his being treated as if he were a sinner, and his being one. If such a medium there be, I should be glad to discover it: at present it appears to me to have no existence.

Brother Peter will not suspect me, I hope, of wishing to depreciate his judgment, when I say, that he appears to me to be attached to certain terms without having sufficiently weighed their import. In most cases I should think it a privilege to learn of him: but in some things I cannot agree with him. In order to maintain the real and proper punishment of Christ, he talks of his being "guilty by imputation." The term *guilty*, I am aware, is often used by theological writers for an obligation to punishment, and so applies to that voluntary obligation which Christ came under to sustain the punishment of our sins: but strictly speaking, guilt is the desert of punishment; and this can never apply but to the offender. It is the opposite of innocence. A voluntary obligation to endure the punishment of another is not guilt, any more than a consequent exemption from obligation in the offender, is innocence. Both guilt and innocence are transferable in their effects, but in themselves they are untransferable. To say that Christ was reckoned or counted in the divine administration as if he were the sinner, and came under an obligation to endure the curse or punishment due to our sins, is one thing: but to say he deserved that curse, is another. Guilt, strictly speaking, is the inseparable attendant of transgression, and could never therefore for

of his own performances: and elsewhere Christ is said to be *made of God unto us righteousness*; that is, his fulfilling the law is placed to our account; and the apostle speaks of *Christ's*

one moment occupy the conscience of Christ. If Christ by imputation became *deserving* of punishment, we by non-imputation cease to deserve it; and if our demerits be literally transferred to him, his merits must of course be the same to us: and then, instead of approaching God as *guilty* and *unworthy*, we might take consequence to ourselves before him, as not only guiltless, but meritorious beings.

*Peter.* Some who profess to hold that believers are justified by the righteousness of Christ, deny, nevertheless, that his *obedience itself* is imputed to them: for they maintain that the scripture represents believers as receiving only the *benefits*, or effects of Christ's righteousness in justification, or their being pardoned and accepted for Christ's *righteousness sake*.—But it is not merely for the *sake* of Christ, or of what he has done, that believers are accepted of God, and treated as completely righteous; but it is *in* him as their Head, Representative, and Substitute; and by the imputation of that *very obedience* which as such he performed to the divine law, that they are justified.

*James.* I have no doubt but that the imputation of Christ's righteousness presupposes a *union* with him; since there is no perceivable fitness in bestowing benefits on one *for another's sake* where there is no union or relation subsisting between them. It is not such a union, however, as that **THE ACTIONS OF EITHER BECOME THOSE OF THE OTHER.** That "the scriptures represent believers as receiving only the benefits or the effects of Christ's righteousness in justification," is a remark of which I am not able to perceive the fallacy: nor does it follow that his obedience itself is not imputed to them. Obedience itself may be and is imputed, while its effects only are *imparted*, and consequently *received*. I never met with a person who held the absurd notion of imputed benefits, or imputed punishments; and am inclined to think there never was such a person. Be that however as it may, sin on the one hand and righteousness on the other, are the proper objects of imputation; but that imputation *consists* in charging or reckoning them to the account of the party in such a way as to *impart* to him their evil or beneficial effects.

*Peter.* The doctrine for which I contend as taught by the apostle Paul, is neither novel, nor more strongly expressed than it has formerly been by authors of eminence.

*James.* It may be so. We have been told of an old protestant writer who says, that "In Christ, and by him, every true Christian may be called a *fulfiller of the law*:" but I see not why he might not as well have added, Every true Christian may be said to have been slain, and, if not to have redeemed himself by his own blood, yet to be worthy of all that blessing, and honour, and glory, that shall be conferred upon him in the world to come.—What do you think of *Dr. CAIR'S Sermons*? Has he not carried your principles to an extreme?

*Peter.* I cordially agree with *WIRSIUS*, as to the impropriety of calling Christ a *sinner*, truly a *sinner*, the *greatest of sinners*, &c. yet I am far from disapproving of what *Dr. CAIR*, and some others, meant by those exceptionable expressions.

*James.* If a Christian may be called a *fulfiller of the law*, on account of Christ's obedience being imputed to him, I see not why Christ may not be called a *transgressor of the law*, on account of our disobedience being imputed to him. Persons and things should be called *what they are*. As to the meaning of *Dr. CAIR*, I am very willing to think he had no ill design: but my concern is with the meaning which his words convey to his readers. He considers God in charging our sins on Christ, and accounting his righteousness to us, as reckoning of things as *they are*. (p. 280.) He contends that Christ was *really* the sinner, or guilt could not have been laid upon him. (p. 272.) Imputation of sin and righteousness, with him, is literally and actually a **TRANSFER OF CHARACTER**; and it is the object of his reasoning to persuade his believing hearers that from henceforward Christ is



being the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4. which is the same with what he asserts in other words elsewhere concerning the *righteousness of the law's*

the sinner, and not they. "Hast thou been an idolater, says he; a blasphemer, a despiser of God's word, a profaner of his name and ordinances, a thief, a liar, a drunkard—If thou hast part in Christ, *all these transgressions of thine become actually the transgressions of Christ, and so cease to be thine; and thou ceasest to be a transgressor from the time they were laid upon Christ, to the last hour of thy life*: so that now thou art not an idolater, a persecutor, a thief, a liar, &c.—thou art not a sinful person. Reckon whatever sin you commit, when as you have part in Christ, you are all that Christ was, and Christ is all that you were."

If the *meaning* of this passage be true and good, I see nothing exceptionable in the expressions. All that can be said is, that the writer explicitly states his principle and avows its legitimate consequences. I believe the principle to be false.—(1.) Because neither sin nor righteousness are *in themselves* transferable. The act and deed of one person may *affect* another in many ways, but cannot possibly become his act and deed.—(2.) Because the scriptures uniformly declare Christ to be sinless, and believers to be sinful creatures.—(3.) Because believers themselves have in all ages *confessed* their sins, and applied to the mercy-seat for *forgiveness*. They never plead such an union as shall render their sins not theirs, but Christ's; but merely such a one as affords ground to apply for pardon in his name, or *for his sake*; not as worthy claimants, but as unworthy supplicants.

Whatever reasonings we may give into, there are certain times in which *conscience* will bear witness, that notwithstanding the imputation of our sins to Christ, *we are actually the sinners*; and I should have thought no good man could have gravely gone about to overturn its testimony. Yet this is what Dr. CRISP has done. "Believers *think*, says he, that they find their transgressions in their own consciences, and they *imagine* that there is a sting of this poison still behind, wounding them: but, beloved, if this principle be received for a truth, that God hath laid thy iniquities on Christ, how can thy transgressions, belonging to Christ, be found in thy heart and conscience?—Is thy conscience *Christ's*?" p. 269.

Perhaps no man has gone further than Dr. CRISP in his attempts at consistency; and admitting his principle, that imputation consists in a transfer of character, I do not see who can dispute his conclusions. To have been perfectly consistent, however, he should have proved that all the confessions and lamentations of believers, recorded in scripture, arose from their being under the *mistake* which he labours to rectify; that is, *thinking* sin did not cease to be theirs, even when under the fullest persuasion that the Lord would not impute it to them, but would graciously cover it by the righteousness of his Son.—

John. I think, brother Peter, you expressed at the beginning of our conversation, a strong suspicion that brother James denied the *substitution of Christ*, as well as the proper imputation of sin and righteousness. What has passed on the latter subject would probably tend either to confirm or remove your suspicions respecting the former.

Peter. I confess I was mistaken in some of my suspicions. I consider our friend as a good man; but am far from being satisfied with what I still understand to be his views on this important subject.

John. It gives me great pleasure to hear the honest concessions of brethren, when they feel themselves in any measure to have gone too far.

Peter. I shall be glad to hear brother James's statement on *substitution*, and to know whether he considers our Lord in his undertaking as having sustained the character of a *Head, or Representative*; and if so, whether the persons for whom he was a substitute were the elect only, or mankind in general.

James. I must acknowledge that on this subject I feel considerably at a loss I have no consciousness of having ever called the doctrine of substitution in question. On the contrary, my hope of salvation rests upon it; and the sum of

*being fulfilled in us*, chap. viii. 3, 4. who could not be justified by our own obedience to it, *in that it was weak through the flesh*, or by reason of our fallen state; therefore Christ did this

my delight, as a minister of the gospel, consists in it. If I know any thing of my own heart, I can say of my Saviour as laying down his life *for, or instead of sinners*, as was said of Jerusalem by the captives—*If I forget THEE, let my right hand forget: If I do not remember THEE, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!*

I have always considered the denial of this doctrine as being of the essence of Socinianism. I could not have imagined that any person whose hope of acceptance with God rests not on any goodness in himself, but entirely on the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him *as if it were his own*, would have been accounted to disown his substitution. But perhaps, my dear brother, (for such I feel him to be, notwithstanding our differences,) may include in his ideas of this subject, that Christ was so our *head and representative*, as that what he did and suffered, we did and suffered in him.—If no more were meant by this, resumed James, than that what he did and suffered is graciously accepted on our behalf *as if it were ours*, I freely, as I have said before, acquiesce in it. But I do not believe, and can hardly persuade myself that brother Peter believes, the obedience and sufferings of Christ to be so ours, as that we can properly be said to have obeyed and suffered.

Christ was and is our *head*, and we are his members: the union between him and us, however, is not in all respects the same as that which is between the head and the members of the natural body: for that would go to explain away all distinct consciousness and accountableness on our part.

As to the term *representative*, if no more be meant by it than that Christ so personated us as to die in our stead, that we, believing in him, should not die, I have nothing to object to it. But I do not believe that Christ was so our representative, as that what he did and suffered, we did and suffered; and so became meritorious, or deserving of the divine favour.—But I feel myself in a wide field, and must treat your indulgence while I take up so much of the conversation.

*Peter and John.* Go on, and state your sentiments without apology.

*James.* I apprehend then that many important mistakes have arisen from considering the interposition of Christ under the notion of *paying a debt*. The blood of Christ is indeed the *price* of our redemption, or that for the sake of which we are delivered from the curse of the law: but this metaphorical language, as well as that of *head and members*, may be carried too far, and may lead us into many errors. In cases of debt and credit among men, where a surety undertakes to represent the debtor, from the moment his undertaking is accepted, the debtor is free, and may claim his liberty, not as a matter of favour, at least on the part of the creditor, but of strict justice. Or should the undertaking be unknown to him for a time, yet as soon as he knows it, he may demand his discharge, and, it may be, think himself hardly treated by being kept in bondage so long after his debt had been actually paid. But who in their sober senses will imagine this to be analogous to the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ? Sin is a debt only in a metaphorical sense: properly speaking, it is a *crime*, and satisfaction for it requires to be made, not on pecuniary, but on moral principles. If Philemon had accepted of that part of Paul's offer which respected property, and had placed so much to his account as he considered Onesimus to have "owed" him, he could not have been said to have *remitted* his debt; nor would Onesimus have had to thank him for remitting it. But it is supposed of Onesimus that he might not only be in debt to his master, but have "wronged" him. Perhaps he had embezzled his goods, corrupted his children, or injured his character. Now for Philemon to accept of that part of the offer, were very different from the other. In the one case he would have accepted of a pecuniary representative; in the other of a moral one; that is, of a mediator. The satisfaction in the one case would annihilate the idea of remission; but not in the other. Whatever satisfaction Paul might give to Philemon respecting the wound inflicted upon his cha-

for us; and accordingly God deals with us as though we had fulfilled the law in our own persons, inasmuch as it was fulfilled by him as our surety.

racter and honour as the head of a family, it would not supersede the necessity of pardon being sought by the offender, and freely bestowed by the offended.

The reason of this difference is easily perceived. Debts are transferable; but crimes are not. A third person may cancel the one; but he can only obliterate the *effects* of the other; the *desert* of the criminal remains. The *debtor* is accountable to his creditor as a *private* individual, who has power to accept of a surety, or if he please, to remit the whole, without any satisfaction. In the one case he would be just; in the other merciful: but no place is afforded by either of them for the *combination* of justice and mercy in the same proceeding. The *criminal*, on the other hand, is amenable to the magistrate, or to the head of a family, as a *public* person, and who, especially if the offence be capital, cannot remit the punishment without invading law and justice, nor in the ordinary discharge of his office, admit of a third person to stand in his place. In extraordinary cases, however, extraordinary expedients are resorted to. A satisfaction may be made to law and justice, as to the *spirit* of them, while the *letter* is dispensed with. The well-known story of Zaleucus, the Grecian law-giver, who consented to lose one of his eyes to spare one of his son's eyes, who by transgressing the law had subjected himself to the loss of both, is an example. Here, as far as it went, *justice and mercy were combined* in the same act: and had the satisfaction been much fuller than it was, so full that the authority of the law, instead of being weakened, should have been abundantly magnified and honoured, still it had been *perfectly consistent with free forgiveness*.

Finally: In the case of the debtor, satisfaction being once accepted, justice requires his complete discharge: but in that of the criminal, where satisfaction is made to the wounded honour of the law, and the authority of the lawgiver, justice, though it *admits* of his discharge, yet no otherwise *requires* it than as it may have been matter of promise to the substitute.

I do not mean to say that cases of this sort afford a competent representation of redemption by Christ. That is a work which not only ranks with extraordinary interpositions, but which has no parallel: it is a work of God, which leaves all the petty concerns of mortals infinitely behind it. All that comparisons can do, is to give us some idea of the *principle* on which it proceeds.

If the following passage in our admired *Milton* were considered as the language of the law of innocence, it would be inaccurate—

“————— Man disobeying,

He with his whole posterity must die:  
Die he, or justice must; unless for him  
Some other able, and as willing, pay  
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.”

Abstractedly considered, this is true; but it is not expressive of what was the revealed law of innocence. The law made no such condition, or provision; nor was it indifferent to the law-giver who should suffer, the sinner, or another on his behalf. The language of the law to the transgressor was not *thou shalt die, or some one on thy behalf*; but simply *thou shalt die*: and had it literally taken its course, every child of man must have perished. The sufferings of Christ in our stead, therefore, are not a punishment inflicted in the ordinary course of distributive justice; but an extraordinary interposition of infinite wisdom and love: not contrary to, but rather above the law, deviating from the letter, but more than preserving the spirit of it. Such, brethren, as well as I am able to explain them, are my views of the substitution of Christ.

*Peter*. The objection of our so stating the substitution of Christ, as to leave no room for the free pardon of sin, has been often made by those who avowedly

This may farther be illustrated, by what we generally understand by Adam's sin being imputed to us, as one contrary may illustrate another; therefore, as sin and death entered into the world by the *offence of one*, to wit, the first Adam, *in whom all have sinned*; so by the *righteousness of one the free gift*, Rom. v. 18. that is, eternal life *came upon all men*, to wit, those who shall be saved *unto justification of life*; and for this reason the apostle speaks of Adam as the *figure of him that was to come*, ver. 14. Now as Adam's sin was imputed to us, as our public head and representative, so that we are involved in the guilt thereof, or fall in him; so Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, as he was our public head and surety: and accordingly, in the eye of the law, that which was done by him, was the same as though it had been done by us; and therefore, as the effect and consequence hereof, we are justified thereby. This is what we call Christ's righteousness being imputed to us, or placed to our account; and it is very agreeable to the common acceptation of the word, in dealings between man and man. When one has contracted a debt, and desires that it may be placed to the account of his surety, who undertakes for the payment of it, it is said to be imputed to him; and his discharge hereupon is as valid as though the debtor has paid it in his own person. This leads us,

VI. To consider justification as it is an act of God's free grace, which is particularly insisted on in one of the answers we are explaining; for the understanding of which, let it be observed, that we are not to suppose, that when we are justified by an act of grace, this is opposed to our being justified upon the account of a full satisfaction made by our surety to the justice of God; in which respect we consider our discharge from condemnation, as an act of justice. The debtor is, indeed, beholden to the grace of God for this privilege, but the surety that paid the debt, had not the least abatement thereof made, but was obliged to glorify the justice of God to the utmost, which accordingly he did. However, there are several things in which the grace of God is eminently displayed, more particularly,

1. In that God should be willing to accept of satisfaction from the hands of our surety, which he might have demanded of us. This appears from what has been before observed, name-

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reject his satisfaction; but for any who really consider his death as an atonement for sin, and as essential to the ground of a sinner's hope, to employ the objection against us, is very extraordinary, and must, I presume, proceed from inadvertency.

*James.* If it be so, I do not perceive it. The grounds of the objection have been stated as clearly and as fully as I am able to state them."

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ly, that the debt which we had contracted was not of the same nature with pecuniary debts, in which case the creditor is obliged to accept of payment, though the overture hereof be made by another, and not by him that contracted the debt: whereas the case is different in debts of obedience to be performed, or punishment to be endured; in which instances, he, to whom satisfaction is to be given, must accept of one to be substituted in the room of him from whom the obedience or sufferings were originally due; otherwise, the overture made, or what is done and suffered by him, pursuant thereunto, is not regarded, or available to procure a discharge for him, in whose room he substituted himself. God might have exacted the debt of us, in our own persons, and then our condition had been equally miserable with that of fallen angels, for whom no mediator was accepted, no more than provided.

2. The grace of God farther appears, in that he provided a surety for us, which we could not have done for ourselves; nor have engaged him to perform this work for us, who was the only person that could bring about the great work of redemption.

The only creatures who are capable of performing perfect obedience, are the holy angels; but these could not do it, for, as has been before observed, whoever performs it must be incarnate, that they may be capable of paying the debt, in some respects, in kind, which was due from us; therefore they must suffer death, and consequently have a nature which is capable of dying; but this the angels had not, nor could have, but by the divine will.

Besides, if God should have dispensed with that part of satisfaction, which consists in a subjection to death, and have declared, that active obedience should be sufficient to procure our justification; the angels, though capable of performing active obedience, would, notwithstanding, have been defective therein; so that justice could not, in honour, have accepted of it, any more than it could have dispensed with the obligation to perform obedience in general; because it would not have been of infinite value; and it is the value of things that justice regards, and not barely the matter of perfection thereof in other respects: so that it must be an obedience that had in it something infinitely valuable, or else it could not have been accepted by God, as a price of redemption, in order to the procuring our justification: and this could be performed by none but our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious author and procurer of this privilege.

It was impossible for man to have found out this Mediator or Surety; so that it had its first rise from God, and not from us; it is he that found a ransom, and laid help upon one that

is mighty ; this was the result of his will : therefore our Saviour is represented as saying, *Lo I come to do thy will*, Heb. x. 7. as the apostle expresses it. That we could not, by any means, have found out this surety, or engaged him to have done that for us which was necessary for our justification, will evidently appear, if we consider,

(1.) That when man fell, the Son of God was not incarnate ; and provided we allow that fallen man had some idea of a Trinity of persons, in the unity of the divine Essence, (which is not unreasonable to suppose ; since it was necessary that that should be revealed to him before he fell, in order to his performing acceptable worship ; yet, can any one suppose that man could have asked such a favour of a divine person, as to take his nature, and put himself in his room and stead, and expose himself to the curse of that law which he had violated ; this could never have entered into his heart ; yea, the very thought, if it had taken its rise first from him, would have savoured of more presumption than had he entreated that God would pardon his sin without a satisfaction. But,

(2.) If he had supposed it impossible for the Son of God to be incarnate, or had conjectured that there had been the least probability of his being willing to express this instance of condescending goodness, how could he have known that God would have accepted the payment of our debt, at the hands of another, or have commended his love to us, who were such enemies to him, in not sparing him, but delivering him up for us ? if God's accepting of a satisfaction be necessary, in order to its taking effect, as well as the perfection or infinite value of it ; it is certain, man could not have known that he would have done it ; for that was a matter of pure revelation. Moreover,

(3.) Should we suppose even this possible, or that man might have expected that God would have been moved to have done it by intreaty ; yet such was the corruption, perverseness, and rebellion of his nature, as fallen ; and so great was his inability to perform any act of worship, that he could not have addressed himself to God, in a right manner, that he would admit of a surety ; and God cannot hear any prayer but that which is put up to him by faith, which supposes a Mediator, whose purchase and gift it is ; and therefore, since the sinful creature could not plead with God by faith, that he would send his Son to be a Mediator, how could he hope to obtain this blessing ? it therefore evidently follows, that as a man could not give satisfaction for himself ; so he could not find out any one that could or would give it for him. And therefore, the grace of God, in the provision that he has made of such a surety as his own Son, unasked for, unthought of, as well as undeserved, is very illustrious.

3. It was a very great instance of grace in our Saviour, that he was pleased to consent to perform this work for us, without which the justice of God could not have exacted the debt of him; and he being perfectly innocent, could not be obliged to suffer punishment, which it would have been unjust in God to have inflicted, had he not been willing to be charged with our guilt, and to stand in our room and stead. And his grace here-in more eminently appears, in that though he knew before-hand all the difficulties, sorrows, and temptations, which he was to meet with in the discharge of this work; yet this did not discourage him from undertaking it; neither was he unapprised of the character of those for whom he undertook it: he knew the rebellion, and guilt contracted thereby, that rendered this necessary, in order to their salvation; and he knew before-hand, that they would, notwithstanding all the engagements he might lay on them to the contrary, discover the greatest ingratitude towards him; and, instead of improving so great an instance of condescending goodness, that they would neglect this great salvation, when purchased by him, and thereby appear to be his greatest enemies, notwithstanding this act of friendship to them, unless he not only engaged to purchase redemption for, but apply it to them, and work those graces in them whereby they might be enabled to give him the glory which is due to him for this great undertaking. And this leads us,

VII. To consider the use of faith in justification, and how, notwithstanding what has been said concerning our being justified by Christ's righteousness, we may, in other respects, be said to be justified by faith; and also shew what this faith is, whereby we are justified: which being particularly insisted on in the two following answers, we shall proceed to consider them.

QUEST. LXXII. *What is justifying Faith?*

ANSW. Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner, by the Spirit and word of God; whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself, and all other creatures, to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person, righteous in the sight of God for salvation.

QUEST. LXXIII. *How doth faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?*

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**ANSW.** Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God ; not because of those graces which do always accompany it, or of those good works that are the fruits of it ; nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for justification ; but only as it is an instrument, by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness.

**WE** choose first to speak to the latter of these two answers, in which faith is considered as that whereby a sinner is justified, before the former of them, inasmuch as it seems better connected with what has been before insisted on, in explaining the doctrine of justification. And in considering the account we have of justifying faith, there are two things, which may be taken notice of, in this answer.

I. It is observed, that though there are other graces which always accompany faith and good works, that flow from it ; yet none of these are said to justify a sinner in the sight of God.

II. How faith justifies, or what it is to be justified by faith. (a)

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(a) That faith is a holy duty is evident, because it never obtains, except where the bent, or bias of the mind has been changed by the Holy Spirit ; yet it is like all the other works of man, imperfect, and might be stronger. That it is necessary in every action is clear, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin ; both because it is the work of an enemy, and because it cannot be accepted, having no reference to Christ. Faith is always accompanied by other holy traits of character, as repentance, love, patience, humility, and the like. The reason of which is evident ; for faith is an act of the renewed man, and all the other graces must accompany. But it is even less holy than love ; “ now abideth faith, hope, charity, (love)—the greatest of these is charity.” it is incapable of procuring by its righteousness our justification, because imperfect. If it were the holiness of the duty of faith, which justifies the man before God, we should read of a justification by love, patience, humility, or holiness in general. No such declaration occurs in the scriptures, but the reverse ; “ for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified,” which is manifestly spoken not merely of the corporal energy, but of the action taken with the intention.

If the righteousness of the duty of faith justifies, there could be no propriety in saying that we are “ justified by Christ,” or his righteousness ; there would have been no need of a Saviour, and all the sacrifices of former days were useless.

If we are to depend upon the righteousness of our believing for our justification, the believing in Christ will be of no importance, because Christ is then not our Saviour ; in proportion as our hopes are founded upon our own holiness, they are withdrawn from Christ.—This will also destroy the righteousness of faith, for if it be useless there can be no holiness in believing.

If the holiness consist not in the act of believing, but in the disposition of the believer, and if it is for this, that he is justified ; salvation is then a debt, not grace ; we have whereof to boast ; we are justified by the deeds of the law ; the offence of the cross has ceased ; and Arians, Socinians, Unitarians, and Deists are seeking justification also in the same way.

That repentance, and holiness are necessary to *salvation* is true, because every man who is justified is also sanctified ; and that faith, considered as a holy duty, is necessary in the same manner, is equally true ; but faith is also useful in our



I. That though there are other graces which always accompany faith, and good works that flow from it; yet none of these are said to justify a sinner in the sight of God. There is an inseparable connexion between faith, and all other graces; which, though it be distinguished, is never separate from them. They are all considered as *fruits of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22, 23. thus the apostle reckons up several other graces that are connected with faith, and proceed from the same Spirit, such as *love, peace, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance*: and the same apostle commends the church at Thessalonica for their *work of faith*; and considers this as connected with a *labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Thess. i. 3. And the apostle Peter exhorts the church, to which he writes, to *add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity*, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. which supposes that all these graces ought to be connected together. And the apostle James calls it a *dead faith*, James ii. 17. which has not other works or graces joined with it; and, indeed, these graces are not only connected with it, but flow from it, or are the fruits thereof: thus we read of the *heart's being purified by faith*, Acts xv. 9. that is, this grace, when acted in a right manner, will have a tendency, in some degree, to purge the soul from that moral impurity, which proceeds out of the heart of man, and is inconsistent with saving faith: and elsewhere we read of *faith as working by love*, Gal. v. 6. that is, exciting those acts of love, both to God and man, which contain a summary of practical religion. It is also said to *overcome the world*, 1 John v. 4. and it enables Christians to do or suffer great things for Christ's sake, of which the apostle gives various instances in the Old Testament saints, Heb. xi. But, notwithstanding the connexion of other graces with faith, and those works which flow from it, we are never said, in scripture, to be justified thereby; not by love to God; nor by any act of obedience to him, which can be called no other than works: whereas, when the apostle speaks of our justification by faith, he puts it in opposition to works, when he says, that

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*justification, and in a manner, in which, it does not appear, that repentance and holiness can be.*

To say that they are conditions of salvation is to speak ambiguously; that we cannot be saved without them, is as certain as that we cannot be justified, without being also sanctified; but to say, that by performing them a title to happiness is vested in us, is to rob Christ of his glory, and to put the crown on man's head. Besides, the condition of holiness is not accomplished till death, and as the condition of our justification is not performed till then, we are never justified in life, which is plainly contrary to the scriptures.

*a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law, Rom. ii. 28.*

*Object.* To this it is objected, that the apostle here speaks concerning the ceremonial law, which he excludes from being the matter of our justification, and not the moral law, or any evangelical duty, such as love and sincere obedience, which, together with faith is the matter of our justification.

*Answ.* To this it may be replied, That when the apostle speaks of our justification by faith, without the deeds of the law, he does not hereby intend the ceremonial law; for those whom he describes as justified persons, are said to be, in a following verse, not only Jews, but Gentiles, that were converted to the Christian faith; the former, indeed, were under a temptation to seek to be justified by the ceremonial law, and so to conclude that they had a right to eternal life; because of their being distinguished from the world, by the external privileges of the covenant which they were under, many of which were contained in, or signified by that law: but the Gentiles had nothing to do with it, and therefore never expected to be justified by the ceremonial law; accordingly, when the apostle speaks of justification by faith without the deeds of the law, he cannot hereby be supposed to intend the ceremonial law. And if we look a little farther into the context, we shall find, by his method of reasoning, that he excludes all works in general, and opposes faith to them; for he argues, that we are justified in such a way, as tends to exclude boasting; but he that insists on any works performed by himself, as the matter of his justification, cannot do this any otherwise than in a boasting way, valuing himself, and founding his right to eternal life, upon them. We are not therefore justified by them, but by faith; that is, we are justified in such a way as that, while we lay claim to the greatest privileges from Christ, we are disposed to give him all the glory, or to renounce our own righteousness at the same time that we have recourse to his righteousness for justification, by faith.

But that it may farther appear, that our justification by faith, is opposed to justification by works, either those that accompany or flow from it, we may apply what has been before suggested, in considering the matter of our justification to this argument. If we consider the demands of justice, or what it may in honour reckon a sufficient compensation for the dishonour that has been brought to the divine name by sin, or what may be deemed a satisfactory payment of the outstanding debt of perfect obedience, which was due from us, or punishment, which we were liable to, according to the sanction of the divine law; we may easily infer, that no obedience, performed by us, though including in it the utmost perfection, that a

fallen creature is capable of attaining, is a sufficient satisfaction; and if there can be no justification without satisfaction, then we cannot be justified thereby. Therefore it is a vain thing for persons to distinguish in this case, between works done before and after faith, as though the former only were excluded from being the matter of our justification; or to say, as some do, that we are not indeed justified by obedience to the moral law, but by our obeying the precepts which our Saviour has laid down in the gospel, such as faith, and repentance, &c. which they call obedience to the gospel as a new law: but let it be considered, that these evangelical duties are supposed to be performed as the result of a divine command, which has the formal nature of a law, whether they be contained in the moral law or no; therefore, when we are justified by faith in opposition to the works of the law, this must be opposed to obedience of any kind performed by us.

And this also appears from the nature of faith, to which justification, by the works of the law, is opposed; for faith is a soul-humbling grace, and includes in it a renouncing of all merit, or inducement taken from ourselves, as a reason why God should bestow on us the blessings we stand in need of; it trusts in Christ for righteousness, and in him alone, and therefore turns itself from any thing that may have the least tendency to eclipse his glory, as the only foundation of our justification: therefore, when we are said to be justified by faith, and not by the works of the law, the meaning is, we are justified in such a way as tends to set the crown upon Christ's head, acknowledging him to be the only fountain from whence this privilege is derived.

It follows from hence that our justification cannot be founded on our repentance; though this is often maintained by those who are on the other side of the question, who suppose, that justification contains in it nothing else but forgiveness of sin; and if offences are to be forgiven by men, upon their repentance, or confessing their fault, then forgiveness may be expected from God, on our repentance: and some use a very unsavoury way of speaking, when they say, that our tears have a virtue to wash away our sins; and that they may give farther countenance to this opinion, they refer to that scripture, in which it is said, *Repent, that your sins may be blotted out*, Acts iii. 19. and others of the like nature; by which we are not to suppose, that the apostle means, that forgiveness of sin is founded on our repentance, as the matter of our justification in the sight of God; but that there is an inseparable connexion between our claim to forgiveness of sin, (together with all the fruits and effects of the death of Christ, whereby this blessing was procured) and repentance; so that one is not to be ex-

pected without the other; and though men are to forgive injuries in case the offender acknowledges his fault, and makes sufficient restitution; this they may do, inasmuch as the offence is only committed against a creature; and especially if the offence be of a private nature. But supposing this should be applied to juridical and forensick cases, will any one say, that the prince is obliged to forgive the criminal who is under a sentence of condemnation, because he is sorry for what he has done, or confesses his fault? Would this secure his honour as a law-giver? And if hereupon the offender were to be discharged from his guilt, would not this be a defect in the administration of the legislature? How then can this be applied to forgiveness, expected at the hand of God; in which justice, as well as mercy, is to have the glory that is due to it; and we are not only to be acquitted, but justified, or pronounced guiltless, since our acknowledgment of our offence cannot be reckoned a sufficient satisfaction to the justice of God?

*Object.* It is objected, by those on the other side of the question, that though repentance be not in itself a sufficient compensation to the justice of God for the crimes which we have committed; yet God may, by an act of grace, accept of it, as though it had been sufficient\*. This they illustrate by a similitude taken from a person's selling an estate of a considerable value, to one who has no money to buy it, provided he will pay a pepper-corn of acknowledgment. Thus, how insignificant soever, repentance, or any other grace, which is deemed the matter of our justification, be in itself, it is by an act of favour, deemed a sufficient price.

*Answer.* In answer to this I would observe, that the objection, which was before brought against the doctrine we have been maintaining, concerning the imputation of Christ's righteousness, namely, that it was a putative righteousness, a not judging of things according to truth, and the like, seems to be of no weight when it affects their own cause; otherwise we might turn their argument against themselves, and ask them; whether this be for God to judge according to truth, when that is accepted as a sufficient payment, by his justice, which is in itself of no value? But passing this by, we may farther observe, that this is wholly to set aside the necessity of satisfaction, as the Socinians do; and therefore it is no wonder that they make use of this method of reasoning. As for others who do not altogether deny this doctrine, yet think that a small price may be deemed satisfactory for sin committed. That which

\* This is what is generally styled, by a diminutive word, *Acceptilatio gratiosa*, which is an accepting a small part of a debt, instead of the whole; a sort of composition, in which, though the payment be inconsiderable, yet the debtor's discharge is founded thereon, by an act of favour in the creditor, as though the whole sum had been paid.

may be replied to it, is, that if justification, as tending to advance the glory of divine justice, in taking away the guilt of sin, depends upon a price paid that is equivalent to the debt contracted; and nothing short of a price of infinite value can be reckoned an equivalent thereunto, then certainly that which is performed by men, cannot be deemed a sufficient payment, or accepted of as such.

It is a vain thing for persons to pretend that there is a difference between satisfying God, and satisfying his justice; or, that to satisfy God is to pay a price, be it never so small, that he demands; whereas, satisfying justice is paying a price equal to the thing purchased; since we must conclude, that God cannot deem any thing satisfactory to himself, that is not so to his justice. Therefore, this distinction will not avail, to free their argument from the absurdity that attends it.

We might here observe, that as some speak of pardon of sin's being founded on our repentance; others speak of our justification as being by the act of faith, or by faith considered as a work, and in defending justification by works, as though it were not opposed to justification by faith (the contrary to which has been before proved) they argue, that we are often said, in scripture, to be justified by faith; but this faith is a work; therefore it cannot be denied but that we are justified by works. To which it may be replied, that it is one thing to say, that we are justified by faith, that is, a work, and another thing to say, that we are justified by it as a work; or, it is one thing to say, that we are justified for our faith, and another thing to say, that we are justified by it; which will more evidently appear under the following head, which we proceed to consider; namely,

II. What it is for us to be justified by faith, or how faith justifies. None can, with the least shadow of reason, deny, that justification by faith, is a scripture-mode of speaking, though some have questioned, whether the apostle's words, *being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, gives countenance to the doctrine of justification by faith; for they observe, that by putting a stop immediately after the word *justified*, the sense would be, that they who are justified by Christ's righteousness, have peace with God by faith, through the Lord Jesus Christ: but though this will a little alter the reading of the text; yet it will not overthrow the doctrine of justification by faith, as contained therein. For if we understand our *having peace with God*, as importing, that peace which they have a right to, who are interested in Christ's righteousness, and not barely peace of conscience: then it will follow, that to have this peace by faith, is, in effect, the same as to be justified by faith; and this farther ap-

pears, from the following words, *by whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand.* The grace wherein we stand, is that grace which is the foundation of our justification, and not barely peace of conscience: when we are therefore said to have access by faith unto this grace, it is the same as for us to be justified by faith.

Moreover, this is not the only place in which we are said to be justified by faith; for the apostle says elsewhere, *We are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ*, Gal. ii. 16. or by faith in Jesus Christ, and again, *the just shall live by faith*, Rom. i. 17: which, agreeably to the context, must be understood of their being justified by faith; in which sense the apostle particularly explains it elsewhere, Gal. iii. 11. and in another place he speaks of *the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ*, Rom. iii. 22. and also of a believer's *waiting for the hope of righteousness by faith*, Gal. v. 5. We must not therefore deny that justification is by faith; but rather explain the sense of those scriptures that establish this doctrine, agreeably to the mind of the Holy Ghost therein.

There are various methods taken to explain the doctrine of justification by faith; particularly one that we think subversive of justification by Christ's righteousness: the other, that which is contained in the answer which we are explaining.

1. As to the former of these, namely, that which is inconsistent with the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness. This is maintained by those who plead for justification by works; and consequently, they say, that we are justified by faith, and all other graces; which they call the conditions of our justification in the sight of God; and indeed to be justified by faith, according to them, is little other than to be justified for faith: whether they reckon it a meritorious condition or no, they must own it to be a pleadable condition; otherwise it would have no reference to justification; and if it be taken in this sense, our justification depends as much upon it, as though it had been meritorious. This is the account which some give of justification; and to prepare the way for this opinion, they suppose, that the terms of salvation, in the gospel, which are substituted in the room of those which were required under the first covenant made with Adam, are faith; repentance and sincere obedience, instead of perfect; and that God in justifying a penitent, believing sinner, pursuant to the performance of these conditions, declares his willingness, that there should be a relaxation of that law which man was at first obliged to obey; and accordingly, that sincerity is demanded by him instead of perfection, or substituted in the room of it; this they call the new law, or others style it a remedial law: so that instead of being justified by Christ's yielding perfect

obedience, or paying the out-standing debt, which we were obliged, by reason of the violation of the first covenant, to pay: we are to be justified by our own imperfect obedience.

But that which may be objected to this method of reasoning, is, that it is inconsistent with the holiness of the divine nature, and the glory of the justice of God, detracts from the honour of his law, and is, in effect, to maintain that we are justified without satisfaction given. For though these terms of our justification, and acceptance in the sight of God, may be falsely styled a valuable consideration; yet none will pretend to assert, that they are an infinite price; and nothing short of that (which is no other than Christ's righteousness) is sufficient to answer this end. I am sensible, that they who lay down this plan of justification, allege in defence thereof; that though these terms of acceptance are of small value in themselves; yet God, by an act of grace, reckons the payment of a small debt equivalent to that of a greater, as has been before observed. And they speak of faith and repentance as having a value set upon them by their reference to the blood of Christ\*, who merited this privilege for us, that we should be justified in such a way, or upon these conditions performed: they call them indeed easier terms, or conditions, and include them all in the general word sincerity, instead of perfection. But they are nevertheless somewhat divided in their method of explaining themselves, inasmuch as some suppose these conditions to be wholly in our own power, without the aids of divine grace, as much as perfect obedience was in the power of our first parents; whereas others ascribe a little more to the grace of God, according as they explain the doctrine of effectual calling; though they do not suppose, that these conditions are altogether out of our own power; and they so far lay a foundation for the sinner's glorying herein, as that, they suppose, our right to justification and eternal life is founded on them.

I cannot but think this method of explaining the doctrine of justification to be subversive of the gospel, and that it is highly derogatory to the glory of God to assert that he can dispense with the demand of perfect obedience, and justify a person on easier terms; which is little better than what the apostle calls *make void the law*: this, says he, we are far from doing *by faith*, or by our asserting the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness; *but we rather establish it* hereby: and to say that God sets such a value on our performing these conditions of the new covenant, as that they are deemed equivalent to Christ's performing perfect obedience for us, this reflects on his glory, as set forth, to be a propitiation for sin, to declare God's righteousness in the remission thereof; and de-

\* *These works they speak of as Tincta sanguine Christi.*

tracts from the obligation which we are laid under to him, for what he did and suffered in our behalf, for our justification.

Moreover, to assert that God sets this value on our performances, pursuant to Christ's merit; or that they are highly esteemed by him, because they are tintured with his blood; this is contrary to the design of his death, which was, not that such an estimate might be set on what is done by us; but rather, that the iniquities that attend our best performances may be forgiven; and that (though, when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants,) we may be made accepted in the Beloved; and having no justifying righteousness of our own, may be justified, and glory in that which he hath wrought out for us.

And as for the supposition, that faith, repentance, and new obedience, are not only conditions of justification, but easy to be performed: this plainly discovers, that they who maintain it, either think too lightly of man's impotency and averseness to what is good, and his alienation from the life of God, or are strangers to their own hearts, and are not duly sensible that it is God that works in his people both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

The only thing that I shall add, in opposition to the doctrine of justification by works, is, that whatever is the matter or ground of our justification in the sight of God, must be pleadable at his bar; for we cannot be justified without a plea, and if any plea, taken from our own works, be thought sufficient, how much soever the proud and deluded heart of man may set too great a value upon them; yet God will not reckon the plea valid, so as to discharge us from guilt, and give us a right and title to eternal life on the account thereof; which leads us to consider,

2. The method taken to explain this doctrine in the answer before us, which we think agreeable to the divine perfections, and contains a true state of the doctrine of justification by faith. We before considered justification as a forensic act, that we might understand what is meant by our sins being imputed to Christ our Head and Surety, and his righteousness imputed to us, or placed to our account. And we are now to speak of this righteousness as pleaded by, or applied to us, as the foundation of our claim to all the blessings that were purchased by it. Here we must consider a sinner as bringing in his plea, in order to his discharge; and this is twofold.

(1.) If he be charged by men, or by Satan, with crimes not committed, he pleads his own innocency; if charged with hypocrisy, he pleads his own sincerity. Thus we are to understand several expressions in scripture to this purpose; as for instance, when a charge of the like nature was brought in against



Job, Satan having suggested that he did not serve God for nought; and that if God would touch his bone and his flesh, he would curse him to his face: and his friends having often applied the character they give of the hypocrite to him, and so concluding him to be a wicked person, he says, *God forbid that I should justify you; that is, that I should acknowledge your charge to be just; till I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me: my righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live*, Job xxvii. 5, 6. that is, I never will own what you insinuate, that my heart is not right with God. And David, when complaining of the ill-treatment which he met with from his enemies and persecutors, who desired not only to *tread down his life upon the earth*, but to *lay his honour in the dust*; to murder his name as well as his person, he prays, *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me*, Psal. vii. 8. What could he plead against maliciousness and false insinuations, but his righteousness or his integrity? And elsewhere, when he says, *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me: For I have kept the ways of the Lord; his judgments were before me. I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity*, 2 Sam. xxii. 21, &c. seq. it is nothing else but an intimation, that how much soever he might be charged with the contrary vices, he was, in this respect, innocent: and though God did not justify him at his tribunal, for this righteousness; yet, in the course of his providence, he seemed to approve of his plea, so far as that whatever the world thought of him, he plainly dealt with him as one who was highly favoured by him; or whom, by his dealings with him, he evidently distinguished from those whose hearts were not right with him. It is true, some who plead for justification by our own righteousness, allege these scriptures as a proof of it, without distinguishing between the justification of our persons in the sight of God, and the justification of our righteous cause; or our being justified when accused at God's tribunal, and our being justified, or vindicated from those charges that are brought against us at man's.

(2.) When a person stands at God's tribunal, as we must suppose the sinner to do, when bringing in his plea for justification in his sight; then he has nothing else to plead but Christ's righteousness; and faith is that grace that pleads it: and in that respect we are said to be justified by faith, or in a way of believing. Faith doth not justify by presenting or pleading itself, or any other grace that accompanies or flows from it, as the cause why God should forgive sin, or give us a right to eternal life; for they have not sufficient worth or excellency in

them to procure these blessings. Therefore, when we are said to be justified by faith, it is by faith, as apprehending, pleading, or laying hold on Christ's righteousness; and this gives occasion to divines to call it the instrument of our justification. Christ's righteousness is the thing claimed or apprehended; and faith is that by which it is claimed or apprehended; and, agreeably to the idea of an instrument, we are said not to be justified for faith, but by it. Christ's righteousness is that which procures a discharge from condemnation for all for whom it was wrought out; faith is the hand that receives it; whereby a person has a right to conclude, that it was wrought out for him. Christ's righteousness is that which has a tendency to enrich and adorn the soul; and faith is the hand that receives it, whereby it becomes ours, in a way of fiducial application: and as the righteousness of Christ is compared, in scripture, to a glorious robe, which renders the soul beautiful, or is its highest and chief ornament; it is by faith that it is put on; and, in this respect, as the prophet speaks, its beauty is rendered *perfect through his comeliness, which is put upon him*, Ezek. xvi. 14. so that Christ's righteousness justifies, as it is the cause of our discharge; faith justifies as the instrument that applies this discharge to us; thus when it is said, *the just shall live by faith*, faith is considered as that which seeks to, and finds this life in him; the effect is, by a metonymy, applied to the instrument; as when the husbandman is said to live or to be maintained by his plough, and the artist to live by his hands, or the beggar by his empty hand that receives the donative. If a person was in a dungeon, like the prophet Jeremiah, and a rope is let down to draw him out of it, his laying hold on it is the instrument, but the hand that draws him out, is the principal cause of his release from thence; or, that we may make use of a similitude that more directly illustrates the doctrine we are maintaining, suppose a condemned malefactor had a pardon procured for him, which gives him a right to liberty, or a discharge from the place of his confinement, this must be pleaded, and his claim be rendered visible; and after that he is no longer deemed a guilty person, but discharged, in open court, from the sentence that he was under. Thus Christ procures forgiveness by his blood; the gospel holds it forth, and describes those who have a right to claim it as belonging to him in particular: and hence arises a visible discharge from condemnation, and a right to claim the benefits that attend it. If we understand justification by faith, in this sense, we do not attribute too much to faith on the one hand, nor too little to Christ's righteousness on the other.

And we rather choose to call faith an instrument, than a condition of our justification, being sensible, that the word con-

*dition* is generally used to signify that for the sake whereof, a benefit is conferred, rather than the instrument by which it is applied; not but that it may be explained in such a way, as is consistent with the doctrine of justification by faith, as before considered. We do not deny that faith is the condition of our claim to Christ's righteousness; or that it is God's ordinance, without which we have no ground to conclude our interest in it. We must therefore distinguish between its being a condition of forgiveness, and its being a condition of our visible and apparent right hereunto. This cannot be said to belong to us, unless we receive it; neither can we conclude that we have an interest in Christ's redemption, any more than they for whom he did not lay down his life, but by this medium. We must first consider Christ's righteousness as wrought out for all them that were given him by the Father; and faith is that which gives us ground to conclude, that this privilege, in particular, belongs to us.

This account of the use of faith in justification, we cannot but think sufficient to obviate the most material objections that are brought against our way of maintaining the doctrine of justification, *viz.* by Christ's righteousness, in one respect, and by faith in another. It is an injurious suggestion to suppose that we deny the necessity of faith in any sense, or conclude, that we may lay claim to this privilege without it; since we strenuously assert the necessity, on the one hand, of Christ's righteousness being wrought out for us, and forgiveness procured thereby; and, on the other hand, the necessity of our receiving it, each of which is true in its respective place. Christ must have the glory that is due to him, and faith the work, or office that belongs to it.

Thus we have considered Christ's righteousness as applied by faith; and it may be also observed, that there is one scripture, in which it is said to be *imputed by faith*, as the apostle Paul, when speaking concerning Abraham's justification by faith, in this righteousness, says, *It was imputed to him for righteousness*; and adds, that *it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe*, Rom. iv. 22, 23, 24. in which scripture, I conceive, that imputation is taken for application; and accordingly the meaning is, the righteousness of Christ is so imputed, as that we have ground to place it to our own account, if we believe; which is the same with applying it by faith. (a)

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(a) "Abraham believed God and it was imputed or counted to him for righteousness." This passage of Scripture is found with little variation also in the Epistle to the Galatians (iii. 6.) and in the Epistle of James (ii. 23.) and in each

And whereas the apostle speaks elsewhere of *faith's being counted for righteousness*, ver. 5. it must be allowed, that there is a great deal of difficulty in the mode of expression. If we

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of the places it seems to have been introduced in support of its context from the first book of Moses. (xv. 6.)

Moses is giving at that place a visionary (as we suppose) correspondence between Jehovah and Abraham; in which the Lord promises to the patriarch to be his "shield and exceeding great reward," and upon Abraham's complaining that he was childless, his attention is directed to the stars, and he is told that it will be equally impracticable to number his posterity, and then follow the words "Abraham believed in<sup>o</sup> the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness."

Here it is given as an old-testament proof of that which has been a little before asserted "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," but because this doctrine would seem to make void the law, the apostle states this objection, then denies it with abhorrence, and introduces for his support Abraham's justification before God, "if Abraham were justified by works he hath wherewith to glory, but not before God; for what saith the scriptures Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

In the letter to the christians of Galatia he aims to bring them back from depending on their obedience to the moral and ceremonial laws, to a reliance upon Christ for salvation, he declares that "by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" in the sight of God; and that christians are "dead to the law," "seek to be justified by Christ," and "live by the faith of the Son of God." He asserts "if righteousness come by the law then Christ is dead in vain." He charges the Galatians with folly. After having heard, seen, and experienced the doctrines of the Gospel, its extraordinary and ordinary spiritual powers, to go back to dead works would argue something like fascination. And then to show that the Gospel mode of justification by faith was not peculiar to the Gospel he quotes from the book of Genesis these words; "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

The apostle James reprehends such as profess to be believers and yet are not careful to maintain good works; such professions of faith are less credible than the fruits of holiness; "show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Faith without works he pronounces to be dead, not merely inoperative, but destitute of a living principle. He then introduces Abraham's example of offering up Isaac as a proof of his faith; this work being a manifest effect of his faith in God, justifies, in the sight of all men, his character as a believer, "and the scripture" he says "was fulfilled which saith Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." The offering up of Isaac, having taken place several years after it had been said that "Abraham believed God," was an undeniable evidence of the truth, and a fulfilment, of that scripture.

Abraham's faith here mentioned has been understood as implying both the act of believing God's promises and his yielding to the call of God by emigrating, &c. † which faith, and its fruits, though an imperfect righteousness, was, it is alleged, by the favour of God accepted as a justifying righteousness.

But the apostle here contrasts faith with works, and denies a justification before God to be attainable by our obedience, consequently his introduction of Abraham's justification by his good deeds would have destroyed his own argument.

Others ‡ understand Abraham to have been justified on the account of the mere act of believing; and this has been confined to his faith in the one promise of a numerous posterity.

That the Lord § "in judging Abraham will place on one side of the account his duties, and on the other his performances, and on the side of his perform-

<sup>o</sup> The quotations of Paul and James follow the lxx. In omitting the in.  
 † Hammond. ‡ Whitby. Macknight. § Macknight.

assert that the act of believing is imputed for righteousness, as they who establish the doctrine of justification by works, or by faith as a work, we overthrow that which we have been main-

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“ances he will place *his faith*, and by mere favour value it equal to a complete performance of his duty, and reward him as if he were a perfectly righteous person.”

Faith is the mind's assent to external evidence; faith thus strictly considered as an act, is man's act, as much so as any can be, and as the understanding at least in its application to the evidence must be accompanied by the consent of the will, here is every thing that is necessary to constitute a work, and accordingly it is commanded as a duty, the neglect of which is criminal. If it be thus that faith justifies the believer in the sight of God, then there is no propriety in saying we are not justified by works, and if it were possible still less in adducing the example of Abraham's justification by that which was no more than a duty to prove that we cannot be justified by works, “Christ being the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth.” If man can be so justified boasting is not excluded he has whereof to glory.

But the design of the apostle was to show that Abraham himself one of the holiest of men with all his good deeds, and implicit obedience to divine commands was not justified for his own holiness or godliness, for that is the opinion he is combating, but by what he calls faith. When the things which we are required to believe are of a spiritual nature, the “carnal mind” requires to be freed from its prejudices before it will “receive them,” and because supernatural aid is necessary to such minds and all naturally possess them, such “faith” must unquestionably be “the gift of God” in a sense higher than that of every other species of faith exercised under the support of Divine Providence. If faith is a gift of God it merits nothing for us, can never create an obligation on Divine justice for remuneration, and so can never be a *justifying* righteousness.

In his epistle to the Galatians that which he terms a being “justified by faith” he also denominates a being “justified by faith in Christ” so that his justifying faith is not merely a belief of the truth of what God has spoken, but is connected in some manner with Christ, and that it is not the mere act of believing in Christ which is the ground of such justification is plain from this, that he expresses the same thing by the words, “being justified by Christ.” If it is true that we are justified by faith, and also justified by Christ, it must be meant in different senses, and to give effect to these words thus differently connected, it seems necessary to suppose the righteousness of Christ as the meritorious cause or ground of justification, and faith the instrumental. “To as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name,” or at least as the concomitant of it, where all other requisites exist as well as grace for its production.

It is not the *holiness of his faith* that is accounted for righteousness to him; faith is a holy duty but not more so than some others, and not so much so as love, “now abide faith, hope, love, and the greatest of these is love.” nor are christians ever said to be justified by love, joy, peace, patience, or by any other grace, except by faith. From whence it follows that it is not the holiness of faith for which the believer is justified, and yet that there is some property not common to any other grace or duty, which must be concerned in our justification; and no doubt it is because faith lays hold on him for whose sake alone we can be justified.

Or faith may be put for its object, as the words fear, hope, joy, and love are; God is our fear, our hope, &c. “Thy faith hath saved thee,” it was not her faith, but its object, Christ's power, that healed her.

The seed which was promised embraced Christ, whose day Abraham saw afar off: so this faith had the Redeemer for its object. In the epistle to the Galatians there follow the quotation these words, “as many as are of faith are the children of Abraham,” these are called his spiritual seed, and believe in Christ, now all who believe in Christ are thereby the children of Abraham, and Abraham their

taining: and if, on the other hand, we understand faith, for the object of faith, *viz.* what was wrought out by Christ, which faith is conversant about, and conclude, (as I conceive we ought to do,) that this, is imputed for righteousness, this is supposed, by some, to deviate too much from the common sense of words, to be allowed of: but if there be such a figurative way of speaking used in other scriptures, why may we not suppose that it is used in this text under our present consideration? If other graces are sometimes taken for the object thereof, why may not faith be taken, by a metonymy, for its object? Thus the apostle calls those whom he writes to, *his joy*, that is, the object, or matter thereof, Phil. iv. 1. And in the book of Canticles, the church calls Christ *her love*, Cant. iv. 8. that is, the object thereof. And elsewhere, hope is plainly taken for the object of it, when the apostle says, *Hope that is seen, is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* Rom. viii. 24. By which he plainly intends, that whatever is the object of hope, cannot be in our present possession: and Christ is farther styled, *The blessed hope*, Tit. ii. 13. that is, the person whose appearance we hope for. And Jacob speaks of God as *the fear of his father Isaac*, Gen. xxxi. 53. that is, the person whom he worshipped with reverential fear; in all which cases the phraseology is equally difficult with that of the text, under our present consideration. Thus concerning Christ's righteousness, as wrought out for us, and applied by faith; which is the foundation of all our peace and comfort, both in life and death; and therefore cannot but be reckoned a doctrine of the highest importance: we shall now consider some things that may be inferred from it. And,

[1.] From what has been said concerning justification, as founded in Christ's suretyship-righteousness, wrought out for us, by what was done and suffered by him, in his human nature; and the infinite value thereof, as depending on the glory of the divine nature, to which it is united, we cannot but infer the absurdity of two contrary opinions, namely, that of those who have asserted, that we are justified by the essential righteousness of Christ as God \*; and that of others, who pretend, that because all mediatorial acts are performed by Christ only as man: therefore the infinite dignity of the divine nature, has no reference to their being satisfactory to divine justice. This is what they mean when they say, that we are justified by

\* This opinion was propagated soon after the reformation, by Andr. Osiander, who lived a little before the middle of the sixteenth century.

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father or pattern of faith, his faith must have been of the same kind. There could have been little propriety in giving a faith of any other kind as a pattern to those who are to believe in Christ that they may be "justified by his blood."

Christ's righteousness as man, in opposition to our being justified by his essential righteousness as God\*: whereas, I think, the truth lies in a *medium* between both these extremes; on the one hand we must suppose, that Christ's engagement to become a surety for us, and so stand in our room and stead, and thereby to pay the debt which we had contracted to the justice of God, could not be done in any other than the human nature; for the divine nature is not capable of being under a law, or fulfilling it, or, in any instance, of obeying, or suffering; and therefore, we cannot be justified by Christ's essential righteousness, as God; and, on the other hand, what Christ did and suffered as man, would not have been sufficient for our justification, had it not had an infinite value put upon it, arising from the union of the nature that suffered with the divine nature, which is agreeable to the apostle's expression, when he says, *God purchased the church with his own blood, Acts, xx. 28.*

[2.] From what has been said, concerning the fruits and effects of justification, as by virtue hereof our sins are pardoned, and we made accepted in the beloved, we infer; that it is not only an unscriptural way of speaking, but has a tendency to overthrow the doctrine we have been maintaining, to assert, as some do, that God is only rendered reconcilable by what was done and suffered by Christ. This seems to be maintained by those who treat on this subject, with a different view. Some speak of God's being rendered reconcilable by Christ's righteousness that they might make way for what they have farther to advance, namely, that God's being reconciled to a sinner, is the result of his own repentance, or the amendment of his life, whereby he makes his peace with him; which is to make repentance or reformation the matter of our justification, and substitute it in the room of Christ's righteousness: therefore, they who speak of God's being made reconcilable in this sense, by his blood, are so far from giving a true account of the doctrine of justification, that, in reality, they overthrow it.

But there are others, who speak of God's being reconcilable as the consequence of Christ's satisfaction; that they might not be thought to assert that God is actually reconciled by the blood of Christ, to those who are in an unconverted state, which is inconsistent therewith; therefore they use this mode of expression, lest they should be thought to give countenance to the doctrine of actual justification before faith; but certainly we are under no necessity of advancing one absurdity to avoid an-

\* This opinion was propagated soon after by Stancarus, in opposition to Oxander, whom Du Pin reckons amongst the Socinians, or, at least, that after he had advanced this notion, he denied the doctrine of the Trinity. [See Du Pin's ecclesiast. sixteenth century, book iv. chap. 6.]

other: therefore, let it be here considered, that the scripture speaks expressly of God's being reconciled by the death of Christ; and accordingly he is said to have *brought him again from the dead*, as a *God of peace*, Heb. xiii. 20. And elsewhere, he speaks of *God's having reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. v. 18. and not becoming reconcilable to us. Again, *When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved*, Rom. v. 10. that is, shall obtain the saving effects of this reconciliation *by his life*. And again, *Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself: and you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight*, Col. i. 21, 22. Where he describes those who were reconciled as once enemies, and speaks of this privilege as being procured by the death of Christ, and of holiness here, and salvation hereafter, as the consequence of it; therefore it is such a reconciliation as is contained in our justification.

But though this appears very agreeable to the mind of the Holy Ghost, in scripture, yet it must be understood in consistency with those other scriptures, that represent persons in an unconverted state, as *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. and being *hateful*, Tit. iii. 3. that is, not only deserving to be hated by God, but actually hated, as appears by the many threatenings that are denounced against them, and their being in a condemned state, that we may not give countenance to the doctrine of some, who, not distinguishing between God's secret and revealed will, maintain that we are not only virtually, but actually justified before we believe; as though we had a right to claim Christ's righteousness before we have any ground to conclude, that it was wrought out for us: but what has been already suggested concerning justification by faith, will, I think, sufficiently remove this difficulty.

The only thing that remains to be explained is; how God may be said to be reconciled by the blood of Christ, to a person who is in an unconverted state, and as such, represented as a child of wrath? for the understanding of which, let us consider, that so long as a person is an unbeliever, he has no ground to conclude, according to the tenor of God's revealed will, that he is reconciled to him, or that he is any other than a child of wrath. Nevertheless, when we speak of God's being reconciled to his elect, according to the tenor of his secret will, before they believe, that is in effect to say, that justification, as it is an immanent act in God, is antecedent to faith, which is a certain truth, inasmuch as faith is a fruit and con-



sequence thereof: whereas, God does not declare that he is reconciled to us, or give us ground to conclude it; whereby we appear no longer to be children of wrath, till we believe. If this be duly considered, we have no reason to assert, that God is reconcilable, rather than reconciled by the death of Christ, lest we should be thought to maintain the doctrine of justification, or deliverance from wrath, as a declared act, before we believe. And to this we may add, that God was reconcilable to his elect, that is, willing to be reconciled to them before Christ died for them; otherwise he would never have sent him into the world to make reconciliation for the sins of his people: he was reconcilable, and therefore designed to turn from the fierceness of his wrath; and in order thereunto, he appointed Christ to make satisfaction for sin, and procure peace for them.

[3.] There is not the least inconsistency between those scriptures which speak of justification as being an act of God's free grace, and others, which speak of it as being, by faith, founded on Christ's righteousness; or between God's pardoning sin freely, without regard to any thing done by us to procure it; and yet insisting on, and receiving a full satisfaction, as the meritorious and procuring cause of it. This is sometimes objected against what we have advanced in explaining the doctrine of justification, as being, in some respects, an act of justice, and in others, of grace; as though it were inconsistent with itself, and our method of explaining it were liable to an absurdity, which is contrary to reason; as though two contradictory propositions could be both true; namely, that justification should be an act of the strictest justice, without any abatement of the debt demanded, and yet of free grace, without insisting on the payment of the debt: but this seeming contradiction may be easily reconciled, if we consider that the debt was not paid by us in our own persons; which had it been done, it would have been inconsistent with forgiveness's being an act of grace; but by our surety, and in that respect there was no abatement of the debt, nor did he receive a discharge by an act of grace, but was justified as our head or surety, by his own righteousness, or works performed by him; whereas, we are justified by his suretyship-righteousness, without works performed by us; and this surety was provided for us; as has been before observed; and therefore, when we speak of justification, as being an act of grace, we distinguish between the justification of our surety, after he had given full satisfaction for the debt which we had contracted; and this payment's being placed to our account by God's gracious imputation thereof to us, and our obtaining forgiveness as the result thereof, which can be no other than an act of the highest grace.

[4.] From what has been said concerning justification by faith, we infer, the method, order and time, in which God justifies his people. There are some who not only speak of justification before faith, but from eternity; and consider it as an immanent act in God in the same sense as election is said to be. I will not deny eternal justification, provided it be considered as contained in God's secret will, and not made the rule by which we are to determine ourselves to be in a justified state, and as such to have a right and title to eternal life, before it is revealed or apprehended by faith: if we take it in this sense, it is beyond dispute, that justification is not by faith; but inasmuch as the most known, yea, the only sense in which justification is spoken of, as applied to particular persons, is, that it is by faith: therefore, we must suppose,

1st, That it is a declared act. That which is hid in God, and not declared, cannot be said to be applied; and that which is not applied, cannot be the rule by which particular persons may judge of their state. Thus, if we speak of eternal election, and say, That God has peremptorily determined the state of those that shall be saved, that they shall not perish; this is nothing to particular persons, unless they have ground to conclude themselves elected. So if we say that God has, from all eternity, given his elect into Christ's hands; that he has undertaken before the foundation of the world, to redeem them; and that, pursuant hereunto, God promised that he would give eternal life unto them; or, if we consider Christ as having fulfilled what he undertook from all eternity, finished transgression, brought in everlasting righteousness, and fully paid the debt which he undertook; consider him as being discharged, and receiving an acquittance, when raised from the dead; and all this as done in the name of the elect, as their head and representative; and if you farther consider them, as it is often expressed, as virtually justified in him; all this is nothing to them, with respect to their peace and comfort; they have no more a right to claim an interest in this privilege or relation, than if he had not paid a price for them. Therefore, we suppose that justification, as it is the foundation of our claim to eternal life, is a declared act.

2d. If justification be a declared act, there must be some method which God uses, whereby he declares, or makes it known. Now it is certain, that he, no where in scripture, tells an unbeliever that he has an interest in Christ's righteousness, or that his sins are pardoned, or gives him any warrant to take comfort from any such conclusion; but, on the other hand, such an one has no ground to conclude any other, concerning himself, but that he is a child of wrath; for he is to judge of things according to the tenor of God's revealed will. Christ's

righteousness is nothing to him in point of application ; he is guilty of bold presumption if he lays claim to it, or takes comfort from it, as much as he would be were he to say, some are elected, therefore I am. Nevertheless,

3d, When a person believes, he has a right to conclude, that he is justified, or to claim all the privileges that result from it ; and this is what we call justification by faith, which therefore cannot be before faith ; for that which gives a person a right to claim a privilege, must be antecedent to this claim ; or, that which is the foundation of a person's concluding himself to be justified, must be antecedent to his making this conclusion ; and in this respect, all who duly consider what they affirm, must conclude that justification is not before faith.

[5.] From what has been said concerning the office or use of faith in justification, as it is an instrument that applies Christ's righteousness to ourselves, we infer ; that it is more than an evidence of our justification : we do not indeed deny it to be an evidence that we were virtually justified in Christ as our head and representative, when he was raised from the dead, in the same sense as it is an evidence of our eternal election : but this is equally applicable to all other graces, and therefore cannot be a true description of justifying faith. If we are justified by faith, only as it is an evidence of our right to Christ's righteousness, we are as much justified by love, patience, and submission to the divine will, or any other grace that accompanies salvation ; but they who speak of faith as only an evidence, will not say that we are justified by all other graces, in the same sense as we are justified by faith ; and indeed, the scripture gives us no warrant so to do.

[6.] From what has been said concerning faith as giving us a right to claim Christ's righteousness, we infer ; that a person is justified before he has what we call, the faith of assurance ; of which more hereafter : therefore we consider the grace of faith, as justifying or giving us a right to claim Christ's righteousness, whether we have an actual claim or no. This must be allowed, otherwise the loss of this assurance would infer the suspension or loss of our justification, and consequently would render our state as uncertain as our frames, or our peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, as liable to be lost as that peace and joy which we sometimes have in believing, and at other times are destitute of.

[7.] From what has been said concerning justifying faith's being accompanied with all other graces, we infer ; that that faith which is justifying, is also a saving grace, or a grace which accompanies salvation ; but yet there is this difference between saving faith, as we generally call it, and justifying, in that the former respects Christ in all his offices, the latter considers him

only in his Priestly office, or as set forth to be a propitiation for sin. And this leads us to consider the grace of faith in its larger extent, both with respect to its acts and objects, as contained in the former of the answers we are explaining: and therefore,

We are now to consider the nature of faith in general, or of that faith, which, as before explained, we call justifying. There are some things in this grace which are common to it with other graces; particularly, it is styled a saving grace, not as being the cause of our salvation, but as it accompanies, or is connected with it. Again, it is said to be wrought in the heart of a sinner, to distinguish it from other habits of a lower nature, which are acquired by us; and it is said to be wrought by the Spirit and Word of God; by his Spirit, as the principal efficient, who, in order thereunto, exerts his divine power; and by the word, as the instrument which he makes use of. The Word presents to us the object of faith; and it is God's ordinance, in attending to which, he works and excites it.

Moreover, there are several things supposed or contained in this grace of faith, which are common to it, with other graces. As when a believer is said to be first convinced of sin and misery, and of his being unable to recover himself out of the lost condition in which he is, by nature; and the impossibility of his being recovered out of it by any other creature; in all these respects, faith contains in it several things in common with other graces; particularly with conversion, effectual calling, and repentance unto life. These things, therefore, we shall pass over as being considered elsewhere, and confine ourselves to what is peculiar to this grace mentioned in this answer; only some few things may be observed concerning it, as it is styled a saving grace, and wrought in the heart of man, by the Spirit and Word of God; and we shall add some other things, of which we have no particular account in this answer; which may contain a more full explication of this grace: in speaking to which, we shall observe the following method;

I. We shall consider the meaning of the word *faith*, in the more general idea of it.

II. We shall speak particularly concerning the various kinds of *faith*. And,

III. The various objects and acts of saving faith; especially as it assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel, and receives, and rests upon, Christ and his righteousness, held forth therein.

IV. We shall consider it as a grace that accompanies salvation, and wrought in the heart by the power of the Spirit, and instrumentality of the word.

V. We shall consider it as strong or weak, increasing or declining, with the various marks and evidences thereof.

VI. We shall speak of the use of faith in the whole conduct of our lives; as every thing we do in an acceptable manner, is said to be done by it.

VII. We shall shew how it is to be attained or increased, and what are the means conducive thereunto.

I. Concerning the meaning of the word *faith*, in the more general idea thereof. It is either an assent to a truth, founded on sufficient evidence; or a confiding or relying on the word or power of one, who is able and willing to afford us sufficient help or relief.\*

1. As to the former of these, as it contains an assent to a truth proposed and supported by sufficient evidence. This is more especially an act of the understanding; and it is necessary, in order hereunto, that something be discovered to us, as the matter of our belief, which demands or calls for our assent; and that is considered either only as true, or else, as true and good: if it be considered only as true, the faith, or assent that is required thereunto is speculative; but if we consider it not only as true, but good, or, as containing something redounding to our advantage; then the faith resulting from it is practical, and seated partly in the understanding, and partly in the will; or, at least, the will is influenced and inclined to embrace what the understanding not only assents to as true, but proposes to us as that which if enjoyed would tend very much to our advantage.

As to this general description of faith, as an assent to what is reported, founded upon sufficient evidence, we may farther consider; † that it is not in our power to believe a thing, unless the judgment be convinced, and we have ground to conclude it to be true, and accordingly there must be something which has a tendency to give this conviction; and that it is what we call evidence: every thing that is reported is not to be credited; since it has very often no appearance of truth in it: and it is reasonable for the understanding, to demand a proof before it yields an assent; and if it be a matter of report, then we are to consider the nature of the evidence, whether it be

\* This is commonly called *fiducia*, and as such, distinguished from *fides*, by which the former is generally expressed.

† In this respect faith is contra distinguished from science; accordingly we are said to know a thing that is contained in an axiom, that no one, who has the exercise of his understanding, can doubt of, viz. that the whole is greater than the part; or, that a thing cannot be, and not be at the same time, &c. And every thing that is founded on a mathematical demonstration, is included in the word science, to which we may add *ocular demonstration*. Now these things are not properly the object of faith, or the assent we give to the truth hereof, is not founded purely upon evidence, in which respect faith is distinguished from it; for which reason we call it an assent to a truth, founded on evidence.

sufficient, or insufficient to persuade us to believe what is reported; and according to the strength or credibility thereof, we believe, hesitate about it, or utterly reject it. If, according to our present view of things, it may be true or false, we hardly call it the object of faith; we can only say concerning it, that it is probable; if it be, on the other hand, attested by such evidence, as cannot, without scepticism be denied; hence arises what we call certainty, or an assurance of faith, supported by the strongest evidence.

Moreover, according to the nature of the evidence, or testimony, on which it is founded, it is distinguished into human and divine; both of these are contained in the apostle's words, *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater*, 1 John v. 9. As for human testimony, though it may not be termed false, yet it can hardly be deemed any other than fallible, since it cannot be said concerning sinful man, that it is impossible for him to lie or deceive, or be deceived himself; but when we believe a thing on the divine testimony, our faith is infallible: it is as impossible for us to be deceived as it is for God to impart that to us, which is contrary to his infinite holiness and veracity. It is in this latter sense that we consider the word *faith*, when we speak of it as an act of religious worship, or included or supposed in our idea of saving faith; and so we style it a firm assent to every thing that God has revealed as founded on the divine veracity.

Let us now consider faith as it contains an assent to a thing, not only as true, but as good; upon which account we call it a practical assent, first seated in the understanding; and then the will embraces what the understanding discovers to be conducive to our happiness; we first believe the truth of it, and then regulate our conduct agreeably thereunto. As when a criminal hears a report of an act of grace being issued forth by the king, he does not rest in a bare assent to the truth thereof, but puts in his claim to it. Or, as when a merchant is credibly informed, that there are great advantages to be obtained by trading into foreign countries; he receives the report with a design to use all proper methods to partake of the advantage; as our Saviour illustrates it, when he compares *the kingdom of heaven unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought*, Matt. xiii. 45. We have sufficient evidence to support our faith, that there is forgiveness of sin, through the blood of Christ; and that all spiritual blessings are treasured up in him, for the heirs of salvation: in this respect faith does not contain a bare speculative assent to the truth of this proposition; but it excites in us an endeavour to obtain these

blessings in that way which is prescribed by him, who is the giver thereof.

2. Faith may be farther considered, as denoting an act of trust or dependence on him, who is the object thereof. This is very distinct from the former sense of the word: for though it supposes indeed an assent of the understanding to some truth proposed; yet this truth is of such a nature, as that it produces in us a resting or reliance on one who is able, and has expressed a willingness to do us good; and whose promise relating hereto, is such, as we have ground to depend on. This supposes in him, who is the subject thereof, a sense of his own weakness or indigence, and in him that is the object of it, a fitness to be the object of trust, for his attaining relief: thus the sick man depends upon the skill and faithfulness of the physician, and determines to look no farther for help, but relies on his prescriptions, and uses the means that he appoints for the restoring of his health; or, as when a person is assaulted by one who threatens to ruin him, and is able to do it, as being an over-match for him, he has recourse to, and depends on the assistance of one that is able to secure and defend him, and thereby prevent the danger that he feared. Thus Jehoshaphat, when his country was invaded by a great multitude of foreign troops, being apprehensive that he was not able to withstand them; he exercises this faith of reliance on the divine power, when he says, *We have no might against this great company, that come against us; neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee*, 2 Chron. xx. 12. And God is very often, in scripture, represented as the object of trust: so the church says, *I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength*; and elsewhere, *he that walketh in darkness and hath no light*, Isa. xii. 2. that is, knows not which way to turn, is helpless and destitute of all comfort, is encouraged to *trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God*, chap. l. 10. This is truly and properly a divine faith, and accordingly an act of religious worship; and is opposed to a *trusting in man, and making flesh his arm*, Jer. xvii. 5. and it supposes a firm persuasion, that God is able to do all that for us which we stand in need of; and that he has promised that he will do us good, and that he will never fail nor forsake them that repose their trust or confidence in him: with this view the soul relies on his perfections, seeks to him for comfort, and lays the whole stress of his hope of salvation on him, not doubting concerning the event hereof, but concluding himself safe, if he can say, that *the eternal God is his refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*, Deut. xxxiii. 27. This leads us,

II. To consider the various kinds of faith, as mentioned in scripture. Thus we read of a faith that was adapted to that

extraordinary dispensation of providence, in which God was pleased to confirm some great and important truths by miracles; which is therefore styled a faith of miracles. There is also a faith that has no reference to a supernatural event, or confined to any particular age or state of the church, in which miracles are expected, but is founded on the gospel-revelation, which, how much soever it may resemble saving faith, yet falls short of it; and there is a faith which is inseparably connected with salvation.

1. Concerning the faith of miracles. This is what our Saviour intends, when he tells his disciples, *That if they had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, they should say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it should remove; and nothing should be impossible unto them*, Matt. xvii. 20. This is such a faith that many had, who were not in a state of salvation; as is plain from what our Saviour says, *that many will say to him in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? to whom he will profess I never knew you; and his commanding them to depart from him as having wrought iniquity*, chap. vii. 22, 23. And the apostle Paul supposes, that a person might have *all faith*, that is, this kind of faith; *so that he might remove mountains*, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. which is a proverbial expression, denoting, that extraordinary and miraculous events might attend it; and yet, at the same time, be destitute of *charity*, or love to God, and consequently without saving grace; and so appear, in the end, to be *nothing*.

Some have questioned whether this faith of miracles was peculiar to the gospel-dispensation, in the time of our Saviour and the apostles, and so was not required in those who wrought miracles under the Old Testament dispensation; though others suppose, that, from the nature of the thing, it was always necessary that faith should be exercised, when a miracle was wrought; though it is true, we have little or no account of this faith, as exercised by those that wrought miracles before our Saviour's time; and therefore, we cannot so peremptorily determine this matter; but according to the account we have thereof in the New Testament, there were several things necessary to, or included in this faith of miracles.

(1.) Some important article of revealed religion must be proposed to be believed; and in order thereunto, an explicit appeal made to God, in expectation of his immediate interposition in working a miracle for that end: every thing that was the object of faith, was not, indeed, to be proved true by a miracle, but only those things which could not be sufficiently evinced without it, so as to beget a divine faith in those who



were the subjects of conviction. We never read that miracles were wrought to convince the world that there was a God, or a providence; or, to persuade men concerning the truth of those things that might be sufficiently proved by rational arguments: but when there could not be such a proof given without the finger of God being rendered visible by a miracle wrought, then they depended on such an instance of divine condescension; and the people who were to receive conviction, were to expect such an extraordinary event.

(2.) It was necessary that there should be a firm persuasion of the truth of the doctrine, to be confirmed by a miracle in him that wrought it, together with an explicit appeal to it for the conviction of those whose faith was to be confirmed thereby: and sometimes we read, that when miracles were to be wrought in favour of them, who before had a sufficient proof that our Saviour was the Messiah, it was necessary that they should have a strong persuasion concerning this matter, and that he was able to work a miracle; otherwise they had no ground to expect that the miracle should be wrought: in the former instance we read of Christ's disciples working miracles for the conviction of the Jews, and exercising, at the same time, this faith of miracles; and in the latter a general faith was demanded, that our Saviour was the Messiah, before the miracle was wrought; in which sense we are to understand his reply to the man who desired that he would cast the Devil out of his son; *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth*, Mark ix. 23. *q. d.* Thou hast had sufficient conviction that I am the Messiah, by other miracles, and consequently hast no reason to doubt but that I can cast the Devil out of thy son; therefore, if thou hast a strong persuasion of the truth hereof, the thing that thou desirest shall be granted: and elsewhere it is said, *He did not many mighty works because of their unbelief*, Matt. xiii. 58.

(3.) How much soever a person might exercise this strong persuasion, that a miracle should be wrought, which we generally call a faith of miracles; yet I cannot think that this event always ensued without exception. For sometimes God might refuse to work a miracle, that he might hereby cast contempt on some vile persons, who pretended to this faith of miracles; who, though they professed their faith in Christ as the Messiah, yet their conversation contradicted their profession, and therefore God would not put that honour upon them so as to work a miracle at their desire; much less are we to suppose, that he would work a miracle at any one's pleasure, if they were persuaded that he would do so. Again, sometimes God might refuse to exert his divine power, in working a miracle, in judgment, when persons had had sufficient means for their

conviction by other miracles, but believed not. And finally, when the truth of the Christian religion had been sufficiently confirmed by miracles, they were less common; and then we read nothing more of that faith which took its denomination from thence.

2. There is another kind of faith, which has some things in common with saving faith, and is sometimes mistaken for it, but is vastly different from it. This, in some, is called an historical faith; and in others, by reason of the short continuance thereof, a temporary faith. An historical faith is that whereby persons are convinced of the truth of what is revealed in the gospel, though this has very little influence on their conversation: such have right notions of divine things, but do not entertain a suitable regard to them; religion with them is little more than a matter of speculation; they do not doubt concerning any of the important doctrines of the gospel, but are able and ready to defend them by proper arguments: nevertheless, though, in words, they profess their faith in Christ, in works they deny him: such as these the apostle intends when he says; *Thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well: the devils also believe and tremble*, James ii. 19. And he charges them with a vain presumption, in that they expected to be justified hereby; whereas their faith was without works, or those fruits which were necessary to justify, or evince its sincerity; or to prove that it was such a grace as accompanies salvation; and therefore he gives it no better a character than that of a dead faith.

As for that which is called a temporary faith, this differs little from the former, unless we consider it, as having a tendency, in some measure, to excite the affections; and so far to regulate the conversation, as that which is attended with a form of godliness, which continues as long as this comports with, or is subservient to their secular interest: but it is not such a faith as will enable them to pass through fiery trials, or part with all things for Christ's sake, or to rejoice in him, as their portion, when they meet with little but tribulation and persecution, in the world, for the sake of the gospel. This will evidently discover the insincerity thereof; for it will wither like a plant that is without a root: our Saviour speaks of it in the parable, of the *seed that fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth, and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away*; which he explains of him, *who heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of thy word, by and by he is offended*, Matt.

xiii. 5, 6. compared with ver. 20, 21. This parable had a particular relation to the Jews, who heard John the Baptist gladly, rejoicing in his light for a season; and seemed to be convinced, by his doctrine, concerning the Messiah, who was shortly to appear; but when they apprehended that his kingdom, instead of advancing them to great honours in the world, was like to expose them to tribulations and persecutions they were offended in him; and this is also applicable to all those who think themselves something, and are thought so by others, as to the profession they make of Christ and his gospel; but afterwards appear to be nothing, deceiving their own souls. This leads us,

3. To consider faith as a grace that is inseparably connected with salvation, which is called justifying faith, and also a saving grace, in this answer, in which the nature thereof is explained; and what may be farther said concerning it will be considered under the following heads, which we proposed to insist on in the general method before laid down; and therefore we shall proceed,

III. To speak concerning the various objects and acts of saving faith.

1. Concerning its objects. Every thing that is the object thereof, must take its rise from God; for we are now speaking concerning a divine faith; and inasmuch as saving faith supposes and includes in it an assent to the truth of divine revelation, we are bound to believe whatever God has revealed in his word; so that as all scripture is the rule of faith, the matter thereof is the object of faith: and as scripture contains an historical relation of things, these are the objects of faith, and we are to yield an assent to what God reveals, as being of infallible verity. As it is a rule of duty and obedience, we are bound to believe so as to adore the sovereignty of God, commanding to submit to his authority therein, as having a right to give laws to our consciences, and acknowledge ourselves his subjects and servants, under an indispensable obligation to yield the obedience of faith to him: as it contains many great and precious promises, these are the objects of faith, as we are to desire, hope for, and depend on the faithfulness of God for the accomplishment of them; and more particularly considering them as they are all, yea and amen, in Christ to the glory of God. As for the threatnings which relate to the wrath of God, due to sin, and warnings to fence the soul against it, and induce us to abhor and hate it; these are objects of faith, so far as that we must believe and tremble, and see the need we stand in of grace, which we receive by faith to enable us to improve them, that through the virtue of Christ's righteousness we may hope to escape his wrath; and by his

strength be fortified against the prevalency of corruption, that has proved destructive to multitudes.

But the principal object of faith is God in Christ, our great Mediator: (a) thus our Saviour says, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*, John xiv. 1. This is sometimes styled coming to the Father by him; as it is elsewhere said, *No man cometh unto the Father but by me*: or else, coming to him as Mediator immediately, that in him we may obtain whatever he has purchased for us, and thereby may have access to God, as to our reconciled God and Father; and in so doing, obtain eternal life, as he expresses it; *He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst*, chap. vi. 35. Which leads us to consider,

2. Those particular acts of saving faith, in which we have to do with Christ as Mediator, whereby we have access to God, through him: there are several expressions in scripture, by

(a) Truth in the abstract is not the object of faith, but that which is true. The word of God when represented as the object of faith is not to be understood of words and letters, nor even of axioms and propositions, nor is the Divine veracity, though certainly confided in, the object of faith, or that which is assented unto. The promises which the old testament-believers had, and reposed in, were not the objects of faith, but the things which they saw afar off, and which were the ground of their rejoicing. When we are required to believe on Jesus Christ, it is not his human, not his Divine nature, not his person, nor even his mediatorial character which is the object of our faith; for any of these alone could be no ground of confidence of salvation, or hope, much less produce joy in the believer. Every thing essential to our salvation must be considered, as the object of our faith; the mercy of God, the love of Christ, the purpose and the act of offering, and accepting the sacrifice to Justice of our sins, and the warrant to us to fix our hope and trust in this atonement; the firm conviction of the truth of these things may be denominated faith.

Yet this conviction, or free assent of the understanding is not the faith, which accompanies salvation; if we can suppose it possible, that there should not be a corresponding impression made upon the will and affections. *With the heart man believeth unto salvation*. In this expression the heart is not put for the intellectual, but moral powers, and must not be understood as if the will assumed the office, peculiar to the understanding, of judging of evidence; but only that the assent of the understanding must be of such a kind, and to such a degree, as to produce a decisive co-operation of all the powers of the man, both of soul and body, to be saved in the way, and by the means discovered.

Such an effort for salvation supposes the bent, or bias of the mind to be inclined towards God, and his glory. And certain it is, that the work, or act of believing, depends so much upon the moral state of the man, that although he may assent to every article of faith, and desire an interest in the advantages of religion, he never believes with the heart in the sense above mentioned, until this change has been wrought in him. On this account faith may well be denominated the work or gift of God, for he only, according to the scriptures can effect this change.

Yet it is not because there is any defect in the evidence of these important truths; nor because of any natural, that is physical, defect of the intellectual powers of man, that he does not believe the Divine revelation; but because his affections are pre-occupied, and his inclinations directed into another channel, whereby he is unwilling to apply himself unto these truths, and is prejudiced against the holiness, which is required, and the self-denial that is necessary to attain the blessings of salvation.

which these acts of saving faith are set forth, some of which are metaphorical; more particularly it is called a looking to him; thus he is represented, by the prophet, as saying, *Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth*, Isa. xlv. 22. Sometimes by coming to him, pursuant to the invitation he gives, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Mat. xi. 25. which coming is elsewhere explained, as in the scripture before-mentioned, by *believing in him*, John vi. 35. And as we hope for refreshment and comfort in so doing, it is set forth by that, metaphorical expression, of *coming to the waters and buying wine and milk without money and without price*, Isa. lv. 1. that is, receiving from him those blessings which tend to satisfy and exhilarate the soul, which are given to such as have nothing to offer for them; and sometimes it is represented by flying to him; or, as the apostle expresses it, *flying for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us*, Heb. vi. 18. as alluding to that eminent type thereof, contained in the man-slayer's flying to the city of refuge, from the avenger of blood, and therein finding protection and safety: this is a description more especially of faith as justifying; in which respect it is elsewhere described, as *a putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*, Rom. xiii. 14. or the glorious robe of his righteousness, on which account we are said to be *clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness*, Isa. lxi. 10. And when we are enabled to apprehend our interest in him by faith, together with the blessings that are the result hereof, we are said to rejoice in Christ Jesus. There are many other expressions by which this grace is set forth in scripture; but those acts thereof, which we shall more especially consider, are our receiving Christ, giving up ourselves to him, and trusting in, or relying on him.

(1.) Faith is that grace whereby we receive Christ. Thus it is said, *as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*, John i. 12. This contains in it the application of an overture made by him; not barely of something that he has to bestow, which might contribute to our happiness, but of himself. Christ has many things to bestow upon his people; but he first gives himself; that is, he expresses a willingness to be their Prince and Saviour, their Prophet, Priest, and King; that being thus related, and adhering to him, they may be made partakers of his benefits, which are the result thereof; and accordingly the soul, by faith applies itself to him, and embraces the overture. Hereupon he is said to be ours; and, as the consequence thereof, we lay claim to those benefits which he has purchased for us, as our Redeemer. Christ is considered as the first pro-

mised blessing in the covenant of grace; and *with him* God *freely gives* his people *all things* that they stand in need of, which respect their everlasting salvation, Rom. viii. 32.

This supposes the person receiving him to be indigent and destitute of every thing that may tend to make him happy, brought into the greatest straits and difficulties, and standing in need of one who is able to afford relief to him. He has heard in the gospel, that Christ is able to supply his wants; and that he is willing to come and take up his abode with him; accordingly the heart is open to embrace him, esteeming him to be altogether lovely and desirable, beholding that excellency and glory in his person, that renders him the object of his delight, as he is said to be *precious to them that believe*, 1 Pet. ii. 7. looking upon him as God-man Mediator, he concludes, that he is able to save, to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him; and that all the treasures of grace and glory are purchased by him, and given into his hand to apply to those who have an interest in him: he expects to find them all in Christ, as the result of his being made partaker of him; and accordingly he adheres to him by this which is called an appropriating act of faith; whereby he that was before represented in the gospel, as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people, the fountain of all they enjoy or hope for, and by whom they have access to God, as their reconciled God and Father, is applied by the soul, to itself, as the spring of all its present and future comfort and happiness. (a)

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(a) Faith, according to the beloved disciple John, and the great St. Paul, is the *belief of the truth*; the *believing that Jesus is the Christ*; or a giving *credit to the record that God gave of his Son*. These definitions are all of the same import, and are all divine. Being dictated by the Spirit of God, they cannot be contradicted by any, although some have glossed upon them, till they have brought in a sense diverse from the inspired writers. This faith, when it is *real*, as distinguished from that uninfluential assent to the gospel, which crowds, who hear it, profess to have, is an effect of the *divine influence in us*; hence it is said to be *of the operation of God*; and that it is *with the heart* man believeth unto righteousness. As the righteousness by which the sinner is justified, is the sole work of Christ *for him*, so this is the work of the Holy Ghost *in him*, and no less necessary in its proper place; it being that, without which a sinner cannot apprehend, receive, and rest upon Christ for eternal life. By faith, as before observed, he becomes acquainted with the glories of the character of Jesus, the fulness of grace in him, and the suitableness and perfection of his righteousness; in consequence of this faith, he admires the Saviour's personal excellencies, flies to him, ventures all upon him, and rejoices in him. These, to speak plainly, are all so many effects of faith. The sinner must have a view of the Saviour's excellency, *before* he will admire it. He must be persuaded, that Christ is the only safe refuge, *before* he will *fly* to him. He must know that there is in Christ sufficient matter of consolation, *before* he will *rejoice* in him. Of all these he is entirely satisfied *by faith* in the testimony of God: subsequent to which is his *coming*, or *flying* to him, *trusting* in, or *venturing* all upon him, *rejoicing* in him, &c. e. g. Joseph's brethren heard that there was corn enough in Egypt; they believed the report: this was faith; upon this they went down for a supply. Doubtless this was an *effect* of their faith; for had they not believed the

(2.) Another act of faith is giving up ourselves to Christ. As, in the covenant of grace, God says, *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people*, faith builds on this foundation; it first apprehends that he is able and willing to do them good, and make them happy in the enjoyment of himself; and with this encouragement the soul receives him, as has been but now observed; and pursuant hereunto devotes itself to him, as desiring to be amongst the number of his faith-

tidings, they would never have gone. So a sinner must believe that Christ is a full and complete Saviour, before he will run or fly to him. Sense of misery, and faith in his sufficiency, are the main stimulus. Or, I am sick, I hear of an able physician, I believe him to be so, upon which I apply to him: my application to him, and my belief of his character, are as distinct as any two things can be: my trusting my life in his hands, is an effect of my believing him to be an able physician. This distinction is obvious in the sacred writings, as well as in the nature of things. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is.* Here is a manifest distinction between coming and believing.

I apprehend that the same distinction should be observed, between believing in Christ, and receiving him. If so, it will follow, that "to receive Christ in all his offices, as a prophet, a priest, and a king," is not properly faith, but an effect of it, and inseparably connected with it. It is certain that a man must believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that he sustains these offices, before he can or will receive him in this light. Christ came unto his own (meaning the Jews) but his own received him not. This refusing to receive him was not unbelief, but an effect of it. Hence should you be asked, why they did not receive him? The answer is ready, because they did not believe him to be the Christ. Nothing is more plain than that unbelief was the grand cause why they rejected him. On the other hand, nothing is more evident, than that receiving Christ, is an effect of believing in him. And should you ask the man who defines faith, "a receiving Christ in all his offices," why he thus receives him? he himself will be obliged to observe this distinction; for the only just answer he can give you is, "because I believe he sustains them."

Thus we see that faith is entirely distinct from the righteousness which justifies; at the same time it is indispensably necessary, answering great and good purposes. Under its influence the sinner flies to Jesus, the hope set before him, and trusts his immortal interest in his hands, being perfectly satisfied with his adorable character. Faith is also the medium of peace and consolation. You may with equal propriety attempt to separate light and heat from the sun, as peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, from the faith of God's elect. The degree of Christian consolation may be greater or less, according to the strength and influence of faith. At one time the believer may have an inward peace and tranquility, which is exceedingly agreeable. At another time he may be favoured with what St. Paul calls *joy unspeakable and full of glory*. At another, guilt may rob him of his comfort, and separate between him and his God. Such are his exercises in the present state of things. But he is far from making a righteousness of his frames, feelings, or experiences. The distinction between these he well understands. The righteousness by which he expects to be justified, is the work of Christ alone; the faith by which he is enabled to receive it, is of the operation of God; the consolations that he enjoys are from this glorious Christ, in believing, or through faith: all as different as A, B, and C. His dependence for acceptance with God is neither on his faith nor experiences, but on Christ alone. At the same time he cannot conceive it possible, for a poor, wretched, undone sinner to be enabled to believe in Christ for eternal life, and not rejoice. A view of the glories of his person, and the fulness and freeness of his grace, cannot fail of introducing strong consolation.

STILLMAN'S SERMONS.

ful servants and followers. God sanctifies or separates them to himself as the objects of his discriminating grace and love; and they desire, as the consequence hereof, to give up themselves to him. Two things are supposed in this act of self-dedication.

1st, A firm persuasion and acknowledgment of his right to us; not only as the possessor of all things, which he has an undoubted right to as God, as the potter has a right to his clay, the Creator to the work of his hands; but that he has a right to us by purchase, as Mediator, in which respect faith, and in particular, that which we call saving, of which we are now speaking, has more especially an eye to him; *Ye are not your own*, says the apostle, *for ye are bought with a price*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. and therefore this act of faith is an ascribing to him that glory which he lays claim to by right of redemption: and as God has constituted him heir of all things, more especially of those who are called his peculiar treasure: so the believer gives up himself to him. Before this, the matter in dispute was, who is Lord over us? Whether we ought to be at our own disposal or his? Whether it be expedient to serve divers lusts and pleasures, or be subject to him as our supreme Lord and Law-giver? But the soul is thoroughly convinced, by the internal efficacious work of the Spirit, that our great Mediator is made of God, both Lord and Christ; and that no one has a right to stand in competition with him; and that we owe not only what we can do, but even ourselves unto him; and as the result hereof, devotes itself to him by faith.

2d, This also supposes that we are sensible of the many blessings that he has in store for his people; and therefore we give up ourselves to him in hope of his doing all that for us, and working all that grace in us which is necessary to our salvation; but more of this will be insisted on, when we consider him as the object of trust. All that I shall add at present, under this head, is, that having this view of the person of Christ, as one who demands obedience, love and gratitude from us, we give up ourselves entirely, and without reserve, to him: thus the apostle says, *They first gave their own selves to the Lord*, 2 Cor. viii. 5. and exhorts the church to *yield themselves unto God, as those that were alive from the dead*, Rom. vi. 13. and, to *present their bodies*, that is, themselves, and not barely the lower or meaner part of themselves, *a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is their reasonable service*, chap. xii. 1. and as the result hereof, we say by faith, Lord, truly I am thy servant, and desire to be so for ever; work in me what thou requirest, and then command what thou pleasest: I am entirely at thy disposal, do with me as seemeth good in thy



sight; only let all the dispensations of thy providence be instances of thy love, and made subservient to my salvation.

This is represented as our solemn act and deed; whereby, with the most mature deliberation, we make a surrender of ourselves to him: the prophet speaks of it as though it were done by an instrument or deed of conveyance; and our consent to be his, is represented by a giving up our names to him; *One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel, Isa. xliv. 5.* This is done with the highest veneration, as an act of religious worship, and with the greatest humility, as being sensible that we give him nothing more than his own; that he is not profited hereby, but the advantage redounds entirely to us. We do it with judgment; as faith always supposes a conviction of the judgment, it considers those relations which Christ stands in to his people, and endeavours to behave itself in conformity thereunto: we are desirous hereby to give up ourselves to him as a Prophet, to be led and guided by him in the way of salvation; as a Priest, to give us a right to eternal life, as the purchase of his blood; as an Advocate to plead our cause; and as a King to give laws to us, and defend us from the insults of our spiritual enemies, and advance us to those honours which he has laid up for his faithful subjects. We give up ourselves to him to worship him in all his ordinances, in hope of his presence and blessing to attend them, in order to our spiritual and eternal advantage; and we do all this without the least reserve or desire to have any will separate from, or contrary to his.

(3.) Another act of faith consists in a fixed, unshaken trust and reliance upon him. This, as was before observed, is a very common and known acceptation of the word *faith*. As we depend on his promise, as a God that cannot lie, and give up ourselves to him, as one that has a right to us; so we trust him, as one whom we can safely confide in, and lay the whole stress of our salvation upon. This act of faith is more frequently insisted on in scripture than any other, it being a main ingredient in all other graces that accompany salvation; and there is nothing by which God is more glorified: it is not one single perfection of the divine nature that is the object thereof; but every thing which he has made known concerning himself, as conducive to our blessedness; we trust him with all we have, and for all that we want or hope for. This implies in it a sense of our own insufficiency and nothingness, and of his all-sufficient fulness. The former of these is what is sometimes styled a soul emptying act of faith; it is that whereby we see ourselves to be nothing, not only as we cannot be profitable to God, or lay him under any

obligations to us, as those who pretend to merit any good at his hand, but as unable to perform any good action without his assistance; in this respect it says, *surely, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. and there is nothing tends more to humble and abase the soul before him than this.

And hereby we are led to another act, which more immediately contains the formal nature of faith; in which it depends on the all-sufficiency of God, and his faithfulness to supply our wants, and bestow the blessings which he has promised: God the Father is the object of this trust or dependence, as the divine All-sufficiency is glorified, grace imparted, and the promises thereof fulfilled by him, through a Mediator; and Christ is the object thereof, as the soul apprehends him to be full of grace and truth; sees the infinite value of his merit, and his ability to make good all the promises of the covenant of grace, and thereby to render him completely blessed. When we trust Christ with all we have, or hope for, this supposes that there is something valuable which we either enjoy or expect; and that we are in danger of losing it, unless it be maintained by him, who has undertaken to *keep his people by his power through faith unto salvation*, 1 Pet. i. 5. and to perfect what concerns them. We have souls more valuable than the whole world, and we *commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator*, chap. iv. 19. and merciful Redeemer; being assured that *none shall be able to pluck them out of his hand*, John x. 28. and we also commit all the graces which he has wrought in us to him, to maintain and carry on to perfection. And since we are assured, that all the promises are in his hand, and that he has engaged to make them good to us, we are encouraged to trust him for all that we expect, namely, that he will conduct us safely and comfortably through this world; and at last receive us to glory; and in so doing, we have the highest satisfaction; or, as the apostle expresses it, *We know whom we have believed, or trusted, and are persuaded that he is able to keep what we have committed unto him against that day*, 2 Tim. i. 12. or the day of his second coming, when grace shall be consummate in glory.

These acts of faith are generally styled, by divines, *direct*; in which we have more immediately to do with Christ, as our great Mediator, or God the Father in him; and being, properly speaking, acts of religious worship, the object thereof must be a divine person. But there is another sense of the word *faith*; which, as it does not contain in it any act of trust or dependence, as the former does, so it has not God for its immediate object, as that has; and this is what we call the *reflex* act of faith, or the soul's being persuaded that it believes; that those acts of faith which have God or Christ for their object,

are true and genuine. This every one cannot conclude at all times, who is really enabled to put forth those direct acts of faith, that we have been speaking of; and it is the result of self-examination, accompanied with the testimony of the Holy Spirit to his own work.

Some indeed have questioned the propriety of the expression, when this is styled an act of faith; as supposing that nothing can be so called, but what hath a divine person for its object: but we have before considered that faith, in a sense different from that in which we have now explained it, may be conversant about divine things; therefore, as we may be said, by a direct act of faith, to trust in Christ; we may be persuaded, by this reflex act, that we do so: and this is more immediately necessary to assurance, together with that joy and peace which we are said to have in believing. But this we shall have occasion to insist on under a following answer.\*

IV. We are now to consider this grace of faith as that which accompanies salvation, upon which account it is called a *saving grace*; and also, that it is wrought in the heart by the power of the Spirit, and by the instrumentality of the word. We do not suppose that every act of faith denominates a person to be in a state of salvation; for there is a bare assent to the truth of divine revelation, that may, in a proper sense, be styled *faith*; and there may be an external dedication to God, a professed subjection to him, which falls short of that faith which has been before described, as it does not proceed from a renewed nature, or a principle of spiritual life implanted in the soul. There may be a willingness and a desire to be saved, when the heart is not purified by faith; a hearing the word with gladness, rejoicing in the light that is imparted thereby, for a season, and doing many things pursuant thereunto, in some, who shall not be saved: but faith is often-times described as referring to and ending in salvation; thus we are said to *believe to the saving of the soul*, Heb. x. 39. and, to *receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls*, 1 Pet. i. 9. This consists, more especially, in those acts of faith, that contain in them an entire subjection of all the powers and faculties of the soul to Christ, arising from the views which it has of his glory, and its experience of his almighty power, which is not only the way to, but the first fruits of everlasting salvation. This is such a receiving and resting on Christ for salvation, as has been before described.

And this grace is farther said to be wrought in the heart of a sinner, by the Spirit. We have before considered effectual calling, as a work of divine power, and proved, that the Spirit is the author of it; † and that they, who are effectually called,

\* See Quest. LXXX.

† See page 39, ante.

are enabled to accept of, and embrace the grace offered in the gospel; from whence it is evident, that faith is the fruit and consequence of our effectual calling; and therefore it must be a work of the almighty power and grace of the Holy Spirit. And, this it farther appears to be, from that account which we have thereof in several scriptures: thus the apostle Peter, describing those he writes to, as having *obtained like precious faith, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*; and also as having *all things that pertain unto godliness, in which faith is certainly included, he ascribes this to the divine power, 2 Pet. i. 1. compared with the 3rd verse. And elsewhere we read of the exceeding greatness of the power of God exerted in them that believe, Eph. i. 19. And when the work of faith is carried on, or fulfilled in the souls of those in whom it was begun, it is considered as an effect of the same power, 2 Thess. i. 11. And, as all that grace, which is the effect of divine power, is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, when he is said hereby, as acting in subserviency to the Father and Son, to demonstrate his Personal glory: so the work of faith, in this respect, is represented as his work; upon which account he is called the *Spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13.**

But that which we shall more particularly consider is, that this grace of faith is wrought by the instrumentality of the word. We have before observed, that the principle of grace, implanted in regeneration, is the immediate effect of the divine power, without the instrumentality of the word; but when the Spirit works faith, and all other graces, which proceed from that principle, then he makes use of the word: thus the apostle says, *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Rom. x. 17.* As it is necessary, in order to our seeing any object, that the eye be rightly disposed and fitted for sight, and the object presented to it: so there are two things necessary to faith, namely, the soul's being changed, renewed, quickened, and so prepared to act this grace; and the objects being presented to it, about which it is to be conversant; which latter is done by the word of God: so that the soul is first internally disposed to receive what God is pleased to reveal relating to the way of salvation by Jesus Christ before it believes; and this revelation is contained in the gospel, which is adapted to the various acts of faith, as before described.

1. As faith implies a coming to Christ, or receiving him; the word of God reveals him to us as giving an invitation to sinners, encouraging them thereunto; thus our Saviour says, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink, John vii. 37.* And, as a farther inducement to this, it sets forth the advantages that will attend it, to wit, that he will not reject them, how unworthy soever they be; as, he says, *Him that cometh to*

*me, I will in no wise cast out, John vi. 37.* And there are many other privileges which he will bestow on them, namely, the blessings of both worlds, grace here, and glory hereafter, all which contain the very sum and substance of the gospel.

2. If we consider faith as including in it a giving up ourselves to Christ, to be intirely his; the word of God represents him as having an undoubted right to all who do so, inasmuch as they are bought with the price of his blood, given to him as his own, by the Father. And as they devote themselves to him, to be his servants, it sets before them the privileges which attend his service, as they are delivered from the dominion of sin, and a servile fear and dread of his wrath; lets them know the ease, pleasure, and delight that there is in bearing his yoke, and the blessed consequences thereof, in that as they *have their fruit unto holiness, the end thereof shall be life everlasting, Rom. vi. 22.*

3. As faith looks to Christ for forgiveness of sin, in which respect it is called justifying faith; so the word of God represents him to us, as having made atonement for sin; as set forth to be a propitiation to secure us from the guilt which we were liable to, and the condemning sentence of the law; as bearing the curse, and, as the consequence thereof, giving us a right to all the privileges of his children. It also represents this forgiveness as full, free, and irreversible; and the soul, by faith rejoices in its freedom from condemnation, and that right and title to eternal life, which is inseparably connected with it.

4. As faith includes in it a trusting or relying on Christ, the gospel represents him as an all-sufficient Saviour, *able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, Heb. vii. 25.* and as faith trusts him for the accomplishment of all the promises, it considers him as having engaged to make them good, inasmuch as *they are yea and amen in him, unto the glory of God, 2 Cor. i. 20.* And therefore, he runs no risque, or is at no uncertainty as to this matter; for Christ's Mediatorial glory lies at stake. If there be the least failure in the accomplishment of any promise; or any blessing made over to his people in the covenant of grace, which shall not be conferred upon them, he is content to bear the blame for ever: but this is altogether impossible, since he that has undertaken to apply the blessings promised, is faithful and true, as well as the Father that gave them; and this affords them *strong consolation, who are fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel, Heb. vi. 18.* Thus Christ is set forth; and agreeably to this discovery made of him, faith takes up its rest in him, and therein finds safety and peace.

V. We shall now consider faith as strong or weak, increasing or declining, with the various marks and signs thereof. A

habits of sin are stronger or weaker, the same may be said concerning habits of grace. It is one thing for them to be entirely lost; and another thing to be in a declining state: their strength and vigour may be much abated, and their energy frequently interrupted; nevertheless God will maintain the principle of grace, as we shall endeavour to prove under a following answer.\* Grace is not always equally strong and lively; the prophet supposes it to be a declining, when he says, *Revive thy work, O Lord, in the midst of the years*, Heb. iii. 2. and our Saviour's advice to the church at Sardis, implies as much, when he exhorts them *to strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*, Rev. iii. 2. and when he bids the church at Ephesus *to remember from whence they were fallen, and repent and do their first works*, chap. ii. 5. Some are said, as Abraham, *to be strong in faith, giving glory to God*, Rom. iv. 20. and others are reprov'd, as our Saviour does his disciples, at some times, when he says, *O ye of little faith*, Matt. vi. 30. As our natural constitution is not always equally healthy and vigorous, nor our condition in the world equally prosperous, the same may be said concerning the habits of grace; sometimes they are strong, and then, as the apostle says concerning his beloved Gaius, *3 John ver. 2. the soul prospereth*, and we go *from strength to strength*, Psal. lxxxiv. 7. from one degree of grace to another; but, at other times, we are ready to *faint in the day of adversity*, and our *strength is small*, Prov. xxiv. 10. This cannot but be observed by all who are not strangers to themselves, or who take notice of the various frame of spirit, which are visible in those whom they converse with.

But if it be enquir'd; by what marks or evidences we may discern the strength or weakness of faith? though this will more evidently appear from what will be said under a following answer,† when we are led to speak concerning the reason of the imperfection of sanctification in believers; yet we shall not wholly pass it over in this place; and therefore, it may be observed, that the strength or weakness of faith, is to be judg'd of by that degree of esteem and value which the soul has for Christ, and the steadiness, or abatement of its dependence on him. The greater diffidence or distrust we have of self, and the more we see of our own emptiness and nothingness, the stronger is our faith; on the other hand, self-confidence, or relying on our own strength is a certain sign of the weakness thereof.

Again, strong faith is that which carries the soul through difficult duties; as the apostle says, *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13. Whereas weak faith is ready to sink under the discouragements that it meets

\* See Quest. lxxix.

† See Quest. lxxviii.

with; the former is *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*, 1 Cor. v. 58. the latter is like a reed shaken with the wind. Strong faith, as it is said of Job, Job i. 21. blesses God when he strips him of all earthly enjoyments, and rejoices that the soul is *counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*, Acts v. 41. and this carries him above those fears which have a tendency to deject and dishearten him: *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*, Psal. cxii. 7. Whereas, weak faith is borne down, with discouragements; he finds it hard to hold on in the performance of his duty, and sees mountains of difficulties in his way; whereby the soul is ready to conclude, that he shall not be able to get safely to his journey's end. He does not rightly improve the consideration of the almighty power of God, and his faithfulness to his promise, in which he has engaged, that *the righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger*, Job xvii. 9. And when we sustain losses and disappointments in the world, or things go contrary to our expectation, then we are ready to say with the Psalmist, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he, in anger, shut up his tender mercies?* Psal. lxxvii. 9. and sometimes conclude, that we have no interest in the love of God, because the dispensations of his providence are afflictive, and fill us with great uneasiness. In this case fear looks upon every adverse providence, as it were, through a magnifying glass, and apprehends this to be but the beginning of sorrows; for it cannot say with the prophet, *I will trust and not be afraid*, chap. xii. 2. *for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength*, chap. xxvii. 4.

Moreover, the strength or weakness of faith may farther be discerned by our enjoying, or being destitute of communion with God; our conversing with him in ordinances, or being deprived of this privilege. We may conclude our faith to be strong, when we can say as the apostle does, *Our conversation is in heaven*, or we live above: but when, on the other hand, we have too great an anxiety or solicitude about earthly things, and an immoderate love to this present world, this argues the weakness thereof. The difference between these two may also be discerned, by the frame of our spirit in prayer. When faith is strong, the soul has a great degree of boldness or liberty of access to the throne of grace; a greater measure of importunity and fervency, accompanied with an expectation of the blessings prayed for, by a secret and powerful intimation from the Spirit, as a Spirit of grace and supplication; from whence it infers, that he that excites this grace will encourage it, as he *says not to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain*, chap. xlv. 19.

We might also add, in the last place, that strong faith may likewise be discerned, when it is accompanied with an assu-

rance of an interest in Christ's righteousness, and our right and title to eternal life founded thereon, or that God will guide us by his counsel, and afterwards receive us to glory, and a persuasion wrought in the soul by the Spirit, that nothing shall separate us from his love: whereas weak faith is attended with many doubts concerning our interest in Christ; sometimes fearing that our former hope was no other than a delusion, our present experiences not real, the ground we stand on sinks under us; and we are ready to conclude, that we shall one day fall by the hands of our spiritual enemies. When I speak of these doubts and fears, as an instance of weak faith, I do not say that they are ingredients in faith; for they are rather to be considered as a burden, and incumbrance that attends it, so that though there be some good thing in us towards the Lord our God, or a small degree of faith, like a grain of mustard seed, these doubts proceed from the weakness thereof, as opposed to that which is strong, and would denote the soul to be in a happy and flourishing condition; which leads us,

VI. To speak concerning the use of faith in the whole conduct of our lives; as every thing that we do in an acceptable manner, is said to be done by it. It is one thing occasionally to put forth some acts of faith, and another thing to live by faith; which, as it is the most noble and excellent life, so nothing short of it can, properly speaking, be called a good life, how much soever many are styled good livers, who are wholly strangers to this grace. The apostle Paul speaks of this way of living, and considers it as exemplified in himself, when he says, *The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God*, Gal. ii. 20. He speaks of it as his constant work, or that which ran through the whole business of life. Whether we are engaged in civil or religious duties, they are all to be performed by faith. Here we shall consider the life of faith;

1. As it discovers itself in all the common actions of life; in these we act as men: but that faith, which is the principal ingredient in them, and their chief ornament, denotes us to walk as Christians; and this we are said to do,

(1.) When we receive every outward mercy, as the purchase of the blood of Christ, as well as the gift of his grace; and consider it as a blessing bestowed by a covenant-God, who, together with outward things, is pleased to give himself to us; which infinitely enhances the value of the blessing, and induces us to receive it with a proportionable degree of thankfulness.

(2.) When we set loose from all the enjoyments of this world, not taking up our rest in them, as though they were our portion or chief good; and therefore, the esteem and value we



have for them is very much below that which we have for things divine and heavenly. When we use them to the glory of God; and account the best outward enjoyments nothing, if compared with Christ; as the apostle says, *I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ*, Phil. iii. 8. This act of faith will quiet our spirits under afflictions, and induce us to submit to the disposing providence of God; when our best outward enjoyments are removed, or we called to suffer the loss of all things for Christ's sake, or by his sovereign will.

(3.) When all the success which we hope for in our secular employments, is considered as an instance of that care which Christ takes of his people, in which he over-rules and orders all things for his own glory, and their welfare; and therefore, we are persuaded that he will cause whatever we take in hand, to prosper, provided he sees that it is best for us; and if not, we are disposed to acquiesce in his will. This is such an instance of faith as will put us upon doing every thing in the name and to the glory of Christ, and fortify us against any disappointment that may attend our expectation, in every employment wherein we are engaged.

(4.) When outward blessings, instead of proving a snare and temptation, to draw off our hearts from Christ, are a means to bring us nearer to him, so that if our circumstances are easy and comfortable in the world, and we have more frequent opportunities offered to us, to engage in religious duties than others, we are accordingly inclined to embrace them; and when every thing we enjoy, as an instance of distinguishing favour from God, above what many in the world do, excites in us a due sense of gratitude, and an earnest desire and endeavour to use the world to his glory.

(5.) When adverse providences, which sometimes have a tendency to drive the soul from Christ, and occasion repining thoughts, as though the divine distributions were not equal, are made of use to bring us nearer to him, so that whatever we lose in the creature, we look for, and endeavour to find in him. And when, with a submissive spirit, we can say, that he does all things well for us, as we hope and trust that he will make even those things that run counter to our secular interests, subservient to our eternal welfare; and as the result hereof, endeavour to keep up a becoming frame of spirit, in such a condition of life, as has in itself a tendency to cast down the soul, and fill it with great disquietude.

(6.) When we devote and consecrate all we have in the world to God, considering, that as we are not our own, but his; so all we have is his: and when hereupon we are endowed with a public spirit, desirous to approve ourselves blessings

to mankind in general, to the utmost of our power; and when we have done all, not only say with David, *Of thine own we have given thee*, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. but as our Saviour taught his disciples to say, *We are unprofitable servants*.

(7.) The life of faith discovers itself in the government of our affections, namely, as they are kept within due bounds, set upon right objects, and rendered subservient to promote Christ's glory and interest. Hereby are we prevented from setting our affections immoderately on things of this world, when faith shews us that there are far better things to draw them forth, which deserve our highest love: it also prevents our being worldly and carnal, as though we were swallowed up with the things of sense, and had nothing else to mind, and religion were only to be occasionally engaged in; or, as though an holy, humble, self-denying frame of spirit were inconsistent with worldly business. Faith suggests the contrary; puts us upon making religion our great business, and engaging in secular affairs, rather as a necessary avocation from it, than that which is the chief end of living. It also puts us upon glorifying Christ in our secular concerns, as we manage them in such a way as he ordains; and hereby the soul is kept in a spiritual frame, while abiding with God in the calling whereunto he is called. This we attribute more especially to the grace of faith, not only as it is connected with, and (as will be observed under our next head) excites other graces; but as it has its eye constantly fixed on Christ as its object, and by this steers its course, and takes an estimate of the valuableness and importance of all the affairs of this life, by their subserviency to our salvation, and the advancement of his glory therein.

2. Faith discovers itself in the performance of all religious duties, and the exercise of all other graces therein. Thus we read of the prayer of faith, whereby a soul hath access to God as a father, in the name of Christ; firmly relies on the promises which are established in him, and has a liberty to plead with him, and hope of acceptance in his sight. Moreover, when we wait on God to hear what he has to impart to us in his word, faith having experienced some degree of communion with him already, and had some displays of his love, puts the soul upon desiring more, as the Psalmist says, *My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee, to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary*, Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. And whatever other ordinances of divine appointment, we are engaged in, we are hereby encouraged to hope for his presence, and draw nigh unto him herein, with a reverential fear and delight, in him: and it puts us upon the exercise of those graces which are necessary for the right performance of gospel worship in general.

These are not only joined with it, but may be said to be excited thereby; so that faith is, as it were, the principal of all other graces. Thus when the heart is drawn forth in love to Christ, it may be said, that *faith worketh by love*, Gal. v. 6. and when this love is accompanied with *joy unspeakable and full of glory*; this we have in a way of believing, and that which tends to excite the grace of love, is the view that faith takes of Christ's mediatorial glory and excellencies, and the obligations we are under to love him, from his grace of love to us; and this is a strong motive, inducing us to express our love to him, by universal obedience, which is called, *the obedience of faith*, Rom. xvi. 26.

When we exercise the grace of repentance, and thereby hate and turn from all sin, and are, in a peculiar manner, sensible, as we ought to be, of the sin of unbelief; it is faith that gives us this sense thereof, as it is best able to see its own defects. When we confess sin, or humble ourselves before God for it, faith views it not only as a violation of the divine law, but as an instance of the highest ingratitude; and when we desire, in the exercise of repentance, to forsake sin, faith makes us sensible of our own weakness, and puts us upon a firm and steadfast dependence on Christ, to enable us thereunto; and when, in the exercise of this grace, our consciences are burdened with a sense of guilt and unbelief is ready to suggest, that our sins are so heinously aggravated, that there is no room to hope for pardoning mercy, faith relieves us against these despairing thoughts, and encourages us to wait for the mercy of God, who will *abundantly pardon*, Isa. lv. 7. and with whom there is *forgiveness, that he may be feared*, Psal. cxxx. 4.

And when we use endeavours to mortify sin, this is to be done by a fiducial view of Christ crucified; and when we encourage ourselves to hope that the indictment brought against us for it, was nailed to the cross of Christ; and that there is *no condemnation to us*, as being in him, Rom. viii. 1. and that, as the apostle says, *Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed: that henceforth we should no longer serve sin*, chap. vi. 6. all this is to be done by faith.

We might also observe, that the grace of patience is connected with, and we excited, thereunto by faith. The apostle, Heb. vi. 12. joins both these together, as supposing that faith affords a motive to patience; and elsewhere we read, not only of what faith enables us to do, but bear, in the account which we have, of the great things which the Old Testament saints did, and suffered by this grace: and therefore, whatever graces are exercised under the afflictions of this present life; faith excites in us a resignation to the will of God, and consider them as the chastisements of a merciful Father, and

as bringing forth the peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby, chap. xii. 11. and we are encouraged to bear them with such a composed frame of spirit that they seem light, and not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. This, faith has constantly in view, setting one against the other; whereby that which would otherwise be an hindrance to us in our way, is improved, by us, to our spiritual advantage; and we enabled, not only to go on safely, but comfortably, till we arrive at the full fruition of what we now behold at a distance, and rejoice in the fiducial expectation thereof: which leads us to the last thing proposed to be considered, concerning faith, namely,

VII. How it is to be attained or increased, and what are the means conducive thereunto. Though faith, in common with all other graces, be wrought in us by the power of God, yet we are far from asserting, that there is no duty incumbent on us, in the performing whereof, we are to hope and wait for the divine blessing, upon which all the success thereof depends. To deny this would give just occasion to charge the doctrine of efficacious grace, as though it led to security, or licentiousness; which many do without ground. Though grace and duty are very distinct, yet they are not inconsistent with each other; the former is God's work, the latter our act.

As for those duties which are required of us, considered as expecting the divine grace and blessing to attend them; these are, a diligent waiting on God in all his ordinances; looking into the state of our souls, by impartial self-examination; calling to mind our past miscarriages, and what matter of humiliation we have for them in the sight of God, as also, our natural aversion and inability to do what is good; our need of Christ's righteousness, to take away the guilt we have contracted, and of his strength, to subdue our corruptions, and enable us to plead earnestly with him for these privileges.

As for the unregenerate, they must pray and wait on him, for the first grace, and say, with Ephraim, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned*, Jer. xxxi. 18. They must be earnest with him, that he would bestow upon them the grace of faith; which is styled, his gift; that he would remove every thing that is, at present, an obstacle, or hindrance to this grace, all the prejudices which corrupt nature has entertained against Christ, and the way of salvation by him; and that he would shine into their souls, to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ; reveal his arm, and incline them, by the internal working of his power, to receive the grace which is held forth in the gospel. These are duties incumbent on persons who are not called effectually, being destitute of regenerating grace.

But, on the other hand, they who have ground to conclude that they have experienced this grace, though, at present, they apprehend that their faith is weak, and on the decline; they must be found waiting on God, in his own way; and be importunate with him in prayer for the revival of his work, that so they may recover their former experiences; they must bless him for the privileges they once enjoyed, and be humbled for their past backslidings, whereby they have provoked him to withdraw from them, and say with the church, *I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now*, Hos. ii. 7. and, as it says elsewhere, *Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips*, chap. xiv. 2. They must lament the dishonour that they have brought to God; and consider how, by this means, they have grieved the Holy Spirit, wounded their own consciences, and made work for a bitter repentance and humiliation before God. They must be sensible, that it is the same hand which wrought grace in them at first, that must now recover them from their fallen state, and, by exciting the principle of grace implanted, bring them into a lively frame; and when he has done this, they must still depend upon him to maintain this frame of spirit, as considering that as the beginning so the progress of grace, is owing to him who is the author and finisher of faith; who worketh in us that which is pleasing in his sight, and carries on his own work unto perfection.

**QUEST. LXXIV. What is adoption?**

**ANSW.** Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ; whereby all those that are justified, are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.

**I**N speaking to this answer we shall consider,

I. The various senses in which persons are the sons of God; and particularly, how they are so called by adoption.

II. The difference between adoption as used by men, and as it is applied in this answer to God's taking persons into this relation, as his children; from whence it will appear to be an act of his free grace.

III. We shall consider the reference the sonship of believers has to the superior and more glorious Sonship of Jesus Christ: and how it is said to be for his sake.

IV. The privileges conferred on, or reserved for them, who are the sons of God by adoption.

I. We shall consider the various senses in which persons are called the sons of God.

1. Some are called the sons of God, as they are invested with many honours or prerogatives from God, as a branch of his image: thus magistrates are called the *children of the Most High*, Psal. lxxxii. 6.

2. Others are called God's children, by an external federal relation; as members of the visible church; in which sense we are to understand that scripture; wherein it is said, *The sons of God saw the daughters of men*, &c. Gen. vi. 2. And when Moses went into Pharaoh, to demand liberty for the Israelites, he was ordered to say, *Israel is my son, even my first-born*, Exod. iv. 22. This privilege, though it be high and honourable, by which the church is distinguished from the world; yet it is not inseparably connected with salvation; for God says, concerning Israel, when revolting, and backsliding from him, *I have nourished and brought up children; and they have rebelled against me*, Isa. i. 2. and many of those who are called *the children of the kingdom shall be cast into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, Matt. viii. 12.

3. The word is sometimes taken in a more large sense, as applicable to all mankind: thus the prophet says, *Have we not all one father, hath not God created us?* Mal. ii. 10. And the apostle Paul, when disputing with the Athenians, speaks in their own language, and quotes a saying taken from one of their poets, which he applies to the great God, as *giving to all life and breath, and all things*; upon which account men are called his *off-spring*, Acts xvii. 25. compared with 28.

4. They are called the sons of God, who are endowed with his supernatural image, and admitted to the highest honours and privileges conferred upon creatures: thus the angels are called the *sons of God*, Job xxxviii. 7.

5. Our Lord Jesus Christ is called the Son of God, in a sense not applicable to any other; as his Sonship includes in it his deity, and his having, in his human nature, received a commission from the Father, to engage in the great work of our redemption, as becoming surety for us; which is the foundation of all those saving blessings which we enjoy or hope for.

6. Believers are called the sons of God, by a special adoption; which is farther to be considered, as being the subject-matter of this answer. Adoption is a word taken from the civil law; and it was much in use among the Romans, in the apostles time, in which it was a custom for persons, who had no children of their own, and were possessed of an estate, to prevent its being divided or descending to strangers, to make

Choice of such who were agreeable to them, and beloved by them, whom they took into this political relation of children; obliging them to take their name upon them, and to pay respect to them, as though they were their natural parents; and engaging to deal with them as though they had been so; and accordingly to give them a right to their estates, as an inheritance. This new relation, founded in a mutual consent, is a bond of affection; and the privilege arising from thence is, that he who is, in this sense, a father, takes care of, and provides for the person whom he adopts, as though he were his son by nature; and therefore Civilians calls it an act of legitimation, imitating nature, or supplying the place of it: and this leads us to consider,

II. The difference between adoption, as used by men, and as it is applied in this answer, to God's taking persons into this relation, as his children.

1. When men adopt, or take persons into the relation of children, they do it because they are destitute of children of their own to possess their estates; and therefore they fix their love on strangers: but God was under no obligation to do this; for if he designed to manifest his glory to any creatures, the holy angels were subjects capable of receiving the displays thereof; and his own Son, who had all the perfections of the divine nature, was infinitely the object of his delight, and, in all respects, fitted to be as he is styled, *Heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2.

2. When men adopt, they are generally inclined to do it by seeing some excellency or amiableness in the persons whom they fix their love upon. Thus Pharaoh's daughter took up Moses, and nourished him for her own son, because he was *exceeding fair*, Acts vii. 20, 21. or, it may be, she was moved hereunto, by a natural compassion she had for him; besides the motive of his beauty; as it is said, *The babe wept, and she had compassion on him*, Exod. ii. 6. And Mordecai adopted Esther, or took her for his own daughter; *for she was his uncle's daughter, and was fair and beautiful, and an orphan, having neither father nor mother*, Esther ii. 7. But when God takes any into this relation of children, they have no beauty or comeliness, and might justly have been for ever the objects of his abhorrance. Thus he says concerning the church of Israel, when he first took them into this relation to him, *None eye pitied thee, but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person: and when I passed by thee and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live, &c.* Ezek. xvi. 5. It might indeed be said concerning man, when admitted to this favour and privilege, that he was miserable; but misery, how much soever it may ren-

der the soul an object of pity, it could not, properly speaking, be said to be a motive or inducement from whence the divine compassion took its first rise, as appears from the account we have of the mercy of God, as founded only on his sovereign will or pleasure; as he says, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion*, Rom. ix. 15. and also, from the consideration of man's being exposed to misery by sin, which rendered him rather an object of vindictive justice than mercy. This therefore cannot be the ground of God's giving him a right to an inheritance; and consequently adoption is truly said, in this answer, to be an act of the free grace of God.

3. When men adopt, their taking persons into the relation of children, is not necessarily attended with any change of disposition or temper in the persons adopted. A person may be admitted to this privilege, and yet remain the same, in that respect, as he was before: but when God takes his people into the relation of children, he gives them, not only those other privileges which arise from thence, but also that temper and disposition that becomes those who are thus related to him. This leads us to consider,

III. The reference which the sonship of believers has to the superior and more glorious Sonship of Jesus Christ; and how it is said to be for his sake. Here we must suppose that there is a sense in which Christ is said to be the Son of God, as the result of the divine decree, which contains in it an idea very distinct from his being a divine person; for that was not the result of the will of the Father; whereas it is said concerning him, *I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, Psal. ii. 7. And elsewhere, *he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than the angels; and this is the consequence of God's saying to him, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: and, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son*, Heb. i. 4, 5. which plainly refers to Christ as Mediator. Now when we consider this mediatorial Sonship of Christ, if I may so express it, we are far from asserting, that Christ's Sonship, and that of believers, is of the same kind; for, as much as he exceeds them as Mediator, as to the glory of his person and office, so much is his Sonship superior to theirs. This being premised, we may better understand the reference which the sonship of believers has to Christ's being the Son of God as Mediator; and therefore let it be farther considered,\*

1. That it is a prerogative and glory of Christ, as the Son of God, that he has all things which relate to the salvation of his elect, put into his hand; and therefore, whatever the saints enjoy or hope for, which is sometimes called in scripture their

\* Vide Vol. I. page 279, in note.



inheritance, agreeably to their character, as the children of God by adoption; this is considered as first purchased by Christ, and then put into his hand; in which respect it is styled his inheritance, he being constituted, pursuant to his having accomplished the work of redemption, heir of all things; and as such, has not only a right to his people, but is put in possession of all those spiritual blessings in heavenly places, wherewith they are *blessed in him*, Eph. i. 3.

2. From hence it follows, that the sonship of believers, and their right to that inheritance, which God has reserved for them, depends upon the sonship of Christ, which is infinitely more glorious and excellent. As God's adopted sons, they have the honour conferred upon them, of being *made kings and priests* to him, Rev. i. 6. These honours are conferred by Christ; and, in order thereunto, they are first given to him to bestow upon them: thus he says, *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me*, Luke xxii. 29. Christ is first appointed heir of all things, as Mediator; and then his people, or his children, are considered as *heirs of God*, as the apostle expresses it; *and joint heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. Not that they have any share in his personal or mediatorial glory; but when they are styled *joint-heirs* with him, we must consider them as having a right to that inheritance, which he is possessed of in their name as Mediator: and in this sense we are to understand those scriptures that speak of God's being first the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and then, to wit, in him our Father; accordingly he says, *I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God*, John xx. 17. And elsewhere, God is styled *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and then *the Father of mercies*, or, our merciful Father, 2 Cor. i. 3. And elsewhere the apostle says, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself*, Eph. i. 3. compared with 5. and inasmuch as he designed to *bring many sons to glory*, as being *made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*; he first *made the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*, Heb. ii. 10. compared with Col. i. 12. In this respect our right to the inheritance of children, is founded in the eternal purpose of God, relating hereunto, and the purchase of Christ, as having obtained this inheritance for us.

IV. We are now to consider the privileges conferred on, or reserved for them who are the sons of God by adoption. These are summed up in a very comprehensive expression, which contains an amazing display of divine grace; as it is said, *He that overcometh, shall inherit all things; and I will be his God,*

and he shall be my son, Rev. xxi. 7. It is a very large grant that God is pleased to make to them; they shall inherit all things. God is not ashamed to be called their God; and in having him, they are said to possess all things, which are eminently and transcendently in him; they have a right to all the blessings which he had designed for, and which have a tendency to make them completely happy: in this sense we are to understand our Saviour's words in the parable; *Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine*, Luke xv. 31. Nothing greater than this can be desired or enjoyed by creatures, whom the Lord delights to honour. But, that we may be a little more particular in considering the privileges which God confers on, or has reserved for his children, it may be farther observed,

1. That they are all emancipated, or freed from the slavery which they were before under, either to sin or Satan; they who were once the *servants of sin*, are hereby made free from sin, and become the *servants of righteousness*, or become *servants to God*, Rom. vi. 17, 18, 22. *have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life; the Son makes them free; and therefore they are free indeed*, John viii. 36. Before this they are described as *serviug divers lusts and pleasures*, Tit. iii. 3. and are said to be *of their father the devil*, and to *do his works*, or follow his suggestions, John viii. 44. ensnared, and *taken captive by him at his will*, 2 Tim. ii. 26. and, as the consequence hereof, are in perpetual bondage, arising from a dread of the wrath of God, and that *fear of death* impressed on their spirits, by him, who is said to have the *power of death*, Heb. ii. 14. this they are delivered from, which cannot but be reckoned a glorious privilege.

2. They have God's name put upon them, and accordingly are described as *his people called by his name*, 2 Chron. vii. 14. This is an high and honourable character, denoting their relation to him as a peculiar people; and it is what belongs to them alone. Thus the church says, *We are thine; thou never bearest rule over them*, Isa. lxiii. 19. namely, thine adversaries; *they were not called by thy name*. They have also Christ's name put on them, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*, Eph. iii. 15. which not only signifies that propriety which he has in them as Mediator, but their relation to him as the ransomed of the Lord, his sheep, whom he leads and feeds like a shepherd; and they are also styled his children, *Behold I and the children which God hath given me*, Heb. ii. 13. and indeed, when he is called a surety, or an advocate, or said to execute certain offices as a Saviour or Redeemer; these are all relative terms; and whatever he does therein, is in their name, and for their advantage; as it is said, *of him are ye in Christ fe-*

*us, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 31.*

3. They are taken into God's family, and dealt with as members thereof; and accordingly are styled *fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, Eph. ii. 19.* And as the consequence hereof, they have protection, provision, and communion with him.

(1.) They have safe protection; as the master of a family thinks himself obliged to secure and defend from danger, all that are under his roof, whose house is, as it were, their castle; so Christ is his people's defence, concerning whom it is said, *A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, Isa. xxxii. 2.* and, as the consequence hereof, it is added, *My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places, ver. 18. They dwell on high; their place of defence is the munition of rocks, chap. xxxii. 16.* He who has subdued their enemies, and will in his own time, bruise them under their feet, will take care that they shall not meet with that disturbance from them, which may hinder their repose or rest in him, or render their state unsafe, so as to endanger their perishing or falling from it.

(2.) They enjoy the plentiful provisions of God's house, and therefore Christ is called their *shepherd, Psal. xxiii. 1.* not only as leading and defending them, but as providing for them; *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, Isa. xl. 11.* As all grace is treasured up in him, and there is a fulness thereof, which he has to impart to the heirs of salvation, that is sufficient to supply all their wants; so they shall never have a reason to complain that they are straitened in him; the blessings of his house are not only exhilarating, but satisfying, and such as have a tendency to make them completely happy.

(3.) They are admitted to the greatest intimacy, and have sweet communion with Christ; *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, Psal. xxv. 14.* he deals with them as with friends, and in this instance in particular, (as he tells his disciples,) that *all that he has heard of the Father, John xv. 15.* that is, whatever he had a commission to impart for their direction and comfort, he *makes known unto them,* which must needs be reckoned a very great privilege. As the queen of Sheba, when beholding the advantages that they who were in Solomon's presence enjoyed, could not but with an extasy of admiration, say, *Happy are thy men; happy are thy servants, which stand continually before thee, that hear thy wisdom, 1 Kings x. 8.* much more may they be happy who are admitted into his presence, in whom *are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. ii. 3.*

(4.) Another privilege which they enjoy, is access to God, as a reconciled Father, through Christ; they have a liberty to come boldly to the throne of grace, that they obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 18. Whatever their straits and difficulties are, God holds forth his golden sceptre, invites them to come to him, asks, What is thy petition? and gives them ground to hope that it shall be granted, so far as it may redound to his glory and their good. And, inasmuch as they are often straitened in their spirits, and unprepared to draw nigh to him; they have the promise of the Spirit to assist them herein; upon which account he is called the *Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba Father*, Rom. viii. 15. This privilege is said to be a consequence of their being sons; *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father*, Gal. iv. 6. By this means they have becoming conceptions of the Divine Majesty, a reverential fear of, and a love to him, earnest desires of communion with him, and of being made partakers of what he has to impart. They have a right to plead the promises; and in so doing, are encouraged to hope for the blessings contained therein.

(5.) As God's children are prone to backslide from him, and so have need of restoring grace, he will recover and humble them, and thereby prevent their total apostacy: this he sometimes does by afflictions, which the apostle calls fatherly chastisements, and reckons them not only consistent with, but evidences of his love: *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth; and if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons*, Heb. xii. 6, 8, 11. The apostle does not here speak of afflictions as considered absolutely in themselves, but as proceeding from the love of God, the design whereof is to do them good; and as they are adapted to this present state, in which they are training up for the glorious inheritance reserved for them in heaven, and need some trying dispensations, which may put them in mind of that state of perfect blessedness which is laid up for them: and they are rendered subservient to their present and future advantage, as the afflictions of this present time *bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness* to them; and when they are, in the end, perfectly freed from them, will tend to enhance their joy and praise; which leads us to consider another privilege, which is so great that it crowns all those that they are now possessed of, namely,

(6.) They shall, at last, be brought into God's immediate presence, and satisfied with his likeness. The apostle calls the perfect blessedness of the saints, when raised from the dead, and so delivered from the boudage of corruption, and made

partakers of the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, by way of eminency, *the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies*; which signifies not only the full manifestation of their adoption, but their taking possession of their inheritance, which they are now waiting and hoping for, which is too great for the heart of man to conceive of in this present state; for the apostle says, *Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. So that all the blessings which we have, either in hand or hope, the blessings of both worlds, which are conferred upon us from our first conversion to our glorification: these are privileges which God bestows on those who are his adopted children.

From what has been said concerning adoption, we may take occasion to observe, how, in some respects it agrees with, or may indeed, be reckoned a branch of justification, and in other respects it includes in it something that is an ingredient in sanctification. We have before observed, in treating on the former of these, *viz.* justification, that when God forgives sin, he confers on his people a right to life, or to all the blessings of the covenant of grace, in which are contained the promises that belong to the life that now is, and that which is to come. These are the privileges which God's adopted children are made partakers of; and in this respect some divines suppose, that adoption is included in our justification.\*

And if justification be explained, as has been before observed, as denoting an immanent act in God, whereby the elect are considered, in the covenant between the Father and the Son, as in Christ, their federal head; so they are considered as the adopted children of God, in Christ, and accordingly as they are described as chosen in Christ, unto eternal life, they are said to be *predestinated unto the adoption of children*, Eph. i. 6. which is a privilege to be obtained by Jesus Christ: in this respect all the elect are called Christ's *seed, that shall serve him*, Psal. xxii. 30. whom he had a special regard to, when he made his soul an offering for sin, and concerning whom he had this promise made to him in the covenant, that passed between the Father and him, *that he should see them, and the pleasure of the Lord, with respect to their everlasting salvation, should prosper in his hand*, Isa. liii. 10. Now when Christ is considered as the head of the elect, who are in this sense called his sons, whom he has engaged to bring to glory, faith is the fruit and consequence of adoption; accordingly the apostle says, *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 6.

But as justification is a declared act, and is said to be by

\* *Vid. Turrett. Theol. Elenc. Tom. 2. Lec. 15. § 7.*

faith, so adoption agreeing with it, is of the same nature; and accordingly we are said to be the *children of God by faith*, chap. iii. 26. that is, it is by faith that we have a right to claim this relation, together with the privileges which are the result thereof.

Moreover, as adoption includes in it a person's being made meet for the inheritance, which God has reserved for him, and so is endowed with the temper and disposition of his children, consisting in humility, heavenly-mindedness, love to him, dependence upon him, and a zeal for his glory, a likeness to Christ; as the same mind is said to be in us, in some measure as was in him; in this respect adoption agrees with sanctification, which is what we are next to consider.

QUEST. LXXV. *What is sanctification?*

ANSW. Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby they whom God hath, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit, applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man, after the image of God, having the seeds of repentance unto life, and of all other saving graces put into their hearts; and those graces so stirred up, increased and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life.

1. **W**E shall shew what we are to understand by the word *sanctify*. This is sometimes considered as what has God for its object: thus he is said to *sanctify himself*, when he appears in the glory of his holiness, and gives occasion to the world to adore that perfection, which he is sometimes represented as doing, when he punishes sin in a visible and exemplary manner. Thus when God threatens to call for a sword, and plead against a rebellious people, with pestilence and with blood, he is said, by this means, to *magnify and sanctify himself*, so as to be *known*, to wit, as an holy God, *in the eyes of many nations*. And when he fulfils his promises, and thereby advances his holiness, as when he brought his people out of captivity, and gathered them out of the countries, wherein they had been scattered, he is said to be *sanctified in them*, Ezek. xxxviii. 21—23. And he is sanctified by his people, when they give him the glory that is due to his perfection, as thus displayed and magnified by him: thus God's people are said to *sanctify the Lord of hosts*, when they make him the object of their *fear and of their dread*, Isa. viii. 13.

However, this is not the sense in which we are here to understand it, but as applied to men; in which respect it is taken in various senses, namely, for their consecration, or separation unto God; thus our Saviour says, when devoting and applying himself to the work, for which he came into the world; *for their sakes I sanctify myself*, John xvii. 19. But this is not the sense in which it is to be understood in this answer.

Moreover, it is often taken, in scripture, for persons being devoted to God, to minister in holy things: thus Aaron and his sons were *sanctified, that they might minister unto him in the priest's office*, Exod. xxviii. 41. And it is sometimes taken for an external federal dedication to God, to walk before him as a peculiar people in observance of his holy institutions. Thus when Israel consented to be God's people they are styled, *holiness unto the Lord*, Jer. ii. 3. *the holy seed*, Ezra ix. 2. and *an holy nation*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And the church, under the gospel-dispensation, as consecrated, and professing subjection, to Christ, or separated to his service, and waiting for his presence, while engaged in all those ordinances, which he has appointed in the gospel, is described as *called to be saints*, Rom. i. 7. and they are hereby related to him, in an external and visible way. Neither is this the sense in which the word is taken in this answer; in which we are to understand sanctification as a special discriminating grace, whereby persons are not barely externally, but really devoted to Christ by faith: it is the internal beauty of the soul, whereby all the faculties being renewed, and a powerful, effectual change wrought therein; they are enabled to turn from sin unto God, and exercise all those graces, whereby they *walk in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their lives*, Luke i. 75. till this work, which is gradually carried on here, shall be brought to perfection hereafter.

2. It may farther be observed, that sanctification as described in this answer, may be considered as including in it several other graces, some of which have been already insisted on, namely, regeneration, effectual calling, and faith; and there is another grace connected with it, which will be particularly insisted on under the next answer, namely, repentance unto life; all which graces are said to be wrought by the powerful operation of the Spirit, in those who were, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy. Regeneration is styled, by some, initial sanctification, as all graces take their first rise from the principle which is therein implanted. Effectual calling, or conversion, is that whereby we are brought into the way of holiness, and internally disposed to walk therein. Faith is that grace whereby this work is promoted, as all holy actions proceed from it, as deriving strength from Christ, to perform them.

And repentance is that whereby the work of sanctification discovers itself, in the soul's abhorring, and flying from, every thing that tends to defile it; approves itself to God as one, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity without the greatest detestation. But inasmuch as these graces either have been, or will be particularly insisted on, in their proper place, we shall more especially consider sanctification as a progressive work, whereby it is distinguished from them, by which we daily consecrate, or devote ourselves to God; and our actions have all a tendency to advance his glory; and, by the Spirit, we are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness; so that it is not barely one single act of grace, but it contains in it the whole progress of the work of grace, as gradually carried on till perfected in glory: this is what we are to speak particularly to. And,

I. It includes in it a continual devotedness to God. As the first act of faith consists in a making a surrender of ourselves to Christ, depending on his assistance in beginning the work of obedience in the exercise of all Christian graces; so sanctification is the continuance thereof. When we are first converted, we receive Christ Jesus the Lord; and in sanctification we walk in him, and exercise a daily dependence on him in the execution of all his offices; make his word our rule, and delight in it after the inward man. How difficult soever the duties are that he commands, we take pleasure in the performance of them, make religion our great business, and in order thereunto conclude, that every thing we receive from him is to be improved to his glory. And as every duty is to be performed by faith; so what has been before observed concerning the life of faith, is to be considered as an expedient to promote the work of sanctification.

II. In the carrying on of this work we are to endeavour, to our utmost, to fence against the prevailing power of sin, by all those methods which are prescribed in the gospel, that so it may not have dominion over us; this is generally stiled the work of mortification. The apostle speaks of *our old man being crucified with Christ, and the body of sin destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin*, Rom. vi. 6. and of our *crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, and of our mortifying the deeds of the body through the Spirit*, Gal. v. 24. that is, by his assistance and grace, which is necessary in order thereunto, Rom. viii. 13.

This is a very difficult work, especially considering the prevalence of corruption, and the multitude of temptations that we are exposed to; the subtilty and watchfulness of Satan, who walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; the treachery of our own hearts, that are so prone to



depart from God; the fickleness and instability of our resolutions; the irregularity of our affections, and the constant efforts made by corrupt nature, to gain the ascendant over them, and turn them aside from God: this it does sometimes by presenting things in a false view, calling evil good, and good evil; representing some things as harmless and not displeasing to God, that are most pernicious and offensive, endeavouring to lead us into mistakes, as to the matter of sin or duty, and to persuade us, that those things will issue well which are like to prove bitterness in the end; and attempting to impose upon us, as though we were in a right and safe way, when, at the same time, we are walking contrary to God, and corrupt nature is gaining strength thereby. But this will be farther considered, when we speak concerning the imperfection of sanctification in believers\*. Now this renders it necessary for us to make use of those methods which God has prescribed for the mortification of sin; and in order thereunto,

1. We must endeavour to maintain a constant sense of the heinous nature of sin, as it is contrary to the holiness of God, a stain that cannot be washed away, but by the blood of Jesus, the highest instance of ingratitude for all the benefits which we have received, a bitter and an only evil, the abominable thing that God hates; it is not only to be considered as condemning, but defiling, that hereby we may maintain a constant abhorrence of it; and that not only of those sins that expose us to scorn and reproach in the eye of the world, but every thing that is in itself sinful, as contrary to the law of God.

2. We must be watchful against the breakings forth of corrupt nature, observe the frame and disposition of our spirits, and the deceitfulness of sin, which has a tendency to harden us, and avoid all occasions of, or incentives to it, *hating even the garment spotted by the flesh*, Jude, ver. 23. *abstaining from all appearance of evil*, 2 Thess. v. 22. And to this we may add, that we are frequently to examine ourselves with respect to our behaviour in every state of life; whether sin be gaining or losing ground in us; whether we make conscience of performing every duty, both personal and relative? what guilt we contract by sins of omission, or the want of that fervency of spirit which has a tendency to beget a formal, dead, and stupid frame and temper of mind, and thereby hinder the progress of the work of sanctification? but that which is the principal, if not the only expedient that will prove effectual for the mortifying of sin is, our seeking help against it from him who is able to give us the victory over it. Therefore,

3. Whatever attempts we use against the prevailing power of sin, in order to the mortifying of it, these must be perform-

\* See Quest. lxxviii.

ed by faith ; seeking and deriving that help from Christ, which is necessary in order thereunto. And therefore,

(1.) As the dominion of sin consists in its rendering us guilty in the sight of God, whereby the conscience is burdened, by reason of the dread that it has of that punishment which is due to us, and the condemning sentence of the law, which we are liable to ; and as its mortification, in this respect, consists in our deliverance from that which makes us so uneasy, no expedient can be used to mortify it, but our looking by faith to Christ, as a propitiation for sin, whereby we are enabled to behold the debt which we had contracted, cancelled, the indictment superseded, and the condemning sentence repealed ; from whence the soul concludes, that iniquity shall not be its ruin. This is the only method we are to take when oppressed with a sense of the guilt of sin, which is daily committed by us. It was shadowed forth by the Israelites looking to the brazen serpent, a type of Christ crucified, when stung with fiery serpents, which occasioned exquisite pain, and would, without this expedient, have brought immediate death : thus the deadly wound of sin is healed by the sovereign balm of Christ's blood, applied by faith ; and we, by his having fulfilled the law, may be said to be dead to it, as freed from the curse thereof, and all the sad consequences that would ensue thereupon.

(2.) As sin is said to have dominion over us, in that all the powers and faculties of our souls are enslaved by it, whereby, as the apostle expresses it, *we are carnal, sold under sin*, Rom. vii. 14. when we are weak and unable to perform what is good, and the corruption of nature is so predominant, that we are, as it were, carried down the stream, which we strive against, but in vain : in this respect sin is to be mortified, by a fiducial application to Christ, for help against it ; and herein we are to consider him as having undertaken, not only to deliver from the condemning, but the prevailing power of sin ; which is a part of the work that he is now engaged in, wherein he applies the redemption he purchased, by the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, and the soul seeks to him for them. As it is natural for us, when we are in imminent danger of present ruin, or are assaulted by an enemy, whose superior force we are not able to withstand, to cry out to some kind friend, for help ; or when we are in danger of death, by some disease which nature is ready to sink under, to apply ourselves to the physician for relief : thus the soul is to apply itself to Christ for strength against the prevailing power of indwelling sin, and grace to make him more than a conqueror over it ; and Christ, by his Spirit, in this respect, enables us (to use the apostle's words,) *to mortify the deeds of body*, Rom. viii. 13.

And, in order hereunto, we take encouragement, from the promises of God; and the connexion that there is between Christ's having made satisfaction for sin, and his delivering those who are redeemed, from the power of it, as the apostle says, *Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law*, that is, under the condemning sentence of it, but *under grace*, chap. vi. 14. as having an interest in that grace which has engaged to deliver from sin: in both these respects we consider Christ not only as able, but as having undertaken to deliver his people from all their spiritual enemies, to relieve them in all their straits and exigences, and to bring them off safe and victorious. This is the method which we are to take to mortify sin; and it is a never-failing remedy. What was before observed, under the foregoing heads, concerning our endeavouring to see the evil of sin, and exercising that watchfulness against the occasions thereof, are necessary duties, without which sin will gain strength: nevertheless the victory over it is principally owing to our deriving righteousness and strength, by faith, from Christ; whereby he has the glory of a conqueror over it, and we have the advantage of receiving this privilege as applying ourselves to, and relying on him for it.

Having considered the way in which sin is to be mortified, agreeably to the gospel-rule; we shall, before we close this head, take notice of some other methods which many rest in, thinking thereby to free themselves from the dominion of sin, which will not answer that end. Some have no other notion of sin, but as it discovers itself in those gross enormities which are matter of public scandal or reproach in the eye of the world, who do not duly consider the spirituality of the law of God; such-like sentiments of moral evil, the apostle Paul had, before his conversion, as he says, *I was alive without the law once*, chap. vii. 9. compared with 7. and *I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet*. Sin did not appear to be sin, ver. 13. that is, nothing was thought sin by him, but that which was openly scandalous, and deemed so by universal consent; and therefore he says elsewhere, that *touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless*, Phil. iii. 6. or, as Ephraim is represented, saying, *In all my labour they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin*, Hos. xii. 8. These persons think they shall come off well, if they can say, that they are not guilty of some enormous crimes; so that none can charge them with those open debaucheries, or other sins, that are not to be mentioned among Christians; or if, through any change in their condition of life, or being delivered from those temptations that gave occasion to them; or if their natural temper be less inclined to them than before, and, as the result

hereof, they abstain from them, this they call a mortifying of sin; though the most that can be said of it is, that sin is only curbed, confined, and their natural inclinations to it abated, while it is far from being dead.

Others, who will allow that sin is of a far larger extent, and includes in it that which prevails in the heart, as well as renders itself visible in the life, or contains in it the omission of duties, as well as the actual commission of known sins; these often take a preposterous method to mortify it: if they are sensible of the guilt that is contracted hereby, they use no other method to be discharged from it, but by pretending to make atonement, either by confessing their sins, using endeavours to abstain from them, or by the performance of some duties of religion, by which they think to make God amend for the injuries they have offered to him thereby: but this is so far from mortifying sin, that it increases the guilt thereof, and causes it to take deeper root, and afterwards to break forth in a greater degree; or else tends to stupify the conscience, after which they go on in a way of sin, with carnal security, and without remorse.

Others think, that to mortify sin, is nothing else but to subdue and keep under their passions, at least, to such a degree that they may not, through the irregularity and impetuous violence thereof, commit those sins which they cannot but reflect upon with shame, when brought into a more calm and considerate temper of mind; and, in order thereunto, they subject themselves to certain rules, which the light of nature will suggest, and the wiser Heathen have laid down to induce persons to lead a virtuous life; and they argue thus with themselves, that it is below the dignity of the human nature, for men to suffer their passions to lead their reason captive, or to do that which betrays a want of wisdom as well as temper; and if by this means the exorbitancy of their passions is abated, and many sins, which are occasioned thereby, prevented, they conclude their lives to be unblemished, and sin subdued; whereas this is nothing else but restraining the fury of their temper, or giving a check to some sins, while sin in general remains unmortified.

As to the methods prescribed by some Popish casuists, of emaciating, or keeping under the body by physic, or a sparing diet, and submitting to hard penances, not only to atone for past sins, but prevent them for the future, these have not a tendency to strike at the root of sin, and therefore are unjustly called a mortifying of it. For though an abstemious regular way of living be conducive to answer some valuable ends, and without it men are led to the commission of many sins; yet this is no expedient to take away the guilt thereof; neither is the ensla-

ving, captivating, and prevailing power of indwelling sin, that discovers itself in various shapes, and attends every condition and circumstance of life, sufficiently subdued hereby.

And those common methods that many others take, which are of a different nature, namely, when they resolve, though in their own strength, to break off their sins by repentance; or, if their resolutions to lead a virtuous life are weak, and not much regarded by them, endeavour to strengthen them, this will not answer their end, sin will be too strong for all their resolutions, and the engagements with which they bind themselves, will be like the cords with which Sampson was bound, which were broken by him like threads. If we rely on our own strength, how much soever we may be resolved to abstain from sin at present, God will make us sensible of our weakness, by leaving us to ourselves; and then, how much soever we resolve to abstain from sin, it will appear that it is far from being mortified, or subdued by us. Therefore we conclude, that this cannot be performed, but by going forth in the name and strength of Christ, who is able to keep us from falling; or, when fallen, to recover us: and this will be found, in the end, to be the best expedient for the promoting this branch of our sanctification; which leads us to consider,

III. That, in the farther carrying on of this work of sanctification, we are enabled to walk with God, or before him, in holiness and righteousness. We are first made alive in regeneration, and then put forth living actions, which some call vivification, as distinguished from that part of sanctification, which has been already considered, namely, mortification of sin.

This is what we may call leading an holy life, whereby we are to understand much more than many do, who suppose, that it consists only in the performance of some moral duties, that contain the external part of religion, without which there would not be the least shadow of holiness; and in performing those duties which we owe to men in the various relations which we stand in to them; or, at least, in keeping ourselves clear from those *pollutions which are in the world through lust*, 2 Pet. i. 4. The Pharisee, in the gospel, thought himself an extraordinary holy person, because he was no extortioner, nor unjust, nor adulterer; but fasted, paid tithes, and performed several works of charity; and many are great pretenders to it, who have no other than a form of godliness, without the power of it, or who are more than ordinarily diligent in their attendance on the ordinances of God's appointment; though they are far from doing this in a right way, like those whom the prophet speaks of, who are said to *seek God daily, and to delight to know his ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the*

*ordinance of their God; though at the same time, they are said to fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness, Isa. lviii. 2.* But, that we may consider several other things, which are contained in a person's leading an holy life, let it be observed,

1. That our natures must be changed, and therefore sanctification always supposes and flows from regeneration: there must be grace in the heart, or else it can never discover itself in the life; the root must be good, or else the tree cannot bring forth good fruit; the spring of action must be cleansed, otherwise the actions themselves will be impure. Some persons, who are generally strangers to the internal work of grace, are very apt to insist much on the goodness of their hearts, and this is sometimes pleaded in excuse for the badness of their lives; whereas they never had a due sense of the plague and perverseness of their own hearts: Good actions must proceed from a good principle, otherwise persons are in an *unsanctified* state; and, as they must be conformable to the rule laid down in the word of God, and performed in a right manner, and to the glory of God as to the end designed thereby; so they must be performed by faith, whereby we depend on Christ for assistance and acceptance, as being sensible of our constant work and business, whereby we are said to walk with God, as well as live to him.

2. In order to our leading an holy life, we must make use of those motives and inducements thereunto, that are contained in the gospel; and to encourage us herein,

(1.) We are to have in our view that perfect pattern of holiness which Christ has given us; he has *left us an example that we should follow his steps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Whatever we find in the life of Christ, prescribed for our imitation, should be improved to promote the work of sanctification; his humility, meekness, patience, submission to the divine will, his zeal for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, and his unfainting perseverance in pursuing the end for which he came into the world, are all mentioned, in scripture, not barely that we should yield an assent to the account we have thereof in the gospel history; but that the *same mind should be in us, which was also in him*, Phil. ii. 5. or, as the apostle says, *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked*, 1 John ii. 6. And to this we may add, that we ought to set before us the example of others, and be followers of them, so far as they followed him: their example, indeed, is as much inferior to Christ's as imperfect holiness is to that which is perfect; but yet it is an encouragement to us, that in following the footsteps of the flock, we have many bright examples of those, who through faith and patience, inherit the promises.

(2.) Another motive to holiness is the love of Christ, expressed in the great work of our redemption, and in that care and compassion which he has extended towards us in the application thereof, in all the methods he has used in the beginning and carrying on the work of grace, in which we may say, hitherto he hath helped us: this ought to be improved so as to constrain us, 2 Cor. v. 14. as he has hereby laid us under the highest obligation to live to him. And as love to Christ is the main ingredient in sanctification; so when by faith we behold him as the most engaging and desirable object, this will afford a constant inducement to holiness.

(3.) Another motive hereunto is our relation to God, as his children, and our professed subjection to him; as we gave up ourselves to him, when first we believed, avouched him to be our God, and, since then, have experienced many instances of his condescending goodness and faithfulness; as he has been pleased to grant us some degrees of communion with him, through Christ; and as he has given us many great and precious promises, and in various instances, made them good to us; and has reserved an inheritance for all that are sanctified in that better world, to which they shall be brought at last: this should induce us to lead a life of holiness, as the apostle says, *Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,* chap. vii. 1.

From what has been said in explaining the doctrine of sanctification, we may infer,

[1.] The difference that there is between moral virtue, so far as it may be attained by the light of nature, and the improvement of human reason; and that holiness of heart and life, which contains in it all Christian virtues, and is inseparably connected with salvation. All who are conversant in the writings of some of the Heathen moralists will find a great many things that tend to regulate the conduct of life; and those precepts laid down, which, if followed, carry in them a great resemblance of the grace of sanctification; and herein some, who have been destitute of the light of the gospel, have very much excelled many who bear the Christian name: when we find a lively representation of the universal corruption and degeneracy of human nature, the disorder and irregularity of the affections, and man's natural propensity to vice, rules laid down for the attaining of virtue, by which means men are directed how to free themselves from that slavery which they are under to their lusts, and advice given to press after a resemblance and conformity to God; this carried in it a great shew of holiness.

A late writer\* has collected together several passages out of their writings, with a design to prove, that though they were destitute of gospel-light, yet they might attain salvation; inasmuch as they use many expressions that very much resemble the grace of sanctification: as for instance, when one of them speaking concerning contentment in the station of life in which providence had fixed him, says, "A servant of God should not be solicitous for the morrow. Can any good man fear that he should want food? Doth God so neglect his servants, and his witnesses, as that they should be destitute of his care and providence? And he adds, Did I ever, Lord, accuse thee, or complain of thy government? Was I not always willing to be sick when it was thy pleasure that I should be so? Did I ever, desire to be what thou wouldest not have me to be? Am I not always ready to do what thou commandest? Wilt thou have me to continue here, I will freely do as thou wilt? Or, wouldest thou have me depart hence, I will freely do it at thy command? I have always had my will subject to that of God; deal with me according to thy pleasure; I am always of the same mind with thee; I refuse nothing which thou art pleased to lay upon me; lead me whither thou wilt; clothe me as thou pleasest; I will be a magistrate or private person; continue me in my country, or in exile, I will not only submit to, but defend thy proceedings in all things." We might also produce quotations out of other writings whereby it appears that some of the heathen excelled many Christians in the consistency of their sentiments about religious matters, with the divine perfections; as when they say, Whatever endowment of the mind has a tendency to make a man truly great and excellent; this is owing to an internal divine influence.† Others, speaking of the natural propensity which there is in man to vice, have maintained, that to fence against it, there is a necessity of their having assistance from God, in order to their leading a virtuous life; and that virtue is not attained by instruction, that is, not only by that means, but that it is from God; and that this is to be sought for at his hands, by faith and prayer: much to this purpose may be seen in the writings of Plato, Maximus Tyrius, Hierocles, and several others.‡

The principal use that I would make hereof is, to observe that this should humble many Christians, who are far from coming up to the Heathen in the practice of moral virtue. And,

\* See *Whitby's Disc. &c.* page 541, in which he quotes *Arrian*, as giving the sense of *Epictetus*, *Lib. 1. cap. 9. Lib. 3. cap. 5, 24, 26, 36, &c.*

† *Vid. Cic. de natura Deorum, Lib. 2. Nullus unquam vir magnus fuit, sine aliquo afflatu divino.*

‡ See *Gale's court of the Gentiles. Book 3. chap. 1. and chap. 10. and Wits. de Oecon. Fœd. 461—463.*



as for the sentiments of those who deny the necessity of our having the divine influence in order to our performing the duties which God requires of us, in a right manner; these fall very short of what the light of nature has suggested to those who have duly attended to it, though destitute of divine revelation. When I meet with such expressions, and many other divine things, in the writings of Plato; and what he says of the conversation of his master Socrates, both in his life and death: I cannot but apply in this case, what our Saviour says to the scribe in the gospel, who answered him discreetly, *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God*, Mark xii. 34. These things, it is true, very much resemble the grace of sanctification; yet in many respects, they fall short of it; inasmuch as they had no acts of faith, in a Mediator, whom they were altogether strangers to, as being destitute of divine revelation.

It is not my design, at present, to enquire, whether they had any hope of salvation? this having been considered under a foregoing answer\*. All that I shall here observe is, that some of the best of them were charged with notorious crimes, which a Christian would hardly reckon consistent with the truth of grace; as Plato, with flattering of tyrants, and too much indulging pride and luxury†; Socrates, with pleading for fornication and incest, and practising sodomy, if what some have reported concerning them be true‡. But, without laying any stress on the character of particular persons, who, in other respects, have said and done many excellent things; it is evident, that whatever appearance of holiness there may be in the writings or conversation of those that are strangers to Christ and his gospel, this falls short of the grace of sanctification. (a)

\* See Vol. II. page 489. & seq. † Vid. G. J. Voss. de Hist. Græc. page 22.

‡ See Gale's court of the Gentiles, Part III. book 1, chap. 1, 2. which learned writer having, in some other parts of that work, mentioned several things that were praise worthy, in some of the philosophers, here takes occasion to speak of some other things, which were great blemishes in them: and, in other parts of this elaborate work, proves that those who lived in the first ages of the church, and were attached to their philosophy, were by this means, as he supposes, led aside from many great and important truths of the gospel; of this number Origen, Justin Martyr, and several others. And he further supposes, that what many of them advanced concerning the liberty of man's will, as to what respects spiritual things, gave occasion to the Pelagians to propagate those doctrines that were subversive of the grace of God; and that the Arian and Samosatenean heresies took their rise from hence. See Part III. Book 2. chap. 1.

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(a) The natural knowledge of God and his goodness, gives some encouragement to guilty creatures to repent of their sins, and to return to God by a general hope of acceptance, though they had no promise of pardoning grace. And this was the very principle upon which some of the better sort of the Gentiles set themselves to practise virtue, to worship God, and endeavour to become like him.

There is a vast difference between recommending or practising moral virtues, as agreeable to the nature of man, and the dictates of reason; and a person's being led in that way of holiness, which our Saviour has prescribed in the gospel. This takes its rise from a change of nature, wrought in regeneration, is excited by gospel-motives, encouraged by the promises thereof, and proceeds from the grace of faith, without which, all pretensions to holiness are vain and defective. What advances soever these may have made in endeavouring to free themselves from the slavery of sin, they have been very deficient, as to the mortification thereof; for being ignorant of that great atonement which is made by Christ, as the only expedient to take away the guilt of sin, they could not, by any method, arrive to a conscience void of offence, or any degree of hope concerning the forgiveness thereof, and the way of acceptance in the sight of God: and their using endeavours to stop the current of vice, and to subdue their inordinate affections, could

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I do not say, that natural religion can give sinful men a full and satisfying assurance of pardon upon their repentance; for the deepest degrees of penitence cannot oblige a prince to forgive the criminal; but still the overflowing goodness of God, his patience and long-suffering, notwithstanding their sins, may evidently and justly excite in their hearts some hope of forgiving grace: and I think the words of my text cannot intend less than this, that God has not left them without witness, when he gave them rain from heaven, when he satisfied their appetites with food, and filled their hearts with gladness. What was it that these benefits of their Creator bore witness to? Was it not that there was goodness and mercy to be found with him, if they would return to their duty, and abandon their own ways of idolatry and vice. Surely, it can never be supposed, that the apostle here means no more than to say, that the daily instances of divine bounty in the common comforts of life, assured them, that God had some goodness in him, and blessings to bestow on their bodies; but gave them no hope of his acceptance of their souls, if they should return and repent never so sincerely. The Ninevites themselves, when threatened with destruction, repented in sackcloth and ashes; for, said they, Who can tell but God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? Nor were they mistaken in their hope, for God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and he repented of the evil that he had threatened, Jonah iii. 5—10. And there is yet a more express text to this purpose, Rom. ii. 4. Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? And if God leads us to repentance, by a sense of his goodness, surely he gives hope that our repentance shall not be in vain: and though, perhaps, I could not affirm it with boldness, and certainty by the mere light of reason, yet I may venture to declare, upon the encouragement of these scriptures, that if there should be found any sinner in the heathen world, who should be thus far wrought upon by a sense of the goodness of God, as to be led sincerely to repent of sin, and seek after mercy, God would find a way to make a discovery of so much of the gospel, as was necessary for him to know, rather than such a penitent sinner should be left under condemnation, or that a guilty creature should go on to eternal death in the way of repentance. Cornelius the Centurion, who feared God, who prayed to him daily, and wrought righteousness, according to the light of his conscience, had both an angel and an apostle sent to him, that he might receive more complete instruction in the matters of his salvation. Acts x. 1—6. and from 30—35."

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not be effectual to answer that end, inasmuch as they were destitute of the Spirit of God, who affords his divine assistance, in order thereunto, in no other way than what is prescribed in the gospel; so that as *without holiness no one shall see the Lord*, this grace is to be expected in that way which God has prescribed; and every one that is holy is made so by the Spirit, who glorifies himself in rendering men fruitful in every good work, being raised by him, from the death of sin, to the life of faith in Christ; which is a blessing peculiar to the gospel.

[2.] Since holiness is required of all persons, as what is absolutely necessary to salvation, and is also recommended as that which God works, in those in whom the gospel is made effectual thereunto; we may infer, that no gospel-doctrine has the least tendency to lead to licentiousness. The grace of God may indeed be abused; and men, who are strangers to it, take occasion from the abounding thereof, to continue in sin, as some did in the apostle's days, Rom. vi. 1. but this is not the genuine tendency of the gospel, which is to lead men to holiness. Whatever duties it engages to, they are all designed to answer this end; and whatever privileges are contained therein, they are all of them inducements thereunto: are we *delivered out of the hands of our spiritual enemies*? it is, *that we should serve him in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our lives*, Luke i. 74, 75. As for the promises, they are an inducement to us, as the apostle expresses it, to *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. and every ordinance and providence should be improved by us, to promote the work of sanctification.

[3.] Let us examine ourselves, whether this work be begun, and the grace of God wrought in us, in truth? and if so, whether it be increasing or declining in our souls?

1st, As to the truth of grace, let us take heed that we do not think that we are something when we are nothing, deceiving our own souls, or rest in a form of godliness, while denying the power thereof, or a name to live, while we are dead; let us think that it is not enough to abstain from grosser enormities, or engage in some external duties of religion, with wrong ends. And if, upon enquiry into ourselves, we find that we are destitute of a principle of spiritual life and grace, let us not think, that because we have escaped some of the pollutions that are in the world, or do not run with others in all excess of riot, that therefore we lead holy lives; but rather let us enquire, Whether the life we live in the flesh, be by the faith of the Son of God, under the influence of his Spirit, with great diffidence of our own righteousness and strength, and firm dependence upon Christ? and as the result hereof, whether we

are found in the practice of universal holiness, and hate and avoid all appearance of evil, using all those endeavours that are prescribed in the gospel, to glorify him in our spirits, souls, and bodies, which are his?

2d, If we have ground to hope that the work of sanctification is begun, let us enquire, whether it be advancing or declining? Whether we go from strength to strength, or make improvements in proportion to the privileges we enjoy? Many have reason to complain that it is not with them as in months past; that grace is languishing, the frame of their spirits in holy duties stupid, and they destitute of that communion with God, which they have once enjoyed; such ought to remember from whence they are fallen, and repent, and do their first works; and beg of God, from whom alone our fruit is derived, that he would revive the work, and cause their souls to flourish in the courts of his house, and to bring forth much fruit unto holiness, to the glory of his own name, and their spiritual peace and comfort.

As for those who are frequently complaining of, and bewailing their declensions in grace, who seem, to others, to be making a very considerable progress therein; let them not give way to unbelief so far as to deny or set aside the experiences which they have had of God's presence with them; for sometimes grace grows, though without our own observation. If they are destitute of the comforts thereof, or the fruits of righteousness, which are peace, assurance and joy in the Holy Ghost, let them consider, that the work of sanctification, in this present state, is, at best, but growing up towards that perfection which is not yet arrived to. If it does not spring up and flourish, as to those fruits and effects thereof, which they are pressing after, but have not attained; let them bless God, if grace is taking root downward, and is attended with an humble sense of their own weakness and imperfection, and an earnest desire of those spiritual blessings which they are labouring after. This ought to afford matter of thankfulness, rather than have a tendency to weaken their hands, or induce them to conclude that they are in an unsanctified state; because of the many hindrances and discouragements which attend their progress in holiness.

**QUEST. LXXVI.** *What is repentance unto life?*

**ANSW.** Repentance unto life, is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner, by the Spirit and word of God; whereby, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filth and odiousness of his sins, and upon the ap-

prehension of God's mercy in Christ, to such as are penitent, he so grieves for, and hates his sins, as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavouring, constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.

**I**N speaking to this answer we shall consider the subject of repentance, *viz.* a sinful fallen creature; and that, though this be his condition, yet he is naturally averse to the exercise thereof, till God is pleased to bring him to it; which will lead us to consider, how the Spirit of God does this; and what are the various acts and effects thereof. (a)

1. Concerning the subjects of repentance. No one can be said to repent but a sinner; and therefore, whatever other graces might be exercised by man in a state of innocency, or shall be exercised by him, when brought to a state of perfec-

(a) It has been, perhaps correctly, asserted that repentance is neither a duty discoverable by the law of nature, nor the written law of God; because it is unfit, that a law, appointing death for the violation of its precept, should also discover to the culprit a way of escape from its own penalty incurred.

But there existed purposes of mercy before the law was made; these have been revealed by a gracious Sovereign; the condition of men, as prisoners of hope possessing competent evidence of the compassion of the Lawgiver, points to repentance. Sacrifices in former ages discover not only a consciousness of guilt, but a glimmering hope at least, of pardon. It is possible that these were the offspring of tradition among the Gentiles, rather than the deductions of the light of nature. But in either way, sorrow for sin is a duty founded on the will of God.

It is therefore a duty, perfectly reasonable, and expressly revealed on the sacred page. The strength to perform it is from the King of Providence and Grace.

There is necessary in its production a discovery of guilt, liability to misery, and entire helplessness. The general belief, or profession of these truths, does not prove in event to be a cause adequate to produce a total change in a man's views, pursuits, desires, aversions, labours, joys, and sorrows. There is necessary some deep sense, or strong conviction of guilt. This, with respect to its proximate cause, may originate in various ways; by reflecting on the Divine Sovereignty and Majesty; by a solemn contemplation of the excellency and loveliness of the moral perfection of Deity; by an affecting sight of his goodness and mercy to the individual in particular; by attending to the awful subject of Divine Justice, seen in the sufferings of Christ, or anticipated in the future judgment, and final sufferings of the damned. Such convictions are produced in great mercy to the individual, how dearly soever they cost him, whether the prostrated idols, on which the sensual affections were fastened, were companions, friends, relations, honour or wealth. Disease, approaching death, or any thing which shall dissolve the unhallowed attachment to earth, may by the Divine blessing produce this change, the glory of which will always really belong to Divine grace, which works unseen.

The bitterness of such sorrows is sometimes extreme, when he who wounded alone can cure. The effects of it are subsequently salutary, both to deter from sin and to strengthen the party's faith.

The degrees of penitential sorrow are extremely various in different converts. He who has been convinced of gospel truths step by step, and has been in the same manner brought to the love and fear of God, and to a universal conscientiousness, may have grounds of peace and comfort equally safe, as he whose convictions have been the most sensible; for not their height but their fruits prove them to be genuine.

tion; yet there cannot, properly speaking, be any room for repentance: some, indeed, have queried whether there shall be repentance in heaven; but it may easily be determined, that though that hatred of sin in general, and opposition to it, which is contained in true repentance, be not inconsistent with a state of perfect blessedness, as it is inseparably connected with perfection of holiness; yet a sense of sin, which is afflictive, and is attended with grief and sorrow of heart, for the guilt and consequences thereof, is altogether inconsistent with a state of perfection; and these are some ingredients in that repentance which comes under our present consideration. Therefore we must conclude, that the subject of repentance is a sinner: but,

II. Though all sinners contract guilt, expose themselves to misery, and will sooner or later be filled with distress and sorrow for what they have done against God; yet many have no sense thereof at present, nor repentance, or remorse for it. These are described as *past feeling*, Eph. iv. 19. and *hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, Heb. iii. 13. as obstinate, and having *their neck as an iron sinew, and their brow as brass*, Isa: xlviii. 4. And there are several methods which they take to ward off the force of convictions. Sometimes they are stupid, and hardly give themselves the liberty to consider the difference that there is between moral good and evil, or the natural obligation we are under to pursue the one, and avoid the other: They consider not the all-seeing eye of God, that observes all their actions, nor the power of his anger, who will take vengeance on impenitent sinners; regard not the various aggravations of sin, nor consider that God will, for those things, bring them to judgment. So that impenitency is generally attended with presumption; whereby the person concludes, though without ground, that it shall go well with him in the end; such an one is represented, as blessing himself in his heart, saying, *I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination*; or, as it is in the margin, in the stubbornness of mine heart, to *add drunkenness to thirst*, Deut. xxix. 19. Or if, on the other hand, he cannot but conclude, that with God is terrible majesty, that he is a consuming fire, and that none ever hardened themselves against him, and prospered, and if he does not fall down before him with humble confession of sin, and repentance for it, he will certainly be broken with his rod of iron, and dashed in pieces, like the potter's vessel, broken with a tempest, and utterly destroyed, when his wrath is kindled; then he resolves, that some time or other he will repent, but still delays and puts it off for a more convenient season, and though God gives him space to do it, repenteth not, Rev. ii. 21. Thus he goes on in the greatness of his way, till God prevents him with the blessings of his goodness, and brings him to repentance. And this leads us to consider,

III. That repentance is God's work; or, as it is observed in this answer, wrought by the Spirit of God: whether we consider it as a common or saving grace, it is the Spirit that convinces or reproves the world of sin. If it be of the same kind with that which Pharaoh, Ahab, or Judas had; it is a dread of God's judgments, and his wrath breaking in upon conscience, when he reproves for sin, and sets it in order before their eyes, that excites it. If they are touched with a sense of guilt, and hereby, for the present, stopped, or obliged to make a retreat, and desist from pursuing their former methods, it is God, in the course of his providence, that gives a check to them. But this comes short of that repentance which is said to be unto life; or which is styled a saving grace, which is wrought by the Spirit of God, as the beginning of that saving work, which is a branch of sanctification, and shall end in compleat salvation.

This is expressly styled in scripture, *repentance unto life*, Acts xi. 18. inasmuch as every one, who is favoured with it, shall obtain eternal life; and it is connected with conversion and remission of sins, which will certainly end in eternal salvation. Thus it is said, *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*, chap. iii. 9. and for this reason it is called a saving grace; or a grace that accompanies salvation, whereby it is distinguished from that repentance which some have, who yet remain in a state of unregeneracy. And it is called, *Repentance to salvation, not to be repented of*, 2 Cor. vii. 10. that is, it shall issue well; and he shall, in the end, have reason to bless God, and rejoice in his grace, that has made him partaker of it, who thus repents.

IV. We shall now consider the instrument or means whereby the Spirit works this grace. \* Thus it is said to be wrought in the heart of a sinner, by the word of God, as all other graces are, except regeneration, as has been before observed; we must first suppose the principle of grace implanted, and the word presenting motives, and arguments leading to repentance; and then the understanding is enlightened and disposed to receive what is therein imparted. The word *calls sinners to repentance*, Matt. ix. 13. and therefore, when this grace is wrought, we are not only turned by the power of God, but *instructed*, Jer. xxxi. 19. by the Spirit's setting home what is contained therein whereby we are led into the knowledge of those things which are necessary to repentance. As,

1. We have in the word a display of the holiness of the divine nature and law, and our obligation in conformity thereunto, to the exercise of holiness in heart and life, as God says,

\* Grace here is put for repentance, and not the immediate influence on the soul.

*Be ye holy, for I am holy, Lev. xi. 44.* And to this we may add, that it contains a display of the holiness of God in his threatenings, which he has denounced against every transgression and disobedience, which shall receive a just recompence of reward; and in all the instances of his punishing sin in those who have exposed themselves thereunto, that hereby he might deter men from it, and lead them to repentance: thus the apostle speaks of *the law of God as holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. 12, 13.* and of its leading him into the knowledge of sin, by which means it appeared to be sin, that is, opposite to an holy God, and, as he expresses it, *became exceeding sinful.*

2. Hereby persons are led into themselves; and by comparing their hearts and lives with the word of God, are enabled to see their own vileness and want of conformity to the rule which he has given them, the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness thereof, and what occasion there is to abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes; thus the apostle, in the place but now mentioned, speaks of himself as *once alive without the law; but when the commandment came, sin revived and he died,* and concludes himself to be *carnal, sold under sin, Rom. vii. 9, 14.* This is a necessary means leading to repentance.

And we may farther add, that God not only makes use of the word, but of his providences to answer this end; therefore he speaks of a sinning people, *when carried away captive into the land of the enemy, as bethinking themselves, and afterwards repenting and making supplication to him therein, 1 Kings viii. 46, 47.* And we read of sickness and bodily diseases as ordained by God, to bring persons to repentance; thus Elihu speaks of a person's being *chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain; his soul drawing nigh to the grave, and his life to the destroyers, Job xxxiii. 19, 27.* and then represents the person thus chastened, and afterwards recovered from his sickness, as acknowledging himself to *have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and that it profited him not.* And the apostle speaks of *the goodness of God in the various dispensations of his providence, as leading to repentance, Rom. ii. 4.* But these dispensations are always to be considered in conjunction with the word, and as impressed on the conscience of men by the Spirit, in order to their attaining this desirable end.

But that we may insist on this matter more particularly, we must take an estimate of repentance, either as it is a common or special grace; in both these respects it is from the Spirit, and wrought by the instrumentality of the word, applied to the consciences of men; but there is a vast difference between the one and the other in the application of the word, as well as in the effects and consequences thereof.



(1.) In them who are brought under convictions, but not made partakers of the saving grace of repentance; the Holy Spirit awakens, and fills them with the terrors of God, and the dread of his vengeance, *by the law, by which is the knowledge of sin, and all the world becomes guilty before God, Rom. iii. 20.* compared with 19. These are what we call legal convictions; whereby the wound is opened, but no healing medicine applied: the sinner apprehends himself under a sentence of condemnation, but at the same time cannot apply any promise which may afford hope and relief to him; groans under his burden, and knows not where to find ease or comfort, and dreads the consequence thereof, as that which would sink him into hell; God appears to him as a consuming fire, his arrows stick fast in his soul, the poison whereof drinketh up his spirits; if he endeavours to shake off his fears, and to relieve himself against his despairing thoughts, he is notwithstanding, described, as being like the *troubled sea, when it cannot rest, which casts forth mire and dirt, Isa. lvii. 20.* This is a most afflictive case; concerning which it is said, that though *the spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; yet a wounded spirit who can bear?* Prov. xviii. 14.

Thus it is with some when convinced of sin by the law: but there are others who endeavour to quiet their consciences by using indirect methods, thinking to make atonement for it, and by some instances of external reformation, to make God amend, and thereby procure his favour, but to no purpose; for *sin taking occasion, by the commandment, works in them all manner of concupiscence, Rom. vii. 8.* And if they grow stupid, which is oftentimes the consequence hereof, their sense of sin is entirely lost, and their repentance ends in presumption, and a great degree of boldness in the commission of all manner of wickedness.

(2.) We shall now consider how the Spirit works repentance unto life, which is principally insisted on in this answer. This is said to be done by the word of God; not by the law without the gospel, but by them both, in which one is made subservient to the other. The law shews the soul its sin, and the gospel directs him where he may find a remedy; one wounds and the other heals; *the law enters, as the apostle expresses it, that the offence might abound, Rom. v. 20.* but the gospel shews him how *grace does much more abound, and where he may obtain forgiveness, by which means he is kept from sinking under that weight of guilt that lies on his conscience.* And it leads him to hate and abstain from sin, from those motives that are truly excellent; for which reason it is called evangelical repentance.

Now that we may better understand the nature thereof, we

shall consider; how it differs from that which we before described, which arises only from that conviction of sin, which is by the law, which a person may have, who is destitute of this grace of repentance, which we are speaking of. Repentance, of what kind soever it be, contains in it a sense of sin: but if it be such a sense of sin, that the unregenerate person may have, this includes little more in it than a sense of the danger and misery which he has exposed himself to by sins committed. The principal motives leading hereunto, are the threatenings which the law of God denounces against those that violate it. Destruction from God is a terror to him; if this were not the consequence of sin, he would be so far from repenting of it, that it would be the object of his chief delight. And that guilt, which he charges himself with, is principally such, as arises from the commission of the most notorious crimes, which expose him to the greatest degree of punishment: whereas, repentance unto life brings a soul under a sense of the guilt of sin, as it is contrary to the holy nature and law of God, which the least, as well as the greatest sins, are opposed to, and contain a violation of. And therefore he charges himself, not only with open sins, which are detestable in the eyes of men; but secret sins, which others have little or no sense of; sins of omission, as well as sins of commission; and he is particularly affected with the sin of unbelief, inasmuch as it contains a contempt of Christ, and the grace of the gospel. And he is not only sensible of those sins which break forth in his life; but that propensity of nature, whereby he is inclined to rebel against God; so that this sense of guilt, in some respects, differs from that which they are brought under, who are destitute of saving repentance.

But that in which they more especially differ is, in that saving repentance contains in it a sense of the filth, and odious nature of sin, and so considers it as defiling, or contrary to the holiness of God, and rendering the soul worthy to be abhorred by him; so that as the sense of guilt excites fear, and a dread of the wrath of God, this fills him with shame, confusion of face, and self-abhorrence, which is inseparably connected with the grace of repentance; accordingly these are joined together, as Job says, *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*, Job xlii. 6. or, as when God promises that he would bestow this grace on his people, he says, *Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings, that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations*, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. As before this they set too high a value upon themselves, and were ready to palliate and excuse their crimes, or insist on their innocence, though their iniquity was written in legible characters, as with a pen of iron,

and the point of a diamond, and to say with Ephraim, *In all my labour they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin*, Hos. xii. 8. or, as the prophet Jeremiah says, concerning a rebellious people, that *though in their skirts were found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents*; yet they had the front to say, *Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me*, Jer. ii. 34, 35. Notwithstanding, when God brings them to repentance, and heals their backslidings; they express themselves in a very different way; *We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covers us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God*, chap. iii. 25. Now this is such an ingredient in true repentance, which is not to be found in that which falls short of it: the sinner is afraid of punishment indeed, or, it may be, he may be filled with shame, because of the reproach which attends his vile and notorious crimes in the eyes of the world; yet he is not ashamed, or confounded, as considering how vile he has rendered himself hereby, in the eye of an holy God.

There is another thing which is farther observed in this answer, which is an ingredient in repentance unto life, in which respect it is connected with faith, inasmuch as he apprehends the mercy of God in Christ to such as are penitent; and this effectually secures him from that despair which sometimes attends a legal repentance, as was before observed, as well as affords him relief against the sense of guilt with which this grace is attended. The difference between legal and evangelical repentance, does not so much consist in that one represents sin, as more aggravated; nor does it induce him that thus repents, to think himself a greater sinner than the other; for the true penitent is ready to confess himself the chief of sinners. He is far from extenuating his sin, being ready, on all occasions, to charge himself with more guilt than others are generally sensible of: but that which he depends upon as his only comfort and support is the mercy of God in Christ, or the consideration that there is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared; this is that which affords the principal motive and encouragement to repentance, and has a tendency to excite the various acts thereof; which leads us to consider,

V. What are the various acts of this repentance unto life; or what are the fruits and effects produced thereby.

1. The soul is filled with hatred of sin. When he looks back on his past life, he bewails what cannot now be avoided; charges himself with folly and madness, and wishes (though this be to no purpose) that he had done many things which he has omitted, and avoided those sins, together with the occasions thereof, which he has committed, the guilt whereof lies with great weight upon him. How glad would he be if lost seasons and opportunities of grace might be recalled, and the

talents, that were once put into his hand, though misimproved, regained! But all these wishes are in vain. However, these are the after-thoughts which will arise in the minds of those who are brought under a sense of sin. Sin wounds the soul; the Spirit of God, when convincing thereof, opens the wound, and causes a person to feel the smart of it, and gives him to know, that *it is an evil thing, and bitter, that he has forsaken the Lord his God*, Jer. ii. 19. This sometimes depresses the spirits, and causes him to walk softly, to *set alone and keep silence*, Lam. iii. 28. being filled with that uneasiness which is very afflictive to him. At other times it gives vent to itself in tears, as the Psalmist expresses it, *I am weary with my groaning, all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears*, Psal. vi. 6. In this case the only thing that gives him relief or comfort is, that the guilt of sin is removed by the blood of Christ, which tends to quiet his spirit, which would otherwise be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

And to this we may add, that sin is always the object of his detestation, even when there is an abatement of that grief, which, by the divine supports and comforts he is fenced against: he hates sin, not barely because of the sad consequences thereof, but as it is in itself the object of abhorrence; and therefore his heart is set against all sin, as the Psalmist says, *I hate every false way*, Psal. cxix. 104. This hatred discovers itself by putting him upon flying from it, together with all the occasions thereof, or incentives to it. He not only abstains from those sins which they who have little more than the remains of moral virtue are ashamed of, and afraid to commit, but hates every thing that has in it the appearance of sin, and this hatred is irreconcilable. As forgiveness does not make sin less odious in its own nature, so the experience that he has of the grace of God herein, or whatever measures of peace he enjoys, whereby his grief and sorrow is assuaged, yet still his hatred of it not only remains, but increases: and, as the consequence hereof,

2. He turns from sin unto God; he first hates sin, and then flies from it, as seeing it to be the spring of all his grief and fears, that which separates between him and his God. Thus Ephraim, when brought to repentance, is represented as saying, *What have I to do any more with idols*, Hos. xiv. 8. reflecting on his past conduct, when addicted to them, with a kind of indignation; so the true penitent, who has hitherto been walking in those paths that lead to death and destruction, now enquires after the way of holiness, and the paths of peace; as he has hitherto walked contrary to God, now he desires to walk with him; and having wearied himself in the greatness of his way, and seeing no fruit in those things whereof he is now ashamed; and being brought into the utmost straits, he deter-

mines to return to his God and Father. And in doing this he purposes and endeavours to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience, as the apostle exhorts those who had received good by his ministry, that *with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*, Acts xi. 23. This purpose is not like those hasty resolutions which unconverted sinners make when God is hedging up their way with thorns, and they are under the most distressing apprehensions of his wrath. Then they say as the people did to Joshua, *We will serve the Lord*, Josh. xxiv. 22. though they are not sensible how difficult it is to fulfil the engagements which they lay themselves under, nor of the deceitfulness of their own hearts, and the need they stand in of grace from God, to enable them so to do. This purpose to walk with God, does not so much respect what a person will do hereafter; but it contains a resolution which is immediately put in execution, and so is opposed to his former obstinacy, when determining to go on in the way of his own heart. Thus the prodigal son, in the parable, no sooner resolved that he would *arise and go to his Father*, Luke xv. 18, compared with 20. but he arose and went. True repentance is always attended with endeavours after new obedience, so that a person lays aside that sloth and indolence which was inconsistent with his setting a due value on, or improving the means of grace; and, as the result hereof, he now exerts himself, with all his might, in pursuing after those things, whereby he may approve himself God's faithful servant; and hereby he discovers the sincerity of his repentance; which he does, or rather is enabled to do, by that grace, which at first began, and then carries on this work in the soul, whereby he *has his fruit unto holiness, and the end thereof everlasting life*, Rom. vi. 22.

From what has been said concerning repentance, we may infer,

(1.) That since it is a grace that accompanies salvation, and consequently is absolutely necessary thereunto, it is an instance of unwarrantable and bold presumption, for impenitent sinners to expect, that they shall be made partakers of the benefits which Christ has purchased, while they continue in a state of enmity, opposition, and rebellion against him; or that they shall be saved by him in their sins, without being saved from them; for *he that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy*, Prov. xxviii. 13.

(2.) Since repentance is the work of the Spirit, and his gift, we infer, that whatever endeavours we are obliged to use, or whatever motives or inducements are given to lead us hereunto, we must not conclude, that it is in our own power to repent when we please; and therefore it should be the matter of our earnest and constant prayer to God, that he would turn our

hearts, give us a true sight and sense of sin, accompanied with faith in Christ, as Ephraim is represented, saying, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned*, Jer. xxxi. 18.

(3.) Let not those that have a distressing sense of their former sins, how great soever they have been, give way to despairing thoughts; but lay hold on the mercy of God in Christ, extended to the chief of sinners, and improve it to encourage them to hate sin, and forsake it from evangelical motives, which will have a tendency to remove their fears while they look on God, not as a sin-revenging Judge, but a reconciled Father, ready and willing to receive those who return to him with unfeigned repentance.

(4.) Since we daily commit sin, it follows from hence, that we stand in need of daily repentance: and this being a branch of sanctification, as sanctification is a progressive work, so is repentance. We are not to expect that sin should be wholly extirpated, while we are in this imperfect state; and therefore it is constantly to be bewailed, and, by the grace of God working effectually in us, avoided; that, as the result hereof, we may have a comfortable hope that that promise shall be fulfilled, *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy*, Psal. cxxvi. 5.

QUEST. LXXVII. *Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?*

ANSW. Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification; yet they differ, in that God in justification, imputeth the righteousness of Christ, in sanctification his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to the exercise thereof; in the former sin is pardoned, in the other it is subdued; the one doth equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation, the other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.

**T**HIS answer being principally a recapitulation of what is contained in those that have been already insisted on, wherein the doctrine of justification and sanctification are particularly explained, we shall not much enlarge on it; but since there are some who suppose that one of these graces may be attained without the other; and others confound them, as though to be justified and to be sanctified implied the same thing; we shall briefly consider,

I. That which is supposed in this answer, namely, that sanctification and justification are inseparably joined together; and accordingly, no one has a warrant to claim one without the

other : This appears in that they are graces that accompany salvation. When the apostle connects justification and effectual calling together, in the golden chain of our salvation, Rom. viii. 30. he includes sanctification in this calling. And elsewhere, when Christ is said to be *made righteousness and redemption* to us for our justification, he is, at the same time, said to be made *wisdom and sanctification*, 1 Cor. i. 31. and we are said to be *saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. iii. 5. which is the beginning of the work of sanctification; *that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*; and speaking of some who were once great sinners, and afterwards made true believers, he says, concerning them, that they were *washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*, 1 Cor. vi. 11. And when God promises to pardon and *pass by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage*, Micah vii. 18, 19. he also gives them ground to expect that he would *subdue their iniquities*; the former is done in justification, the latter in sanctification.

From the connexion that there is between justification and sanctification, we infer; that no one has ground to conclude that his sins are pardoned, and that he shall be saved while he is in an unsanctified state; for as this tends to turn the grace of God into wantonness, so it separates what he has joined together, and it is a certain evidence that they who thus divide them, are neither justified nor sanctified. Let us therefore give diligence to evince the truth of our justification, by our sanctification, or that we have a right and title to Christ's righteousness, by the life of faith, and the exercise of all those other graces that accompany or flow from it.

II. We have, in this answer, an account of some things in which justification and sanctification differ, as,

1. In justification God imputes the righteousness of Christ to us; whereas, in sanctification the Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to the exercise thereof. What it is for God to impute Christ's righteousness hath been before considered; the only thing that we shall now observe is, that the righteousness whereby we are justified, is, without us, wrought out by Christ, for us; so that it is *by his obedience*, as the apostle expresses it, that *we are made righteous*, Rom. v. 19. and that which Christ did as our Surety, is placed to our account, and accepted by the justice of God, as though it had been done by us, as has been before observed: Whereas, in sanctification, the graces of the Spirit are wrought and excited in us, we are denominated holy, and our right to eternal life is evinced, though not procured.

2. In justification sin is pardoned, in sanctification it is sub-

duced; the former takes away the guilt thereof, the latter its reigning power. Where sin is pardoned, it shall not be our ruin; but yet it gives us daily disturbance and uneasiness, makes work for repentance, and is to be opposed by our dying to it, and living to righteousness. This is therefore sufficiently distinguished from justification, which is also to be considered as a motive or inducement leading to it.

3. They differ, in that justification equally frees all believers from the avenging wrath of God, in which respect it is perfect in this life, so that a justified person shall never fall into condemnation; whereas, the work of sanctification is not equal in all, nor perfect in this life, but growing up to perfection. For the understanding of which, let us consider, that when we speak of justification as perfect in this life, or say, that all are equally justified, we mean, that where God forgives one sin, he forgives all; so that *there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, as the apostle says, chap. viii. 1. and he adds, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died*, ver. 33, 34. Were it not so, a person might be said to be justified, and not have a right to eternal life, which implies a contradiction; for though he might be acquitted, as to the guilt charged upon him by one indictment, he would be condemned by that which is contained in another.

We may from hence infer, that all justified persons have an equal right to conclude themselves discharged from guilt, and the condemning sentence of the law of God; though all cannot see their right to claim this privilege by reason of the weakness of their faith. As for sanctification, that, on the other hand, is far from being equal in all; since the best of believers have reason to complain of the weakness of their faith, and the imperfection of all other graces which are wrought in them by the Spirit. If it be enquired from whence this imperfection of sanctification arises, that is the subject of the following answer.

**QUEST. LXXVIII.** *Whence ariseth the imperfection of sanctification in believers?*

**ANSW.** The imperfection of sanctification in believers, ariseth from the remains of sin abiding in every part of them, and the perpetual lustings of the flesh against the spirit, whereby they are often foiled with temptations, and fall into many sins, are hindered in all their spiritual services, and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.

**I**N this answer we may consider,

**I.** That there is something supposed, namely, that the



work of sanctification is imperfect in this life, or that there are the remnants of sin still abiding in the best of men.

II. In what the imperfection of sanctification more especially discovers itself; and in particular, what we are to understand by the lusting of the flesh against the Spirit. And,

III. The consequences hereof, to wit, their being foiled with temptations, falling into many sins, and being hindered in their spiritual services.

L. As to the thing supposed in this answer, that the work of sanctification is imperfect in this life: This must be allowed by all who are not strangers to themselves, as it is said, *There is not a just man upon the earth that doth good and sinneth not*, Eccl. vii. 20. fine gold is not without a mixture of some baser metal, or alloy; even so our best frames of spirit, when we think ourselves nearest heaven, or when we have most communion with God, are not without a tincture of indwelling sin, that is easy to be discerned in us. Whatever grace we exercise, there are some defects attending it, either with respect to the manner of its exerting itself, or the degree thereof; therefore perfection, how desirable soever it be, is a blessing which we cannot, at present, attain to: And if it be thus with us, when at the best, we shall find, that at other times, corrupt nature not only discovers itself, but gives us great interruption and disturbance, so that the work of sanctification seems to be, as it were, at a stand, and we are hereby induced to question the truth and sincerity of our graces; and if, notwithstanding this, we have sufficient ground to conclude, that our hearts are right with God; yet we are obliged to say with the apostle, that we are *carnal, sold under sin*; and that, *when we would do good, evil is present with us*, Rom. vii. 14. compared with 21. which is an undeniable argument of the imperfection of the work of sanctification.

The contrary opinion to this is maintained by many who pretend that perfection is attainable in this life; and to give countenance hereunto, they refer to some scriptures, in which persons are characterized as *perfect men*; and others wherein perfection is represented as a duty incumbent on us; as our Saviour says, *Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*, Matt. v. 48. and the apostle, in his valedictory exhortation to the church, advises them to *be perfect*, as well as *of one mind*; as they expected that the God of love and peace should be with them, 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

But to this it may be replied, that these scriptures do not speak of a sinless perfection, but of such a perfection as is opposed to hypocrisy; as Hezekiah says concerning himself, that he had *walked before the Lord in truth, and with a perfect heart*, Isa. xxxviii. 3. Accordingly, the perfection of those who are

thus described in scripture, is explained as denoting their uprightness. Thus Job is described, as *a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil*, Job i. 1. compared with 8. though he elsewhere disclaims any pretensions to a sinless perfection; as he expresses himself, *If I say I am perfect, mine own mouth shall prove me perverse*, chap. ix. 20. And when Noah is said to be *perfect in his generation*, this is explained as denoting that he was a *just or an holy man*, and one that *walked with God*, Gen. vi. 9.

As for other scriptures, which speak of perfection as a duty incumbent on us, they are to be understood concerning the perfection of grace, as to those essential parts thereof, without which it could not be denominated true and genuine, and not as respecting a perfection of degrees. True grace is perfect indeed, as it contains in it those necessary ingredients, whereby an action is denominated good in all its circumstances, in opposition to that which is so, only in some respects; and therefore it must proceed from a good principle, an heart renewed by regenerating grace; it must be agreeable to the rule which God has prescribed in the gospel, and be performed in a right manner, and for right ends: Thus a person may be said to be a perfect man, in like manner as a new-born infant is denominated a man, as having all the essential perfections of the human nature; though not arrived to that perfection, in other respects, which it shall afterwards attain to: Accordingly grace, when described, in scripture, as perfect, is sometimes explained as alluding to a metaphor, taken from a state of perfect manhood, in opposition to that of children: Thus the apostle speaks of some, whom he represents, as *being of full age*; where the same word is used \*, which is elsewhere rendered *perfect*; and these are opposed to others whom he had before been speaking of, as weak believers, or *babes in Christ*, Heb. v. 13, 14. And elsewhere he speaks of the church, which he styles the *body of Christ*, as arrived to a state of manhood, and so calls it a *perfect man*; having attained the *measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*; still alluding to that stature which persons arrive to when they are adult; and these he opposes in the following words, to children, who, through the weakness of their faith, were liable to be *tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*, Eph. iv. 13, 14. And in other places, where Christians are described as perfect, there is a word used, which signifies their having that internal furniture whereby they are prepared or disposed to do what is good: Thus the apostle speaks of *the man of God being perfect* †, that is, *thoroughly furnished unto all good works*, 2 Tim. iii. 17. And elsewhere he prays, for those to whom he writes, that

\* Titus.

† "As?106.

God would *make them perfect in, or for every good work, to the end that they may do his will\**, which is such a perfection as is necessary to our putting forth any act of grace; and therefore it does not in the least infer that perfection which they plead for, whom we are now opposing.

And, indeed, it is not barely the sense they give of those scriptures that speak of persons being perfect, which they cannot but suppose may be otherwise understood, that gives them occasion to defend this doctrine; but the main thing on which it is founded, is, that God does not require sinless perfection of fallen man, inasmuch as that is impossible; and therefore he calls that perfection, which includes in it our using those endeavours to lead a good life, which are in our own power. This is agreeable to the Pelagian scheme, and to that which the Papists maintain, who make farther advances on the Pelagian hypothesis; and assert, not only that men may attain perfection in this life, but that they may arrive to such a degree thereof, as exceeds the demands of the law, and perform works of supererogation; which doctrine is calculated to establish that of justification by works.

But that which may be alleged in opposition hereunto, is, that it is disagreeable to the divine perfections, and a notorious making void the law of God, to assert that our obligation to yield perfect obedience, ceases, because we have lost our power to perform it; as though a person's being insolvent, were a sufficient excuse for his not paying a just debt. We must distinguish between God's demanding perfect obedience, as an out-standing debt, which is consistent with the glory of his holiness and sovereignty, as a law-giver; and his determining that we shall not be saved, unless we perform it in our own persons: and we also distinguish between his connecting a right to eternal life with our performing perfect obedience, as what he might justly insist on according to the tenor of the first covenant, as our Saviour tells the young man in the gospel, *If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments*, Matt. xix. 16. and his resolving that we shall not be saved, unless we are able to perform it. The gospel purposes another expedient, namely, that they who were obliged to yield perfect obedience, and ought to be humbled for their inability to perform it, should depend on Christ's righteousness, which is the foundation of their right to eternal life, in which respect they are said to be perfect, or *compleat in him*, Col. ii. 10. which is the only just notion of perfection, as attainable in this life: and, to conclude this head, it is very unreasonable for a person to suppose that God will abate some part of the debt of perfect

\* The word is *κατασκευασ*; which signifies to give them an internal disposition or fitness for the performance of the duties which they were to engage in, Heb. xiii. 21.

obedience, and so to call our performing those works, which have many imperfections adhering to them, a state of perfection, which is to make it an easier matter to be a Christian than God has made it. Thus concerning the thing supposed in this answer, *viz.* that the work of sanctification is imperfect in this life.

But before we dismiss this head, we shall enquire, why God does not bring this work to perfection at once, which he could easily have done, and, as it is certain, will do, when he brings the soul to heaven. In answer to which, we shall consider in general, that it is not meet for us to say unto God, Why dost thou thus? especially considering that this, as well as many of his other works, is designed to display the glory of his sovereignty, which very eminently appears in the beginning, carrying on, and perfecting the work of grace: we may as well ask the reason, why he did not begin the work of sanctification sooner? or, why he makes use of this or that instrument, or means, to effect it rather than another? which things are to be resolved into his own pleasure: but since it is evident that he does not bring this work to perfection in this world, we may adore his wisdom herein, as well as his sovereignty. For,

1. Hereby he gives his people occasion to exercise repentance and godly sorrow for their former sins committed before they were converted. Perfect holiness would admit of no occasion to bring past sins to remembrance; whereas, when we sin daily, and have daily need of the exercise of repentance and godly sorrow, this gives us a more sensible view of past sins. When corrupt nature discovers itself in those that are converted, they take occasion hereby to consider how they have been transgressors from the womb; as David, when he repented of his sin in the matter of Uriah, at the same time that he aggravated the guilt of his crime, as it justly deserved, he calls to mind his former sins, from his very infancy, and charges that guilt upon himself which he brought into the world; *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*, Psal. li. 5. And when Job considers God's afflictive providences towards him, as designed to bring sin to remembrance, and desires that he would *make him to know his transgression and his sin*; he adds, *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth*, Job. xiii. 23, 26. sins committed after conversion were brought to mind, and ordered as a means to humble him for those that were committed before it. As for sins committed before conversion, they could not, at that time, be said truly to be repented of, since that would be to suppose the grace of repentance antecedent to conversion; therefore if the work of sanctification were to be immediately brought to perfection, this

perfect holiness would be as much attended with perfect happiness, as it is in heaven, and consequently godly sorrow would be no more exercised on earth, than it is there; whereas God, in ordering the gradual progress of the work of sanctification, attended with the remainders of sin, gives occasion to many humbling reflections, tending to excite unfeigned repentance, not only for those sins committed after they had experienced the grace of God; but for those great lengths they ran in sin before they had tasted that the Lord was gracious; and therefore he does not bring the work of sanctification to perfection in this present world.

2. Another reason of this dispensation of providence, is, that believers, from their own experience of the breakings forth of corruption, together with the guilt they contract thereby, and the advantage they receive in gaining any victory over it, may be furnished to administer suitable advice, and give warning to those who are in a state of unregeneracy, that they may be persuaded to see the evil of sin, which, at present, they do not.

3. God farther orders this, that he may give occasion to his people to exercise a daily conflict with indwelling sin. He suffers it to give them great disturbance and uneasiness, that hereby they may be induced to endeavour to mortify it, and be found in the exercise of those graces which are adapted to an imperfect state, such as cannot be exercised in heaven; nor could they be exercised here on earth, were they to be brought into and remain while here in a sinless state; particularly there could not be any acts of faith, in managing that conflict, whereby they endeavour to stand their ground while exposed to those difficulties that arise from the perpetual lustings of the flesh against the spirit; which leads us to consider,

II. In what the imperfection of sanctification more especially discovers itself. This it does, not only in the weakness of every grace, which we are at any time enabled to act; and the many failures we are chargeable with in the performance of every duty incumbent upon us; so that if an exact scrutiny were made into our best actions, and they weighed in the balance, they would be found very defective; as appears from what has been said under the foregoing head, concerning perfection, as not attainable in this life.

But this more particularly appears, as it is observed in this answer, from the perpetual lustings of the flesh against the spirit. Thus the apostle speaks of, *the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh*, Gal. v. 19. and so of the contrariety of the one to the other; so that we cannot do the things that we would, and points out himself as an instance hereof, when he says, *I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but*

*how to perform that which is good, I find not; the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do, Rom. vii. 18—23.* and this reluctance and opposition to what is good, he lays to the charge of sin that dwelt in him, which he considers as having, as it were, the force of a law; and in particular he styles it *the law of his members warring against the law of his mind*, which is the same thing with the lusting of the flesh, against the spirit: so that from hence it appears, that when God implants a principle of grace in regeneration, and carries on the work of sanctification in believers, he does not wholly destroy, or root out those habits of sin which were in the soul before this, but enables us to militate against, and overcome them by his implanting and exciting a principle of grace; and from hence arises this conflict that we are to consider.

Indwelling sin is constantly opposing; but it does not always prevail against the principle of grace. The event or success of this combat is various, at different times. When corrupt nature prevails, the principle of grace, though not wholly extinguished, remains unactive, or does not exert itself, as at other times; all grace becomes languid, and there appears but little difference between him and an unbeliever; he falls into very great sins, whereby he wounds his own conscience, grieves the holy Spirit, and makes sad work for a bitter repentance, which will afterwards ensue: but inasmuch as the principle of spiritual life and grace is not wholly lost, it will some time or other be excited, and then will oppose, and maintain its ground against, the flesh, or the corruption of nature; and, as the consequence hereof, those acts of grace will be again put forth, which were before suspended.

Having thus given an account of the conflict between indwelling sin and grace, we shall now more particularly shew, how the habits of sin exert themselves in those who are unregenerate, where there is no principle of grace to oppose them. And then, how they exert themselves in believers; and what opposition is made thereunto by the principle of grace in them; and how it comes to pass that sometimes one prevails, at other times the other.

1. We shall consider those violent efforts that are made by corrupt nature, in those who are unregenerate, in whom, though there be no principle of grace to enable them to withstand them; yet they have a conflict in their own spirits. There is something in nature, that, for a time, keeps them from complying with temptations to the greatest sins; though the flesh, or that propensity that is in them to sin, will prevail at last, and lead them from one degree of impiety to another, unless prevented by the grace of God. In this case the conflict is be-

tween corrupt nature and an enlightened conscience; and that more especially in those who have had the advantage of a religious education, and the good example of some whom they have conversed with, whereby they have contracted some habits of moral virtue, which are not immediately extinguished: it is not an easy matter to persuade them to commit those gross, and scandalous sins, which others, whose minds are blinded, and their hearts hardened to a greater degree by the deceitfulness of sin, commit with greediness and without remorse. The principles of education are not immediately broke through; for in this case men meet with a great struggle in their own breasts, before they entirely lose them; and they proceed, by various steps, from one degree of wickedness unto another\*. A breach is first made in the fence, and afterwards widened by a continuance in the same sins, or committing new ones, especially such as have in them a greater degree of presumption. And this disposes the soul to comply with temptations to greater sins; whereas, it would be to no purpose to tempt him at first, to be openly profane, blaspheme the name of God, or cast off all external acts of religion, and abandon himself to those immoralities which the most notoriously wicked, and profligate sinners commit, without shame, till he has paved the way to them by the commission of other sins that lead thereunto.

That which at first prevents or restrains him from the commission of them, is something short of a principle of grace which we call the dictates of a natural conscience, which often check and reproves him: his natural temper or disposition is not so far vitiated, at present as to allow of, or incline him to pursue and thing that is openly vile and scandalous; he abhors, and, as it were, trembles at the thoughts of it. Thus when the prophet Elisha told Hazael of all the evil that he would do unto the children of Israel, that he would *set their strong holds on fire, slay their young men with a sword, dash their children, and rip up their women with child*; when he heard this, he entertained the thought with a kind of abhorrence, and said, *But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing*, 2 Kings viii. 12, 13. Yet afterwards, when king of Syria, we find him of another mind; for he was a greater scourge to the people of God than any of the neighbouring princes, and *smote them in all the coasts of Israel*, chap. x. 32.

Now that which prevents these greater sins, is generally fear or shame; their consciences terrify them with the thoughts of the wrath of God, which they would hereby expose themselves to; or they are apprehensive that such a course of life would

\* It is a true observation which some have laid down in this known aphorism, *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*,

blast their reputation amongst men, and be altogether inconsistent with that form of godliness which they have had a liking to from their childhood. But since these restraints do not proceed from the internal and powerful influence of regenerating grace, being excited by lower motives than those which the Spirit of God suggests, in them who are converted; since natural conscience is the main thing that restrains them, corrupt nature first endeavours to counteract the dictates thereof, and, by degrees, gets the mastery over them. When conscience reproves them, they first offer a bribe to it, by performing some moral duties, to silence its accusations for presumptuous sins, and pretend that their crimes fall short of those committed by many others; at other times they complain of its being too strict in its demands of duty, or severe in its reproofs for sin. And if all this will not prevail against it, but it will, notwithstanding, perform the office of a faithful reprov-er, then the sinner resolves to stop his ears against it, but it will, notwithstanding, perform the office of a faithful reprov-er, then the sinner resolves to stop his ears against convictions; and if this will not altogether prevent his being made uneasy thereby, he betakes himself to those diversions that may give another turn to his thoughts, and will not allow himself time for serious reflection; and associates himself with those whose conversation will effectually tend to extinguish all his former impressions of moral virtue; and by this means, at last he stu-pifies his conscience, and it becomes, as the apostle expresses it, *seared with a hot iron*, 1 Tim. iv. 2. and so he gets, as I may express it, a fatal victory over himself; and from that time meets with no reluctancy or opposition in his own breast, while *being past feeling, he gives himself over unto lasciviousness, to work uncleanness, and all manner of iniquity with greediness*, Eph. iv. 19. which leads us to consider,

2. That conflict which is between the flesh and spirit, in those in whom the work of sanctification is begun. Here we shall first observe, the lustings of the flesh; and then the opposition that it meets with from that principle of grace which is implanted and excited in them, which is called the lusting of the spirit against it.

(1.) How corrupt nature exerts itself in believers, to prevent the actings of grace. Here it may be observed,

[1.] That that which gives occasion to this, is the Spirit's withdrawing his powerful influences, which, when the soul is favoured with, have a tendency to prevent those pernicious consequences which will otherwise ensue. And God withdraws these powerful influences sometimes in a way of sovereignty, to shew him that it is not in his own power to avoid sin when he will; or that he cannot, without the aids of his grace, with-stand those temptations which are offered to him to commit it.



Or else, he does this with a design to let him know what is in his heart; and that he might take occasion to humble him for past sins, or present miscarriages, and make him more watchful for the future.

[2.] Besides this, there are some things which present themselves in an objective way, which are as so many snares laid to entangle him. And corrupt nature makes a bad improvement thereof, so that his natural constitution is more and more vitiated by giving way to sin, and defiled by the remainders of sin that dwelleth in him. The temptation is generally adapted to the corrupt inclination of his nature, and Satan has a hand therein. Thus if his natural temper inclines him to be proud or ambitious, then immediately the honours and applause of the world are presented to him; and he never wants examples of those, who, in an unlawful way, have gained a great measure of esteem in the world, and made themselves considerable in the stations in which they have been placed: if he is naturally addicted to pleasures, of what kind soever they be, then something is offered that is agreeable to corrupt nature, which seems delightful to it; though it be in itself, sinful: if he be more than ordinarily addicted to covetousness, then the profits and advantages of the world are presented as a bait to corrupt nature, and groundless fears raised in him, of being reduced to poverty, which, by an immoderate pursuit after the world, he is tempted to fence against. Moreover, if his natural constitution inclines him to resent injuries, then Satan has always his instruments ready at hand to stir up his corruption, and provoke him to wrath, by offering either real or supposed injuries; magnifying the former beyond their due bounds, or inferring the latter without duly considering the design of those whose innocent behaviour sometimes gives occasion hereunto, and, at the same time, overcharging his thoughts with them, as though no expedient can be found to atone for them. Again, if his natural constitution inclines him to sloth and inactivity, then the difficulties of religion are set before him, to discourage him from the exercise of that diligence which is necessary to surmount them. And if, on the other hand, his natural temper leads him to be courageous and resolute, then corrupt nature endeavours to make him self-confident, and thereby to weaken his trust in God. Or if he be naturally inclined to fear, then something is offered to him, that may tend to his discouragement, and to sink him into despair. These are the methods used by the flesh, when lusting against the spirit; which leads us to consider,

(2.) The opposition of the spirit to the flesh; or how the principle of grace in believers inclines them to make a stand against indwelling sin, which is called the lusting of the spirit against the flesh. The grace of God, when wrought in the heart

in regeneration, is not an unactive principle ; for it soon exerts itself, as being excited by the power of the Spirit, who implanted it ; and from that time there is, or ought to be, a constant opposition made by it to corrupt nature ; and that, not only as the soul, with unfeigned repentance, mourns for it, and exercises that self-abhorrence which the too great prevalence thereof calls for ; but as it leads him to implore help from God, against it, by whose assistance he endeavours to subdue the corrupt motions of the flesh ; or, as the apostle expresses it, to *mortify the deeds of the body*, Rom. viii. 13. that by this means they may not be entertained, or prove injurious and destructive to him.

And inasmuch as there is something objective, as well as subjective, in this work ; since the power of God never excites the principle of grace without presenting objects for it to be conversant about, there are several things suggested to the soul, which, if duly weighed and improved, are a means conducive to its being preserved from a compliance with the corrupt motions of indwelling sin : these are of a superior nature to those made use of by an enlightened conscience, in unregenerate persons, to prevent their committing the vilest abominations, as was before considered ; and indeed, they are such as, from the nature of the thing, can be used (especially some of them) by none but those in whom the work of grace is begun. Accordingly,

[1.] A believer considers not only the glorious excellencies and perfections of Christ, which he is now duly sensible of, as he is said to be precious to them that believe ; but he is also affected with the manifold engagements, which he has been laid under to love him, and to hate and oppose every thing that is contrary to his glory and interest. The love of Christ constraineth him ; and therefore he abhors the thoughts of being so ungrateful and disingenuous as he would appear to be, should he fulfil the lusts of the flesh : the sense of redeeming love and grace is deeply impressed on his soul ; he calls to mind how he has been quickened, effectually called, and brought into the way of peace and holiness, and therefore cannot entertain any thoughts of relapsing or returning again to folly.

Here he considers the great advantage which he has received, which he would not lose on any terms. The delight and pleasure which he has had in the ways of God and godliness, has been so great, that corrupt nature cannot produce any thing that may be an equivalent for the loss of it. He is very sensible that the more closely he has walked with God, the more comfortably he has walked. And besides this, he looks forward, and, by faith, takes a view of the blessed issue of the life of grace, or those reserves of glory laid up for him in anq-

ther world, which inclines him to cast the utmost contempt on every thing that has the least tendency to induce him to relinquish or abandon his interest therein.

[2.] He considers and improves those bright examples which are set before him, to encourage him to go on in the way of holiness; takes Christ himself for a pattern, endeavouring, so far as he is able, to follow him; walks as they have done, who have not only stood their ground, but come off victorious in the conflict, and are reaping the blessed fruits and effects thereof.

[3.] He also considers, as an inducement to him to oppose the corrupt motions of the flesh; that he has by faith, as his own act and deed, in the most solemn manner, given up himself to Christ entirely, and without reserve, and professed his obligation to obey him in all things, and to avoid whatever has a tendency to displease him. And therefore he reckons that he is not his own, or, at his own disposal, but Christ's, whose he is, by a double right, not only as purchased by, but as devoted and consecrated to him; and therefore he says with the apostle, *How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* Rom. vi. 2. He says to this purpose, I have given up my name to Christ; and I have not, since that time, seen the least reason to repent of what I did; I have not found the least iniquity in him, neither has he been an hard master; but, on the other hand, has expressed the greatest tenderness and compassion to me, to whose grace alone it is owing, that I am what I am. Shall I therefore abandon his interest, or prove a deserter at last, and turn aside into the enemies' camp? Is there any thing that can be proposed as a sufficient motive hereunto? Such like thoughts as these, through the prevailing influence of the principle of grace implanted and excited by the Spirit, are an effectual means to keep him from a sinful compliance with the motions of the flesh, and to excite him to make the greatest resistance against them.

Thus we have considered the opposition that there is between the flesh and spirit, and how each of these prevail by turns; we might now observe the consequence of the victory obtained on either side. When grace prevails, all things tend to promote our spiritual peace and joy; we are hereby fortified against temptations, and enabled, not only to stand our ground, but made more than conquerors, through him that loved us. However it is not always so with a believer; he sometimes finds, that corrupt nature prevails, and then many sad consequences will ensue hereupon, which not only occasion the loss of that peace and joy which he had before; but expose him to many troubles, which render his life very uncomfortable: and this leads us to consider,

III. What are the consequences of the prevailing power of indwelling sin. When the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and God is pleased to withhold his grace, the soul is subjected to many evils, which are mentioned in the remaining part of this answer, as,

1. A believer is foiled with temptation. Satan gains ground against him by this means, and pursues the victory which the flesh has obtained against the spirit; hereupon his conflicts are doubled, arising not only from *flesh and blood*; but the *rulers of the darkness of this world*, Eph. vi. 12. as the apostle expresses it: now his difficulties encrease upon him, his enemies are more insulting, and he less able to stand his ground against them, his faith weakened, and his fears encreasing, so that he is perpetually subject to bondage; sometimes inclined to think that he shall one day fall, and whatever he formerly thought he had gained, he lost by the assaults of his spiritual enemies; and at other times, to question whether ever he had the truth of grace or no; in which case his spirit must needs be filled with the greatest perplexity, and almost overwhelmed within him. And he is destitute of that boldness or liberty of access to the throne of grace, and that comfortable sense which once he had of his interest in Christ, and finds it very difficult to recover those lively frames which he has lost, or to stand his ground against the great opposition made by corrupt nature, which still increases as faith grows weaker.

2. Another consequence hereof, is his falling into many sins. By which we are not to suppose that he shall be so far left as to fall into a state of unregeneracy, or lose the principle of grace that was implanted in regeneration: nevertheless, when this principle does not exert itself, and corrupt nature on the other hand, is prevalent, it is hard to say how far he will run into the commission of known and wilful sins. As for sins of infirmity, they cannot be avoided, when we are in the best frame: but in this case we shall find a person committing presumptuous sins, so that if we were to judge of his state by his present frames, without considering the former experiences which he has had of the grace of God, we should be ready to question, whether his heart were right with God.

And as for sins of omission, these generally ensue hereupon; he cannot draw nigh to God, with that frame of spirit, which he once had, and therefore is ready to say, *What profit should I have if I pray unto him?* Job xxi. 15. and sometimes concludes, that he contracts guilt by attempting to engage in holy duties. And to this we may add, that he is hindered in all his spiritual services, as it is farther observed in this answer: thus the apostle says, *When I would do good, evil is present with me*, Rom. vii. 21. He finds his heart disposed to wander from

God, and his thoughts taken up with vanity ; upon which account it may be truly said, that his best works are not only imperfect, but defiled in the sight of God, who searcheth the heart, and observes the various steps by which it treacherously departs from him, and can find no way to recover itself till he is pleased to revive his work, take away the guilt which he has contracted, recover him out of the snare into which he has fallen, and so cause the work of grace again to flourish in the soul, as it has once done.

We shall conclude with some inferences from what has been said concerning the imperfection of sanctification in believers, together with the reasons and consequences thereof.

1. Since sinless perfection is not attainable in this life, we should from hence take occasion to give a check to our censorious thoughts concerning persons or things, so as not to determine persons to be in an unconverted state, because they are chargeable with many sinful infirmities, which are not inconsistent with the truth of grace : some abatements are to be made for their being sanctified but in part, and having the remnants of sin in them ; and indeed, the greatest degree of grace which can be attained here, comes far short of that which the saints are arrived to in heaven ; accordingly the difference between a believer and an unregenerate sinner is not in that one is perfect, and the other imperfect ; for when we consider the brightest characters given of any in scripture, their blemishes as well as their graces are recorded ; so that none but our Saviour could challenge the world to convict or reprove them of sin. The apostle speaks of Elias, as a *man subject to like passions as we are*, James v. 17. and he might have instanced in many others. Therefore, when we are sensible of our own imperfections, we ought to enquire, whether the spots we find in ourselves, are like the spots of God's children ? or, whether these infirmities may be reckoned inconsistent with the truth of grace ? which, if they be, though it affords matter for humiliation, that we are liable to any sinful failures, or defects ; yet it will be some encouragement to us, and matter of thanksgiving to God, that notwithstanding this, our hearts are right with him. That we may be, in some measure, satisfied as to this matter, let it be considered,

[1.] That we must distinguish between a person's being tempted to the greatest sins, which are inconsistent with the truth of grace ; and his complying with the temptation. A temptation of this kind may offer itself, and at the same time grace may exert itself in an eminent degree, by the opposition that it makes to it, whether it arises from indwelling sin, or Satan.

[2.] When we read of some sins that are inconsistent with

the truth of grace, such as those which the apostle speaks of, when he says, that *neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. and elsewhere, *the fearful and unbelieving*, as well as those who are guilty of other notorious crimes, are said to *have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*, Rev. xxi. 8. We must distinguish between those who are guilty of these sins in a less degree than what is intended, when they are said to exclude from the kingdom of heaven; and others being guilty thereof, in a notorious degree, with greater aggravations: Thus unbelieving fears in those who are called to suffer for Christ's sake, if they do not issue in a denial of him, are not altogether inconsistent with the truth of grace, though they render a person guilty before God. And the least degree of covetousness, though it is not to be excused, yet it does not exclude from the kingdom of heaven; but the prevailing love of the world, or the immoderate pursuit of it in those who use unlawful means to attain it, or have a rooted habitual desire after it, more than Christ, or put it in his room, this is to be reckoned a mark of ungeneracy.

[3.] We must distinguish between sinful infirmities and allowed infirmities, or such who sin through surprize, as being assaulted by an unforeseen temptation, when not being on their guard; and the same sin committed with deliberation; the latter gives greater ground to fear that a person is in a state of ungeneracy than the former.

We must also distinguish between sins committed and repented of, with that degree of godly sorrow which is proportioned to their respective aggravations; and the same sins committed and continued in with impenitency; the latter gives ground to conclude, that a person is in an unconverted state, though not the former. And the difference arises not barely from the nature of the crimes, for we suppose the sins in themselves to be the same; but from other evidences which a person has or has not of his being in a state of grace.

2. From what has been said concerning the opposition that there is between natural conscience and corrupt nature in the unregenerate, we may infer; that it is a great blessing to have a religious education, as it has a tendency to prevent many enormities, which others, who are destitute of it, run into: Accordingly they who have had this privilege ought to bless God for, and make a right improvement of it. But since those principles which take their rise from thence, are liable, without the grace of God prevent it, to be overcome and lost; let us press after something more than this, and be importunate with God,

whose providence has favoured us thus far, that he would give us a better preservative against sin, or that the prevailing power thereof may be prevented by converting grace.

3. From the opposition that corrupt nature makes in believers to the work of grace, we may infer; that the standing of the best of men, or their not being chargeable with the greatest sins, is not so much owing to themselves as to the grace of God, by which we are what we are, and therefore the glory thereof belongs intirely to him; and that we have reason, when we are praying against our spiritual enemies, to beg that God would deliver us from the greatest of them, namely, ourselves; and that he, who has a sovereignty over the hearts of all men, and can govern and sanctify their natural tempers and dispositions, would keep us from being drawn aside thereby. This should also induce us to walk watchfully, and to be always on our guard, depending on the grace of God for help, that indwelling sin may not so far prevail as to turn aside and alienate our affections from him.

4. From what has been said concerning the flesh and spirit prevailing by turns, we infer the uncertainty of the frame of our spirits, and what changes we are liable to, with respect to the actings of grace, or the comforts that result from it. This somewhat resembles the state of man as subject to various changes, with respect to the dispensations of providence; sometimes lifted up, at other times cast down, and not abiding long in the same condition: Thus we are enabled, at some times, to gain advantage over indwelling sin, and enjoy the comforts which arise from thence; at other times, when the flesh prevails, the acts of grace are interrupted, and its comforts, almost, if not intirely lost. What reason have we therefore to bless God, that though our graces are far from being brought to perfection, and our frames so various; yet he has given us ground to conclude, that grace shall not wholly be lost, and we are assured, that our state, as we are justified, is not liable to the same uncertainty, so that that which interrupts the progress of sanctification, does not bring us into an unjustified state, or render us liable to condemnation?

5. From the inconveniences we sustain by the flesh prevailing against the spirit, as we are foiled by temptation, fall into sins and are hindered in spiritual services, we infer the great hurt that sin does to those who are in a justified and sanctified state, as well as to others, who are under the dominion of it. And therefore it is a vile and unwarrantable way of speaking which some use, who say, that because nothing shall separate them from the love of Christ, or bring them who are justified, back again into an unjustified state, that therefore sin can do them no hurt; as though all the consequences of the prevalency of

corrupt nature, and the dishonour we bring to God, and the guilt we contract hereby, could hardly be reckoned prejudicial; but this is such a way of speaking as confutes itself in the opinion of all judicious and sober Christians.

Again, we might also infer, from the consequences of the prevalency of corruption, as we are liable hereby to be discouraged from, or hindered in the performance of duty; that we ought, if we find it thus with us, to take occasion from hence to enquire, whether some secret sin be not indulged and entertained by us, which gives occasion to the prevalency of corrupt nature, which we ought to be humbled for. Or if we have lived in the omission of those duties which are incumbent on us, or have provoked God to leave us to ourselves, and so have had an hand in our present evils; this affords matter of great humiliation. And we ought to be very importunate with God for restoring grace, not only that our faith may not fail; but that we may be recovered out of the snare in which we are entangled, and may be brought off victorious over all our spiritual enemies.

**QUEST. LXXIX.** *May not true believers, by reason of their imperfections, and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with, fall away from the state of grace?*

**ANSW.** True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God, and his decree and covenant to give them perseverance, their inseparable union with Christ, his continual intercession for them, and the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.

**I**T is natural for persons, when they enjoy any blessing, to be solicitous about their retaining it; otherwise the pleasure that arises from it; if it is like to be short and transitory, is rather an amusement than a solid and substantial happiness. The same may be said of those graces and privileges which believers are made partakers of, as the fruits and effects of the death of Christ: These are undoubtedly the most valuable blessings; therefore it highly concerns us to enquire; whether we may assuredly conclude, that we shall not lose them, and so fail of that future blessedness which we have had so delightful a prospect of?

The saints' perseverance has not only been denied by many since the reformation, and, in particular, by Papists, Socinians, and Remonstrants: But by the Pelagians of old; and all these



whose sentiments bear some affinity to, or are derived from their scheme. And, indeed, when we find persons endeavouring to establish the doctrine of conditional election, universal redemption, &c. or when they explain the nature of human liberty, as they do, who make the grace of God to be dependent on it for its efficacy in the beginning and carrying on the work of conversion and sanctification; and accordingly assert, that the will has an equal power to determine itself to good or evil; or, that the grace of God affords no other assistance to promote the one or fence against the other, than what is objective, or, at least, by supporting our natural faculties; and if there be any divine concurrence, that it consists only in what respects the external dispensations of providence, as a remote means conducive thereunto, the event hereof depending on our own conduct or disposition to improve these means: I say, if persons maintain these and such-like doctrines, it is not to be wondered, when we find them pleading for the possibility of a believer's falling totally and finally from the grace of God. For they who have brought themselves into a state of grace, may apostatize, or fall from it. If the free-will of man first inclined itself to exercise those graces which we call special, such as faith, repentance, love to God, &c. then it will follow, that he may lose them and relapse to the contrary vices; and by this means men may plunge themselves into the same depths of sin and misery from whence they had before escaped; and, according to this scheme, there may be, in the course of our lives, a great many instances of defection from the grace of God, and recovery to it, and finally, a drawing back unto perdition: Or if a person be so happy as to recover himself out of his last apostacy before he leaves the world, then he is saved; otherwise he finally perishes. This is a doctrine which some defend, the contrary whereunto we shall endeavour to maintain, as being the subject insisted on in this answer.

But before we proceed to the defence thereof, it may not be amiss to premise something, which may have, at least, a remote tendency to dispose us to receive conviction from the arguments which may be brought to prove it. Thus we may consider that the contrary side of the question is in itself less desirable, if it could be defended. It is certain, that the doctrine of the possibility of the saints falling from grace, tends very much to abate that delight and comfort which the believer has in the fore-views of the issue and event of his present state. It is a very melancholy thought to consider, that he who is now advanced to the very borders of heaven, may be cast down into hell; or that, though he has at present an interest in the special and discriminating love of God, he may afterwards become the object of his hatred, so as never to be-

hold his face with joy in a future world ; or that, though his feet are set upon a rock, yet his goings are not established ; though he is walking in a plain and safe path, yet he may be ensnared, entangled, and fall, so as never to rise again ; that though God be his friend, yet he may suffer him to fall into the hands of his enemies, and be ruined and undone thereby, as though his own glory were not concerned in his coming off victorious over them, or connected with the salvation of his people : So that, as this doctrine renders the state of believers very precarious and uncertain, it tends effectually to damp their joys, and blast their expectations, and subject them to perpetual bondage ; and it is a great hindrance to their offering praise and thanksgiving to God, whose grace is not so much magnified towards them, as it would be, had they ground to conclude that the work which is now begun, should certainly be brought to perfection.

And on the other hand, the doctrine which we are to maintain, is in itself so very comfortable, that if we were, at present, in suspense concerning the truth thereof, we cannot but desire that it may appear to be agreeable to the mind of God : It is certainly a very delightful thing for us to be assured, that what is at present well, shall end well ; that they who are brought to believe in Christ, shall for ever abide with him ; and that the work of grace, which, at present, affords so fair and pleasing a prospect of its being at last perfected in glory, shall not miscarry. This will have a tendency to enhance our joy in proportion to the ground we have to conclude that the work is true and genuine ; and it will excite our thankfulness to God, when we consider, that he who is the author, will also be the finisher of faith : So that it is certain this doctrine deserves confirmation ; and accordingly we shall endeavour to establish our faith therein in the following method :

I. We shall consider what we are to understand by persevering in grace, or falling from it.

II. We shall prove, that the best believers would certainly fall from grace, were they left to themselves : So that their perseverancq therein, is principally to be ascribed to the power of God, which keeps them, through faith, unto salvation.

III. We shall consider, what ground we have to conclude that the saints shall persevere in grace ; and so explain and illustrate the several arguments insisted on in this answer ; to which we shall add some others taken from several scriptures by which this doctrine may be defended.

IV. We shall endeavour to answer some objections that are generally brought against it.

A. We shall consider what we are to understand by persevering in grace, or falling from it.

1. When we speak of a person as persevering in grace, this supposes that he has the truth of grace. We do not hereby intend that a person may not fall away from a profession of faith; or that no one can lose that which we generally call common grace, which, in many things, bears a resemblance to that which is saving. We have before considered, that there is a temporary faith, whereby persons appear religious, while it comports with their secular interest; but when they are called by reason of persecution or tribulation, which may arise for the sake of the gospel, to forego their worldly interests, or quit their pretensions to religion, they fall away, or lose that grace which they *seemed to have*, as the Evangelist expresses it, Luke viii. 18. We read of some whose hope of salvation is like the spider's web, or the giving up of the ghost; but these are described not as true believers, but hypocrites. It is beyond dispute that such may apostatize, and not only lay aside the external practice of some religious duties, but deny and oppose the doctrines of the gospel, which they once assented to the truth of.

2. It is certain that true believers may fall into very great sins; but yet they shall be recovered and brought again to repentance: therefore we must distinguish between their dishonouring Christ, disobeying his commands, and thereby provoking him to be angry with him; and their falling away totally from him. We have before considered, when we proved that perfection is not attainable in this life, that the best men are sometimes chargeable with great failings and defects. And indeed, sometimes their sins are very heinously aggravated, their conversation in the mean while discovering that they are destitute of the actings of grace, and that to such a degree that they can hardly be distinguished from those who are in an unregenerate state; accordingly it is one thing for a believer not to be able to put forth those acts of grace which he once did; and another thing for him to lose the principle of grace: it would be a very preposterous thing to say, that when David sinned in the matter of Uriah, the principle of grace exerted itself; yet it was not wholly lost. It is not the same in this case, as in the more common instances of the saints' infirmities, which they are daily chargeable with, in which, the conflict that there is between the flesh and spirit appears; for when corrupt nature exerts itself in such a degree that it leads persons to the commission of deliberate and presumptuous sins, they hardly appear to be believers at that time: nevertheless if we compare what they were before they fell, with what they shall be when brought to repentance, we may conclude, that they did not, by their fall, bring themselves altogether into a state of unregeneracy.

3. It is beyond dispute, that as a believer may be destitute of the acts of grace; so he may lose the comforts thereof, and sink into the depths of despair. Of this we have several instances recorded in scripture, which are agreeable to the experiences of many in our day: thus the Psalmist, at one time, speaks of himself, as *cast down, and his soul disquieted within him*, Psal. xliii. 5. and cxvi. 3. And at another time he says, *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.* And elsewhere he complains, *Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies,* Psal. lxxvii. 7—9. And again, a believer is represented as being altogether destitute of a comfortable sense of the divine love, when complaining, *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction? Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off,* Psal. lxxxviii. 6. &c. And it is certain, that when at any time he falls into very great sins, which seem inconsistent with a state of grace, he has no present evidence that he is a believer; and is never favoured with a comfortable sense of his interest in Christ, nor is the joy of God's salvation restored to him, till he is brought unfeignedly to repent of his sin. Former experiences will not evince the truth of grace, while he remains impenitent. It is a bad sign when any one, who formerly appeared to have the truth of grace, but is now fallen into great sins, concludes himself to be in a state of grace, without the exercise of true repentance; for this can be deemed little better than presumption: however, God, whose mercy is infinitely above our deserts, will, in the end, recover him; though, at present, he does not look like one of his children.

4. There are some who suppose that a believer may fall totally, though not finally from grace. And their reason for it is this; because they conclude, as they have sufficient warrant to do, from scripture, that they shall not fall finally, inasmuch as the purpose of God concerning election, must stand; if they had not been chosen to salvation they would never have been brought into a state of grace: they are supposed, before they fell, to have been sanctified; whereas sanctification is inseparably connected with salvation; and therefore, though they consider them, at this time, as having lost the grace of sanctification, and so to have fallen totally; yet they shall be recovered, and therefore not fall finally. Sanctification is Christ's

purchase; and where grace is purchased for any one, a price of redemption is paid for his deliverance from condemnation; and consequently he shall be recovered and saved at last, though, at present, he is, according to their opinion, totally fallen.

These suppose, not only that the acts of grace may be lost, but the very principle, and the reason hereof is, because they cannot see, how great and notorious sins, such as those committed by David, Peter, Solomon, and some others, can consist with a principle of grace: this indeed cuts the knot of some difficulties that seem to attend the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, though falling into great sins: nevertheless, I think it may easily be proved, which we shall endeavour to do, that they shall be preserved from a total, as well as a final apostacy: or, that when they fall into great sins, they do not lose the principle of grace, though it be, at present, inactive; which we shall take occasion to insist on, more particularly under a following head, when we consider that argument mentioned in this answer for the proof of this doctrine taken from the Spirit and seed of God abiding in a believer, as that which preserves him from a total as well as a final apostacy.

II. We shall now consider, that the best believers would certainly fall from grace, were they left to themselves: so that their perseverance therein is principally to be ascribed to the power of God, that keeps them through faith unto salvation. This is particularly observed in this answer, in which several arguments are laid down to prove the doctrine of the saints' perseverance in grace, and it is supposed to be founded on his power, and will, to maintain it. God is styled *the preserver of men*, Job vii. 20. inasmuch as he upholds all things by the word of his power, so that independency on him is inconsistent with the idea of our being creatures; and we have no less ground to conclude, that his power maintains the new creature, or that grace, which took its first rise from him. Should he fail or forsake us, we could not put forth the least act of grace, much less persevere therein. When man at first came out of the hands of God, he was endowed with a greater ability to stand than any one, excepting our Saviour, has been favoured with, since sin entered into the world; yet he apostatized, not from any necessity of nature, but by adhering to that temptation which he might have withstood. Then how unable is he to stand in his present state, who is become weak, and, though brought into a state of grace, renewed and sanctified but in part; having still the remainders of corruption, which maintain a constant opposition to the principle of grace? Our perseverance in grace cannot therefore be owing to ourselves; accordingly the apostle ascribes this to a divine hand, when he

says, that we are kept by the power of God through faith until salvation, 1 Pet. i. 5.

A late celebrated writer, on the other side of the question, attempts to evade the force of this argument to prove the doctrine of perseverance, though I think, without much strength of reasoning, when he says; that all who are preserved to salvation, are kept by the power of God, but not that all believers are so kept.

To which it may be replied, that all believers, whose character answers that of the church, to which the apostle writes, shall be saved; namely, all who are *begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them; whose faith, after it has been tried, shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 7.* I say, these shall certainly be saved: therefore, if all who are thus preserved to salvation, are kept by the power of God, this is all we need contend for. And whereas he adds, that when they are said to be kept through faith, the meaning is, they are kept, if they continue in the faith. To this it may be replied, That their continuance in the faith was put out of all dispute, by what is said concerning them in the words going before and following, as now referred to. And as to his argument, it amounts to no more than this; that they shall be kept by the power of God, if they keep themselves; or they shall persevere if they persevere, to which I need make no reply.

But since our main design in this head is not to prove that believers shall persevere, which we reserve to our next; but to shew that whatever we assert concerning their perseverance, take its rise from God; we shall consider this as plainly contained in scripture. Accordingly the apostle speaks of the Lord's *delivering him from every evil work, and preserving him to his heavenly kingdom, 2 Tim. iv. 18.* Jude, ver. 1. and the apostle Jude speaks of believers as *sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called, or as being first called, and then preserved by God the Father, through the intervention of Christ, our great Mediator, till they are brought to glory.* And our Saviour, in his affectionate prayer for his church, a little before he left the world, says, *Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, John xvii. 11.* which not only proves that the perseverance of the saints is owing to God, but that the glory of his own name is concerned herein; therefore it is not from ourselves, but him: and there is another scripture, in which our Saviour, speaks of the perseverance of his *sheep* in grace, and of his

\* See Whitby's discourse, &c. page 463.

giving them eternal life, and adds, that *they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand*, chap. x. 28. therefore it is owing to his care, as the great Shepherd of the sheep, and to his power, that is superior to that of all those who attempt to destroy them, that they shall persevere in grace. And this leads us to consider,

III. What ground we have to conclude that the saints shall persevere in grace, and so explain and illustrate the arguments insisted on in this answer, together with some others that may be taken from the sense of several scriptures, by which this doctrine may be defended.

1. The saints' perseverance in grace may be proved from the unchangeable love of God; and his decree and purpose, relating to their salvation, in which it is discovered and executed. That God loved them with a love of good-will, before they were inclined to express any love to him, is evident; because their love to him is assigned as the effect and consequence of his love to them, as the apostle says, *We love him because he first loved us*, 1 John iv. 19. Therefore this love of God to his people, must be considered as an immanent act; from whence it follows, that it was from eternity, since all God's immanent acts are eternal: and this is particularly expressed by the prophet, when he says, *The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love*, Jer. xxxi. 3. If this be meant of a love that shall never have an end, it plainly proves the doctrine we are defending; but inasmuch as the words that immediately follow, *Therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee*, seem to intimate that this everlasting love is that which was from everlasting; as his drawing them or bringing them into a converted state is the result hereof: therefore this everlasting love is the same as his eternal purpose, or design to save them. If there be such an eternal purpose relating to their salvation, this necessarily infers their perseverance; and that there was such a design in God has been already proved under a foregoing answer\*. And they who are the objects of this eternal purpose of grace are frequently described, in scripture, as believers, inasmuch as faith and salvation are inseparably connected together; therefore, the execution of God's purpose in giving faith, necessarily infers the execution thereof, in saving them that believe.

- That this purpose of grace is unchangeable, has been before proved †; and may be farther argued from what the apostle speaks concerning *the immutability of his counsel*, shewn to the heirs of promise, as the ground of that strong consolation which they have *who are flying for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them*, Heb. vi. 17, 18. Therefore, if God cannot change

\* See Vol. I. Page 469.

† See Vol. I. page 481, and page 135-138.

his purpose, relating to the salvation of believers, it necessarily follows, that they shall certainly attain this salvation, and consequently, that they shall persevere in grace.

*Obj.* To this it will be objected, that though God may be said to love his people, while they retain their integrity, yet they may provoke him by their sins to cast them off; therefore the present exercise of divine love to them is no certain argument that it shall be extended to the end, so as that, by virtue hereof, he will enable them to persevere, and then bring them to glory.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied; that we do not deny that believers, by their sins, may provoke God so far, as that, if he should mark their iniquities, or deal with them according to the demerit thereof, he would cast them off for ever; but this he will not do, because it is inconsistent with his purpose to recover them from their backslidings, and forgive their iniquities. Moreover, it cannot be denied, that, notwithstanding God's eternal love to them, there are many instances of his hatred and displeasure expressed in the external dispensations of his providence, which are as often changed, as their conduct towards him is changed; but this does not infer a change in God's purpose: he may testify his displeasure against them, or as the Psalmist expresses it, *Visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes*, Psal. lxxxix. 32. Nevertheless he cannot change his resolution to save them; and therefore, by some methods of grace, he will recover them from their backslidings, and enable them to persevere in grace, since his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

2. Another argument to prove the saints' perseverance, may be taken from the covenant of grace, and the many promises respecting their salvation, which are contained therein. That this may appear, let it be considered,

(1.) That Christ was appointed to be the head of this covenant, as was observed in a foregoing answer\*; and accordingly there was an eternal transaction between the Father and him; in which, all things were stipulated in the behalf of his elect, whom he therein represented, which relate to their everlasting salvation. In this covenant God the Father, not only promised that he should *have a seed to serve him*, Psal. xxii. 30. but that he should *see his seed*; and that *the pleasure of the Lord, with relation to them, should prosper in his hand*; that he should *see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied*, Isa. liii. 10, 11. which implies, that he should see the fruits and effects of all that he had done and suffered for them, in order to their salvation; and this is not spoken of some of them, but of all; and it could not have had its accomplishment, were it possible for them not to persevere in grace.

\* See *Vo. II. page 170, 171.*



(2.) In this covenant, Christ has undertaken to keep them, as the result of his becoming a Surety for them, in which he not only engaged to pay the debt of obedience and sufferings that was due from them, which he has already done; but that he would work all that grace in them which he purchased by his blood; and he has already begun this work in them which is not yet accomplished: can we therefore suppose that he will not bring it to perfection, nor enable them to endure to the end, that they may be saved, which would argue the greatest unfaithfulness in him, who is styled Faithful and True?

Moreover, as there are engagements on Christ's part, relating hereunto, and in pursuance thereof, they are said to be in his hand; so the Father has given them an additional security, that they shall be preserved from apostasy; and therefore they are also said to be *in his hand*; from whence *none can pluck them out*; and from thence it is argued, that *they shall never perish*, John x. 28, 29. And we may observe, that the life which Christ is said to give them respects not only the beginning thereof, in the first grace which they are made partakers of in conversion; but it is called *eternal life*, which certainly denotes the completing of this work in their everlasting salvation.

(3.) The subject-matter of the promises contained in the covenant of grace, relates not only to their sanctification here, but salvation hereafter; in which respect it is called *an everlasting covenant*, and the mercies thereof, *the sure mercies of David*, Isa. lv. 3, 4. that is, either those mercies which David, who had an interest in this covenant, was given to expect; or mercies which Christ had engaged to purchase and bestow, who is here called David, as elsewhere, Hos. iii. 5. inasmuch as David was an eminent type of him, as well as because he was his seed according to the flesh; and that this is the more probable sense of the two, appears from the following words, in which he is said to be *given for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people*: and if these mercies are in Christ's hand to apply, it is no wonder that they are styled *sure mercies*.

We might here consider the covenant of grace as containing in it all the promises that respect the beginning, carrying on, or completing the salvation of his people; and these relate not only to what God will do for them; but what he will enable them to be, and do, in those things that concern their faithfulness to him, whereby they have the highest security that they shall behave themselves as becomes a covenant-people. Thus he assures them, that he will be to them a God, that is, that he will glorify his divine perfections in bestowing on them the special and distinguishing blessings of the covenant; and

that they shall be to him a people, that is, shall behave themselves so as that they shall not, by apostacy from him, oblige him to disown his relation to them, or exclude them from his covenant. He has not only encouraged them to expect those great things that he would do for them, provided they yielded obedience to his law; but that he would *put his law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*, whereby they might be disposed to obey him: and when he says, that they *shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord*, he gives them to understand that they should not only teach or instruct one other in the knowledge of God, which respects their being favoured with the external means of grace; but that they *should all know him, from the least of them unto the greatest*. This not only denotes that they should have a speculative knowledge of divine truth, but a saving knowledge thereof; which is inseparably connected with *life eternal*, John xvii. 3. as appears from its being accompanied with, or flowing from forgiveness of sin, as it immediately follows; *for I will forgive their iniquity*; and this is expressed with a peculiar emphasis, which is certainly inconsistent with their falling from a justified state, when it is said, *I will remember their sin no more*, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. And elsewhere, when God speaks of his *making an everlasting covenant* with his people, chap. xxxii. 40. he promises that *he will not turn away from them to do them good*; and, inasmuch as they are prone, by reason of the deceitfulness of their hearts, to turn aside from him, he adds, *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me*; it is not only said that he will not turn from them, if they fear him; but he gives them security in this covenant, that they shall fear him: can we therefore conclude that they, in whom this covenant is so far made good, that God has put his fear in their hearts, which is supposed in their being believers, shall not attain the other blessing promised, to wit, that of their not departing from him?

Moreover, the stability of this covenant, as a foundation of the saints' perseverance, is set forth by a metaphor, taken from the most fixed and stable parts of nature; and it is said to exceed them herein; *The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee*, Isa. liv. 10.

*Object.* The principal objection that is brought to enervate the force of this argument taken from those promises of the covenant, which respect the saints' perseverance, is, that they are to be considered either as conditional, and the conditions thereof not fulfilled, in which case they are not obliging, and therefore God is not bound to give salvation to those to whom

he has promised it, upon these conditions; or else they are to be considered as made to a political body, viz. the Jewish nation, in which case it is not to be supposed that they respect their eternal salvation, but only some temporal deliverance which they were to be made partakers of, that belonged to that church in general; for everlasting salvation is never considered as a blessing that shall be applied to whole nations, how much soever an whole nation may partake of the common gifts of divine bounty which are bestowed in this world.

*Ans.* In answer to this objection, in both its branches, I need only refer to what has been said elsewhere. As to the former branch thereof, we have endeavoured to shew how those scriptures are to be understood which are laid down in a conditional form, without supposing that they militate against the absoluteness of God's purpose, or its unchangeableness, and independency on the conduct of men.\* And as to the latter branch thereof; what has been said in answer to an objection of the like nature, brought against the doctrine of election by Dr. Whitby, and others, who suppose that the blessings, which the elect are said to be made partakers of in scripture, respect the nation of the Jews, or the church in general, and not a particular number chosen out of them to salvation; and that the promises which are directed to them, are only such as they were given to expect, as a church or political body of men, may well be applied to our present purpose, and serve as an answer to this objection; † therefore all that I shall add by way of reply to it, in this place, is,

[1.] If any thing be annexed to these promises of the covenant, that gives occasion for some to conclude, that it is conditional, we must take heed that we do not understand such expressions as denoting the dependance of God's determinations on the arbitrary will of man; as though his purpose relating to the salvation of his people were indeterminate, and it were a matter of doubt with him, as well as with us, whether he should fulfil it or no; because it is uncertain whether the conditions thereof shall be performed; for this supposition is inconsistent with the divine perfections: but, if, on the other hand, we suppose that the grace or duty annexed to the promise, must have some idea of a condition contained in it; this may be understood according to the tenor of God's revealed will, as denoting nothing else but a condition of our expectation, or of our claim to the blessing promised; and then nothing can be inferred from hence, but that some who lay claim to, or expect salvation, without performing the condition thereof, may apostatize, and so miss of it; which does not in the least militate against the doctrine we are defending.

\* See Vol. I. page 477, & alibi passim. † See Vol. I. page 437.

And to this we may farther add, that when such a condition is annexed to a promise (for I will not decline to call it so, in the sense but now laid down) and there is another promise added, in which God engages that he will enable them to perform this condition, that is equivalent to an absolute promise; and of this kind are those conditions that are mentioned in the scriptures before referred to, as has been already observed. When God promises that he will be a God to them, that he will forgive their iniquities, and never reverse the sentence of forgiveness, or remember their sins no more, and that he will never turn away from them to do them good; he, at the same time promises, that he will put his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and put his fear in their hearts, and so enable them to behave themselves as his people, or to be to him a people; and when God sets forth the stability of his covenant, and intimates that it should not be removed, he adds, that his kindness shall not depart from them, which kindness does not barely respect some temporal blessings which he would bestow upon them, but his extending that grace to them that should keep them faithful to him; and therefore he says, *that in righteousness they should be established*; which contains a promise to maintain grace in them, without which they could hardly be said to be established in righteousness, as well as that he would perform the other things promised to them in this covenant.

[2.] As to the other branch of the objection, in which the promises are considered as given to the church in general, or to the Jews, as a political body of men; and that this cannot be supposed to respect their everlasting salvation, but only some temporal blessings which they should enjoy, it may be replied, That this is to be determined by the express words contained in the promise: if God tells them that he will do that for them which includes more in it than the blessings which they are supposed to enjoy, that are of a temporal nature, we are not to conclude that there is nothing of salvation contained in them, when the words seem to imply that there is. And though these promises are said to be given to the Jews, as a political body of men, and there are some circumstances therein, which have an immediate and particular relation to them: yet the promises of special grace and salvation were to be applied only by those who believed amongst them; and the same promises are to be applied by believers in all ages; or else we must understand those scriptures only as an historical relation of things that do not belong to us; which would tend very much to detract from the spirituality and usefulness of many parts of scripture.

To make this appear, we might consider some promises

which, when first made, had a particular relation to God's dealings with his people in those circumstances in which they were at that time; which, notwithstanding, are applied in a more extensive manner, to New Testament believers in all ages. Thus when God tells his people, in the scripture before referred to, that *all thy children shall be taught of the Lord*, Isa. liv. 13. whatever respect this may have to the church of the Jews, our Saviour applies it in a more extensive way, as belonging to believers in all ages, when he says, *Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me*, John vi. 45. And when God promises Joshua that *he would not fail nor forsake him*, and encourages him thereby, *not to fear nor be dismayed*, Josh. i. 5, 9. when he was to pass over Jordan, into the land of Canaan; and after that, to engage in a work which was attended with many difficulties: this promise is applied, by the apostle, as an inducement to believers, in his day, to be *content with such things as they have*; accordingly he adds, that what God told Joshua of old, the same was written for their encouragement, *viz. that he would never leave them, nor forsake them*, Heb. xiii. 5. We cannot therefore but conclude from hence, that this objection is of no force in either of its branches, to overthrow the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, as founded on the stability of the promises of the covenant of grace.

3. The saints' perseverance in grace may be farther proved from their inseparable union with Christ: this union is not only federal, as he is the head of the covenant of grace, and they his members, whose salvation he has engaged to bring about, as was observed under the last head; but he may be considered also as their vital head, from whom they receive spiritual life and influence; so that as long as they abide in him, their spiritual life is maintained as derived from him: if we consider the church, or the whole election of grace as united to him, it is called, *His body*, Col. i. 24. *the fulness of him that filleth all in all*, Eph. i. 23. and every believer being a member of this body, or a part, if I may so express it, of this fulness, if it should perish and be separated from him, his body would be defective, and he would sustain a loss of that which is an ingredient in his fulness.

Moreover, as this union includes in it that relation between Christ and his people, which is, by a metaphorical way of speaking, styled conjugal;\* and accordingly is mutual, as the result of his becoming theirs by an act of grace, and they his by an act of self-dedication; this is the foundation of mutual love, which is abiding, it is certainly so on his part; because it is unchangeable, as founded on a covenant-engagement, which he cannot

\* See Page 11, 12, *ante*.

violate; and though their love to him be in itself subject to change, through the prevalency of corrupt nature, which too much inclines them to be unstedfast in this marriage-covenant; yet he will recover and bring them back to him, and will not deal with them as persons do with strangers, whom they exclude from their presence or favour, if they render themselves unworthy of it; but they who stand in a nearer relation to him, and accordingly are the objects of his special love, shall not be cast off for ever, how much soever he may resent their unworthy behaviour to him. Not to be separate from Christ, is, according to the apostle's expression, not to *be separated* from his love; and this, he says, he was *persuaded* that he should not be, or *that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to do it*; Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39. Accordingly it is said, *that having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end*, John xiii. 1.

Here I cannot but take notice of a very jejune and empty sense which some give of this text, to evade the force of the argument taken from it, to prove the doctrine we are maintaining. How plausible soever it may seem to be to those who conclude that this must be the true sense, because it favours their own cause: by *his own* they mean no other than Christ's disciples, whom he was at that time conversant with; and indeed, they apply whatever Christ says, in some following chapters, to them, exclusive of all others; as when he says, *Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world*, chap. xv. 19. and *because I live, ye shall live also*, chap. xiv. 19. This, they suppose, respects them in particular; and so in the text before us, *having loved his own which were in the world*; that is, his own disciples; as though he had a propriety in none but them; *he loved them to the end*; that is, not to the end of their lives; for that would prove the doctrine we are maintaining, but to the end of his life, which was now at hand; and his love to them, they suppose to be expressed in this, that he condescended to wash their feet. But if this were the sense of the words, his love to them would not be so extraordinary a privilege as it really is; for it would be only an instance of human and not divine love. And indeed, our happiness consists, not only in Christ's loving us to the end of his life; but in his continuing to express his love in his going into heaven to prepare a place, and there making continual intercession for us; and in the end, in his coming again to receive us to himself, that where he is, we may be also; which leads us to consider,

4. That the saints' perseverance farther appears from Christ's

continual intercession for them. This has been particularly explained in a foregoing answer; \* and the apostle speaking of his *ever living to make intercession* for his people, infers that *he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him*, Heb. vii. 25. This he could not be said to do, should he leave the work which he has begun in them, imperfect, and suffer them, who come to him by faith, to apostatize from him. We have before considered Christ's intercession, as including in it his appearing in the presence of God, in the behalf of those for whom he offered himself a sacrifice while here on earth; and also, that what he intercedes for shall certainly be granted him, not only because he is the Son of God, in whom he is well pleased, but because he pleads his own merits; and to deny to grant what he merited, would be, in effect, to deny the sufficiency thereof, as though the purchase had not been fully satisfactory; therefore we must conclude, as he himself said on earth, that *the Father heareth him always*. It is also evident, that he prays for the perseverance of his people, as he says to Peter, *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*, Luke xxii. 32. And there are many things in that affectionate prayer, mentioned in John xvii. which he put up to God, immediately before his last sufferings, which respect their perseverance in grace; as when he says, *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are*, John xvii. 11. and, *I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil*, ver. 15. that is, either the evil that often attends the condition in which they are, in the world, that so the work of grace may not suffer, at least, not miscarry thereby; or else, that he would keep them from the evil one, that so they may not be brought again under his dominion; he also prays, *that they may be made perfect in one*, ver. 23. that is, not only that they may be perfectly joined together in the same design, but that this unanimity may continue till they are brought to a state of perfection; and *that the world may know that God has loved them, even as he has loved Christ*. And he declares his *will*; which shews that his intercession is founded on justice, and accordingly contains in it the nature of a demand, rather than a supplication for what might be given or denied, namely, *That they whom the Father had given him might be with him where he is, that they may behold his glory*, ver. 24. all which expressions are very inconsistent with the supposition; that it is possible that they, whom he thus intercedes for, may apostatize, or fall short of salvation.

*Object.* It is objected by some, that this prayer respects

\* See Vol. II. page 473—479. Quest. lv.

none but his disciples, who were his immediate friends and followers, and not believers in all ages and places in the world.

*Answ.* But to this it may be replied, That the contrary hereunto is evident, from several things which are mentioned in this prayer, as for instance, he says, *That the Father had given him power over all flesh; that he should give eternal life to as many as he had given him,* ver. 2. the sense of which words will sink too low, if we suppose that he intends thereby, thou hast given me power to dispose of all persons and things in this world, that I may give eternal life to that small number which thou hast given me, namely, my disciples; whereas he speaks of that universal dominion which he has over all persons and things, which were committed to him with this view, that all those who were put into his hand to redeem and save, should attain eternal life: and again, he says, *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word,* ver. 6. Did Christ manifest the divine name and glory to none but those who were his disciples; and were there none but them that had kept his word? And when he says, that they whom he prayed for, are the Father's; and adds, that *all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them,* ver. 9, 10. Is the number of those, whom Christ has a right to, and the Father has set apart for himself, in whom he would shew forth his glory, as the objects of his love, and in whom Christ, as Mediator, was to be glorified, so small, as that it contained only the eleven disciples? Or does it not rather respect all that have, or shall believe, from the beginning to the end of time? and when he speaks of *the world's hating them, because they are not of the world,* John xvii. 14, 15. and of their being exposed to the evils that are in the world, or the assaults of Satan, who is their avowed enemy; is this only applicable to the disciples? And when he says, *Neither pray I for these alone,* that is, for those who now believe, *but for them also which shall believe,* ver. 20. does it not plainly intimate that he had others in view besides his disciples? These, and several other passages in this prayer, are a sufficient evidence that there is no weight in the objection, to overthrow the argument we are maintaining.

5. Believers' perseverance in grace may be proved from the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them. When at first they were regenerated, it was by the power of the Holy Ghost, as condescending to come and take up his abode in them: thus we read of their being acted by, and under the influence of, the Holy Ghost, who is said to dwell where he is pleased to display his divine power and glory; and if these displays hereof be internal, then he dwells in the heart. Our Saviour speaks



of him, as another Comforter given, that he may abide with his people for ever, chap. xiv. 19. And this indwelling of the Spirit is very distinct from that extraordinary dispensation which the church had, when they were favoured with inspiration; for the apostle speaks of it as a privilege peculiar to believers as such, when he says, *Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you: Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, Rom. viii. 9. the meaning of which cannot be, that they have no interest in Christ, who have not the extraordinary *afflatus* of the Spirit, such as the prophets had; therefore we must suppose, that this is a privilege which believers have in all ages. Now if the Spirit is pleased to condescend thus to take up his abode in the soul, and that for ever, he will certainly preserve it from apostasy.

And to this we may add, that there are several fruits and effects of the Spirit's dwelling in the soul, which affords an additional proof of this doctrine: thus believers are said to have *the first fruits of the Spirit*, ver. 23. that is, they have those graces wrought in them which are the beginning of salvation; and as the first fruits are a part of the harvest that will follow, these are the fore-tastes of the heavenly blessedness which God would never have bestowed upon them had he not designed to preserve them from apostasy. Moreover, believers are said to be *sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of their inheritance*, Eph. i. 13, 14. The earnest, as given by men, is generally deemed a part of payment, upon which they who are made partakers thereof, are satisfied that they shall, at last, receive the full reward; and shall believers miss of the heavenly blessedness, who have such a glorious pledge and earnest of it? Again, if we consider *the Spirit as bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; and that they shall be glorified together with him*, Rom. viii. 16, 17. is this testimony invalid, or not to be depended on, which it could not be were it possible for them to fall from a state of grace?

This testimony is what we depend very much upon, in order to our attaining assurance that we are in a state of grace, and shall persevere therein, as will be observed under the next answer; therefore we shall at present, take it for granted, that there is such a thing as assurance, or that this blessing is attainable; and the use which I would make of this supposition to maintain our present argument, is, that if the Spirit has an hand in working or encouraging this hope that we have of the truth of grace, and consequently shall persevere therein to salvation, this argues that it is warrantable, and not delusive; for

he that is the author or giver of it cannot deceive our expectation, or put us upon looking for that which is not a reality. From whence it follows, that it is impossible that they should apostatize, to whom *God has given this good hope through grace*, so that they should fail of that *everlasting consolation*, which is connected with it, 2 Thess. ii. 16. This consequence will hardly be denied by those who are on the other side of the question; and we may observe, that they who oppose the doctrine of perseverance, always deny that of assurance, especially as proceeding from the testimony of the Spirit: nevertheless, that we may not be misunderstood, we do not say, that every one who has a strong persuasion that he shall be saved, shall be saved; which is no other than enthusiasm; but our argument is, in short, this, that if there be a witness of the Spirit to this truth, that cannot be charged therewith, then the doctrine we are maintaining, is undeniably true, which will more evidently appear from what will be said in defence of the doctrine of assurance under our next answer.

And therefore we proceed to the other branch of the argument before-mentioned, to prove this doctrine, namely, that *believers have the seed of God abiding in them*; which is founded on what the apostle says in 1 John iii. 9. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God*; for the understanding of which let us consider,

(1.) That by the words, *he cannot commit sin*, the apostle does not intend that such an one is not a sinner, or that there is such a thing as sinless perfection attainable in this life; for that is contrary, not only to the whole tenor of scripture, and daily experience of mankind; but to what he had expressly said, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*, 1 John i. 8. Therefore, in this text, upon which our present argument is founded, he is, doubtless, speaking of persons committing sins, inconsistent with the truth of grace, as he says in a foregoing verse, *Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him*, chap. iii. 6. it is such a sin therefore as argues a person to be in a state of unregeneracy; and then, *He that committeth sin is of the devil*, ver. 8. therefore he certainly speaks of such a commission of sin, as argues us to be under the reigning power of the devil: and that this may plainly appear to be his sense, we may observe, that he elsewhere distinguishes between *a sin that is unto death*, and a sin that is *not unto death*, chap. v. 16, 17. by which he does not mean, as the Papists suppose, that some sins deserve eternal death, and others not; the former of which they call mortal sins, the latter venial; but he is speaking of a sin that is inconsistent with the principle of grace, and that which is consistent

therewith; the former is sometimes called *the pollution that is in the world, through lust*, 2 Pet. i. 4. the latter *the spot of God's children*, Deut. xxxii. 5. The least sin deserves death, though they who commit it shall not perish, but be brought to repentance; but the *sin unto death* is wilful sin, committed and continued in with impenitency; and with this limitation we are to understand the apostle's words, *He who is born of God doth not commit sin*.

(2.) We shall now consider the reason assigned, why the person he speaks of, cannot, in this sense, commit sin; namely, because he is *born of God*, and *the seed of God abideth in him*. To be born of God, is what is elsewhere styled regeneration, or being born of the Spirit, in which there is a principle of grace implanted, which is here called *the seed of God*. And, indeed, this metaphorical way of speaking is very expressive of the thing designed hereby; for as in nature the seed produces fruit, and in things moral, the principle of action produces action, as the principle of reason produces acts of reason: so in things spiritual, the principle of grace produces acts of grace; and this principle being from God, which has been largely proved under a foregoing answer,\* it is called here, *the seed of God*.

(3.) This seed of God, or this principle is not barely said to be in the believer, as that which, for the present, is the ground of spiritual actions; but it is said to *remain in him*. As elsewhere Christ speaks of the Spirit as *abiding* with his people *for ever*, John xiv. 16. so here the apostle speaks of that principle of grace wrought by the Spirit, as *abiding*, that is, continuing for ever; and from thence he infers, that a believer *cannot sin*; for if he had been only speaking of its being implanted, but not abiding; all that could be inferred from thence would be, that he does not sin; but whereas, he argues from it, that he cannot sin, that is, apostatize; it being understood, that this principle abides in him continually; which plainly contains the sense of the argument we are maintaining, namely, that because the seed of God abides in a believer, therefore he cannot apostatize, or fall short of salvation.

They who are on the other side of the question, seem to find it very difficult to evade the force of this argument: some suppose that the apostle intends no more but that he that is born of God, should not commit sin; but that is not only remote from the sense of the words *cannot sin*; † but it does not sufficiently distinguish one that is born of God, from another that is not so; for it is as much a truth, that an unregenerate person ought not to sin, as when we speak of one that is regenerate.

Others, by not sinning, suppose that the apostle means, they

\* See Page 30, ante.

† The words are a *divinus auctoritas*.

sin with difficulty, or they are hardly brought to commit sin ; but as this also does not answer to the sense of the word *cannot* sin, so it is inconsistent with that beautiful gradation, which we may observe in the words. To say that he does not sin ; and then if he commits sin, it is with some difficulty, is not so agreeable to that climax, which the apostle makes use of, when he says, he does not commit sin, yea, he cannot.

Others suppose that the apostle's meaning is, that he that is born of God, cannot sin unto death, or apostatize, so as to fall short of salvation, so long as he makes a right use of this principle of grace, which is implanted in him ; but by opposing and afterwards extinguishing it, he may become an apostate. But we may observe ; in answer to this, that the apostle does not attribute his perseverance in grace, to his making use of the principle, but his having it, or its abiding in him ; and he sufficiently fences against the supposition of its being possible that the principle of grace may be wholly lost ; for then this seed could not be said to abide in him, nor would the inference deduced from its abiding in him, namely, that he cannot sin, be just.

Thus, concerning this latter branch of the argument to prove the saints' perseverance in grace, taken from the seed of God, abiding in believers : But there is one thing must be observed before I dismiss this head, *viz.* That the principle of grace, which is signified by this metaphor, though it be, and abide in a believer ; yet it does not always exert itself so as to produce those acts of grace which would otherwise proceed from it. This cannot be better illustrated than by a similitude taken from the soul, which is the principle of reason in man ; though it be as much so in an infant in the womb as it is in any, yet it is altogether unactive ; for most allow that such have not the exercise of thought or acts of reason ; and when a person is newly born, it hardly appears that this principle is deduced into act ; and in those in whom it has been deduced into act, it may be rendered stupid, and almost unactive, or at least, so disordered, that the actions which proceed from it cannot be styled rational, through the influence of some bodily disease, with which it is affected, yet still it remains a principle of reason. The same may be said concerning the principle of grace ; it is certainly an unactive principle in those who are regenerate from the womb ; and it may cease to exert itself, and be with equal reason, styled an unactive principle in believers, when they fall into very great sins, to which it offers no resistance : This we shall take occasion to apply under a following head, when we shall consider some objections that are brought against this doctrine, by those who suppose that believers, when sinning presumptuously, as David, Peter, and others, are said to have

done, fall totally, though not finally. There was indeed a total suspension of the activity of this principle, but yet the principle itself was not wholly lost; but more of this in its proper place. We are therefore bound to conclude, that because this principle abides in them, they can neither totally nor finally apostatize, and therefore, that they can neither fall from a state of grace, nor fail, at last, of salvation.

Thus we have endeavoured to explain and shew the force of those arguments which are contained in this answer to prove the doctrine of the saints' perseverance. There are several others that might have been insisted on; and particularly it may be proved, from the end and design of Christ's death, which was not only that he might purchase to himself a peculiar people, but that he might purchase eternal life for them; and we cannot think that this invaluable price would have been given for the procuring of that which should not be applied, in which respect Christ would be said to die in vain. When a person gives a price for any thing, it is with this design, that he or they, for whom he purchased it, should be put into the possession of it; which, if it be not done, the price that was given is reckoned lost, and the person that gave it disappointed hereby.

And this argument may be considered as having still more weight in it, if we observe, that the salvation of those whom Christ has redeemed, not only redounds to their happiness, but to the glory of God the Father, and of Christ, our great Redeemer. God the Father, in giving Christ to be a propitiation for sin, designed to bring more glory to his name than by all his other works: Thus our Saviour appeals to him in the close of his life, *I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*, John xvii. 14. The work was his, and there was a revenue of glory which he expected thereby; and this glory did not only consist in his receiving a full satisfaction for sin, that so he might take occasion to advance his grace in forgiving it; but he is said to be glorified, when his people are enabled to *bear much fruit*, chap. xv. 8. Therefore the glory of God the Father is advanced by the application of redemption, and consequently by bringing his redeemed ones to perfection.

The Son is also glorified, not barely by his having those honours, which his human nature is advanced to, as the consequence of his finishing the work of redemption, but by the application thereof to his people; accordingly he is said to be *glorified in them*, chap. xviii. 10. that is, his mediatorial glory is rendered illustrious by all the grace that is conferred upon them; and therefore, certainly he will be eminently glorified, when they are brought to be with him, where he is, to behold

his glory. Now can we suppose, that since the Father and the Son designed to have so great a glory redound to them by the work of our redemption, that they will sustain any loss thereof, for want of the application of it to them, for whom it was purchased. If God designed, as the consequence thereof, that the saints should sing that new song, *Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*: And if God the Father, and the Son, are both joined together, and their glory celebrated therein, by their ascribing *blessing, glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever*, Rev. v. 19. compared with 13. Then certainly they will not lose this glory; and therefore, the saints shall be brought into that state where they shall have occasion thus to praise and adore them for it.

If it be objected to this, that God, the Father and the Son, will be glorified, though many of his saints should apostatize, and the death of Christ be, to no purpose, with respect to them, because all shall not apostatize. The answer to this is plain and easy; that though he could not be said to lose the glory he designed, by the salvation of those who persevere, yet some branches of his glory would be lost, by reason of the apostacy of others, who fall short of salvation; and it is a dishonour to him to suppose that he will lose the least branch thereof, or that any of those, for whom Christ died, should be for ever lost.

We might also add, that for the same reason that we suppose one whom Christ has redeemed, should be lost, all might be lost, and so he would lose all the glory he designed to have in the work of redemption. This appears, in that all are liable to those temptations, which, if complied with, have a tendency to ruin them. All are supposed to be renewed and sanctified but in part, and consequently the work of grace meets with those obstructions from corrupt nature; which would certainly prove too hard for all our strength, and baffle our utmost endeavours to persevere, did not God appear in our behalf, and keep us by his power. Now, if all need strength from him to stand, and must say, that without him they can do nothing, then we must either suppose, that that grace is given to all saints which shall enable them to persevere, or else that it is given to none; if it be given to none, but all are left to themselves, then that which overthrows the faith of one, would overthrow the faith of all; and consequently we might conclude, that whatever God the Father, or the Son have done, in order to the redemption and salvation of the elect might be of none effect.

I might produce many other arguments in defence of the saints' perseverance, but shall conclude this head with two or

Three scriptures, whereby the truth hereof will farther appear: Thus our Saviour says to the woman of Samaria, *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*, John iv. 14. Where, by the water that Christ gives, is doubtless understood the gifts and graces of the Spirit; these are not like the waters of a brook, that often deceive the expectation of the traveller; but they are a well of water, intimating that a believer shall have a constant supply of grace and peace till he is brought to the rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right-hand, and is made partaker of eternal life. Again, our Saviour says, *He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life*, chap. v. 24. *i. e.* it is as surely his as though he was in the actual possession of it; and he farther intimates, that such are not only justified for the present; but they shall not come into condemnation; certainly this implies that their salvation is so secure as that it is impossible for them to perish eternally.

Another scripture that plainly proves this doctrine, is in 2 Tim. ii. 19. *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*; in which words the apostle encourages the church to hope for perseverance in grace, after they had had a sad instance of two persons of note, *viz.* Hymeneus and Philetus, who had not only erred from the truth, but overthrown the faith of some; and he cautions every one, who makes a profession of religion, as they would be kept from apostatizing, to depart from iniquity, *q. d.* since many of you are ready to fear that your faith shall be overthrown, as well as that of others, by the sophistry or cunning arts of those apostates who lie in wait to deceive, you may be assured that their state is safe, who are built upon that foundation which God has laid, that *chief corner stone, elect, precious, viz.* Christ, on whom he that believeth, shall not be confounded, 1 Pet. ii. 6. or else, that the instability of human conduct shall not render it a matter of uncertainty, whether they, who are ordained to eternal life, shall be saved or no; for that depends on God's purpose, relating hereunto, which is a sure foundation, and has this seal annexed to it, whereby our faith herein may be confirmed, that they whom God has set apart for himself, and lays a special claim to, as his chosen and redeemed ones, whom he has foreknown and loved with an everlasting love, shall not perish eternally, because the purpose of God cannot be frustrated. But inasmuch as there is no special revelation given to particular persons, that they are the objects of this purpose of grace; therefore every one that names

or professes the name of Christ ought to use the utmost caution, that they be not ensnared; let them depart from all iniquity, and not converse with those who endeavour to overthrow their faith. And, indeed, all that are faithful shall be kept from iniquity by God, as they are here given to understand that it is their duty to endeavour to depart from it, and consequently they shall be kept from apostacy. This seems to be the sense of these words; and it is agreeable to the analogy of faith, as well as a plain proof of the doctrine which we are maintaining.

A late writer\*, by the foundation of God, which standeth sure, supposes the doctrine of the resurrection is intended, which Hymeneus and Philetus denied, saying, that it was past already; this doctrine, says he, which is a fundamental article of faith, standeth sure, having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are his; that is, he loveth and approveth of them. But though it be true the resurrection is spoken of in the foregoing verse, and we do not deny that it is a fundamental article of faith; yet that does not seem to be the meaning of the word *foundation*, in this text. For if by the resurrection we understand the doctrine of the general resurrection of the dead, I cannot see where the force of the apostle's argument lies, viz. that there shall be a general resurrection, because the Lord knoweth who are his, since the whole world are to be raised from the dead. But if by the resurrection we are to understand a resurrection to eternal life, so that they who are known or beloved of God, shall have their part in it, and the apostle's method of reasoning be this, that they who believe shall be raised to eternal life; that is, so far from militating against the argument we are maintaining, that it is agreeable to the sense we have given of the text, and makes for, rather than against us.

As to what is farther advanced by the author but now mentioned, viz. that *the Lord knoweth who are his*, is to be taken for that regard which God had to his apostles and ministers. This seems too great a strain on the sense of the words, and so much different from the scope of the apostle therein, as well as disagreeable to the caution given, that *every one who names the name of Christ* should depart from iniquity, that no one who reads the scriptures without prejudice, can easily give into this sense of the text.

I shall mention but one scripture more for the proof of this doctrine, and that is in 1 John ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us; for the un-*

\* See Whist's Discourse, &c. Page—67, 68, 463.



understanding of which, let it be considered, that the apostle is speaking of some who were formerly members of the church, who afterwards turned apostates and open enemies to Christ, and his gospel: It is plain that the words *they went out from us*, and *they were not of us*, must be taken in different respects, otherwise it would imply a contradiction, to say that a person departed from the faith and communion of the church, when he never embraced it, or had communion with it; but if they understand it thus, they left the faith and communion of the church because they were Christians only in pretence, and did not heartily embrace the faith on which the church was built; nor were they really made partakers of that grace, which the apostles, and other faithful members of the church, had received from God, as being effectually called thereby, the sense is very plain and easy, viz. That there were some false professors, who made a great shew of religion, and were admitted into communion with the church, and, it may be, some of them preached the gospel, and were more esteemed than others; but they apostatized; for they had not the truth of grace, but were like the seed that sprang up without having root in itself, which afterwards withered; whereas, if they had had this grace it would have been abiding, and so they would, *without doubt*, says the apostle, *have continued with us*; but by their apostacy it appears, that they were not, in this sense, of our number, that is believers,

They who understand this scripture, not of persons who were members of the church, but ministers, that first joined themselves with the apostles, and afterwards deserted them, and their doctrine, advance nothing that tends to overthrow the argument we are maintaining; for we may then understand the words thus, they pretended to be the true ministers of Jesus Christ, and doubtless, to be, as the apostles were, men of piety and religion, for, in other respects, they were of them visibly, whilst they preached the same doctrines; but afterwards, by departing from the faith, it appeared, that though they were ministers they were not sincere Christians, for, if they had, they would not have apostatized.

IV. We shall now proceed to consider the objections that are usually brought against the doctrine of the saints' perseverance in grace:

*Object. 1.* It is objected, that there are several persons mentioned in scripture, who appear to have been true believers, and yet apostatized; some totally, as David and Peter; others not only totally, but finally, in which number Solomon is included; and others are described as apostates, such as Hymeneus and Alexander, who are said *concerning faith, to have made shipwreck*, and therefore it is supposed that they had the

grade of faith; and Judas is also, by them, reckoned to have been a true believer, whom all allow afterwards to have proved an apostate.

*Ans. 1.* As to the case of David and Peter, it is true, their fall was very notorious, and the former seems to have continued some months in a state of impenitency; and when they fell, there appeared no marks of grace in either of them. Peter's sin, indeed, was committed through surprize and fear; but yet it had such aggravating circumstances attending it, that if others, whose character is less established than his was, had committed the same sin, we should be ready to conclude, that they were in a state of unregeneracy; and David's sin was committed with that deliberation, and was so complicated a crime, that if any believer ever lost the principle of grace, we should have been inclined to suppose this to have been his case. Nevertheless, that which gives us ground to conclude that this principle was not wholly extinguished, either in Peter or him, at the same time that they fell; and therefore, that they were not total apostates, is what we before observed, that the principle of grace may be altogether unactive, and yet abide in the soul, agreeably to the sense we gave of that scripture, *his seed abideth in him*; and if what has been already said concerning the possibility of the principle of grace remaining, though it makes no resistance against the contrary habits of sin, be of any force, then these and other instances of the like nature, on which one branch of the objection is founded, will not be sufficient to prove the possibility of the total apostacy of any true believer.

*2.* As to the case of Solomon; that he once was a true believer is allowed on both sides; for it is said concerning him, soon after he was born, that *the Lord loved him*, 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25. upon which occasion he gave him that significant name, *Jedidiah*, the beloved of the Lord; and it is certain, that in the beginning of his reign, his piety was no less remarkable than his wisdom, as appears from his great zeal, expressed in building the temple of God, and establishing the worship thereof; and also from that extraordinary instance of devotion with which he dedicated or consecrated the house to God, 1 Kings viii. 27. and the prayer put up to him on that occasion, and also from God's appearing to him twice: in his first appearance he condescended to ask him, what he would give him; and upon Solomon's choosing, *an understanding heart*, to judge his people, he was pleased with him, and gave him several other things that he asked not for; so that there were *not his equals among the kings like unto him*, chap. iii. 9, 10, 12, 13. From all this it is taken for granted, that he once was a be-

• See page 213, 214, ante.

liever: but, on the other hand, we must, if we duly weigh the force of the objection, set the latter part of his life against the former, in which we find him guilty of very great sins; not only in multiplying wives and concubines, beyond what any of his predecessors had done, but in that *his heart was turned away after other gods, and, as it is expressly said, was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David, his father, chap. xi. 4.* And it is also said, that *the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared to him twice, ver. 9.* and on this occasion he determined to rend part of the kingdom from his son, ver. 13. which came to pass accordingly; and all this is said to have been done *when he was old, ver. 4.* And after this we read of several that were stirred up as adversaries to him, ver. 14, 23, 26. And in the remaining part of his history we read of little but trouble and uneasiness that he met with; and this seemed to continue till his death, of which we have an account in 1 Kings xi. chapter throughout, which contains the history of his sin, and troubles; and we read not the least word of his repentance therein; for which reason he is, supposed, in the objection, to have apostatized totally and finally.

The main strength of this objection lies in the supposition, that Solomon did not repent of his idolatry which he committed in his old age, or, as it is supposed, in the latter part of his life, and also from the silence of scripture as to the matter; especially in that part of it which gives an account of his fall and death. But this is not sufficient to support the weight of the objection, and to oblige us to conclude him to be an apostate; for there is nothing that appears from the account we have of him in scripture, but that he might have sufficient time for repentance between his fall and death. It is said indeed, that in his old age his wives turned him aside, but this they might do, and yet he not die an apostate; for sometimes that part of life which is called old age, comprises in it several years; therefore, when he began to be in his declining age, he might sin; and after that be brought to repentance. And as for the scripture's speaking first of his fall, and then of his death; it does not follow from thence that one was immediately after the other; since the history of the blemishes and troubles of his life is but short.

On the other hand, there are several things which may give us ground to conclude, that he repented after his fall; particularly,

(1.) We have an intimation hereof in God's promise relating thereunto, in which it is supposed, that God would suffer him to fall, and a provisional encouragement is given to expect that he should be recovered: thus he says, *I will chaq-*

use him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee, 1 Sam. vii. 14, 15. and the same thing is repeated, in which his fall is supposed, and his recovery from it particularly mentioned, in Psal. lxxxix. 30—34. as though God had designed that this should be a supplement to his history, and remove the doubts which might arise from it, with relation to his salvation.

(2.) There are some things in other parts of scripture, which give sufficient ground to conclude, that he was a true penitent, which plainly refer to that part of his life which was between his fall and his death. Thus, if we duly weigh several passages in Ecclesiastes, which none can deny that he was the inspired writer of, inasmuch as it is said, in the title or preface set before it, that they are *the words of the preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem*, we shall find many things in which he expresses the great sense of the vanity of his past life, when he says, *I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly*, Eccl. i. 17. where, by *madness and folly*, he doubtless intends that which was so in a moral sense, when he indulged his sinful passions, which respects the worst part of his life. And this he farther insists on; *Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced in all my labour*, Eccl. ii. 10. or in all things, which afterwards were matter of grief and uneasiness to me; in which he observes how he did, as it were, take pains to bring on himself a long train of miseries that troubled him afterwards; and then he plainly expresses his repentance, when he says, *All was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun*, ver. 11. as though he should say, I turned from God to the creature, to see what happiness I could find therein, but met with nothing but disappointment; he had no profit in those things, whereof he was now ashamed. It is probable, God shewed him the vanity thereof, by his chastening him, or visiting his transgressions with the rod, and his iniquities with stripes, as he had promised to do; and this ended in vexation of spirit, which is a plain intimation of that godly sorrow that proceeded from a sense of sin, which made him, beyond measure, uneasy; and this vexation or uneasiness was so great, that he says, *I hated life*, that is, I hated my past wicked life, and abhorred myself for it, *because the work that is wrought under the sun, is grievous unto me*; that is, the work that I have wrought, was such as gave me grief of heart; *for all is vanity and vexation of spirit*, ver. 17. that is, this is all the consequence thereof: it cannot be supposed that he was weary of his life for the same reasons that many others are, who are deprived of the blessings of common providence, and

reduced to that condition that makes them miserable, as to their outward circumstances in the world; but it was the uneasiness he found in his own spirit, the secret wounds of conscience and bitterness of soul, which arose from a sense of sin, that made him thus complain.

And elsewhere, he seems to be sensible of his sin, in heaping up vast treasures, which he calls *loving silver*; and adds, that such an one, which seems very applicable to his own case, *shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance, with increase; this is also vanity*, chap. v. 10. that is, this had been an instance of his former vanity: and he adds, *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep*, ver. 12. If by this we understand that the increase of riches sometimes gives disturbance to, and stirs up the corruptions of those that possess them, and this be applied to himself, it is an acknowledgment of his sin. Or, if we understand by it that the abundance of a rich man will not give him rest at night, when his mind is made uneasy with a sense of the guilt of sin, and this be applied to his own case, when fallen by it; then it intimates that his repentance gave him not only uneasiness by day, but took away his rest by night; and it seems not improbable, that what gave him farther occasion to see the vanity of his past life, was the sense of mortality impressed on him; for he says, *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart*, chap. vii. 3. that is, he will, or ought to improve the sense of his own frailty, which we may conclude he had done; and therefore adds, *Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better*, ver. 3.

But if it be objected, that all these expressions are not applicable to himself, and many others of the like nature, which might have been referred to, which are expressive of his great repentance; though I cannot but think that the contrary to this seems very probable; yet there is something farther added, that he expressly applies to himself, which refers to his unlawful love of women: *I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares, and nets, and her hands as bands. Whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her: behold, this have I found, saith the preacher*, ver. 26, 27. If these things be not expressive of repentance, it is hard to say what are.

And to this we may add, that as he expresses a grief of heart for past sins; so he warns others that they may not be guilty of that which he himself found more bitter than death; and accordingly, having described the arts used by the wicked we-

man, to betray the unthinking passenger, he cautions every one to take heed of declining to her ways; inasmuch as the consequence thereof will be, that a *dart will strike through his liver*, and he is as a *bird that hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life*, Prov. vii. 23. compared with the foregoing verses. He also adds, *That she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death*, ver. 26, 27. So that we find in Solomon, two of the greatest evidences that we can have of sincere repentance; namely, a great degree of sorrow for sin, and an earnest desire that others would avoid it, by giving those cautions that are necessary to prevent their falling into the snare in which he had been entangled.

(3.) There is something spoken in Solomon's commendation, after his death, which may be gathered from what is said, that during the three first years of Rehoboam's reign, which God approved of he *walked in the way of David and Solomon*, 2 Chron. xi. 17. where we may observe, that Solomon is joined with his father David: so that as there were abatements to be made for the blemishes in David's reign; the reign of Solomon had in it great blemishes: but as one repented, so did the other, and therefore ought not to be reckoned an apostate.

And to all this we may add, that he was a penman of scripture; and it does not appear that God conferred this honour upon any that apostatized from him; but on the other hand, they have this general character given of them by the apostle Peter, that they were all *holy men of God*, 2 Pet. i. 21. which we must conclude Solomon to have been, till we have greater evidence to the contrary than they can produce who deny it.

3. There are others mentioned in the objection, to wit, Hymeneus and Alexander, whose apostacy we have no ground to doubt of; but we cannot allow that they fell from, or lost the saving grace of faith. It is one thing to fall from the profession of faith, and another thing to lose the grace of faith; therefore, the only thing to be proved in answer to this branch of the objection, is, that these persons, who are described as apostates, never had the truth of grace; or that they only fell from that visible profession which they made thereof; whereby they were reckoned to be, what in reality they were not, namely, true believers. Now that this may appear, let it be considered,

That the apostle speaks of them as having *departed from the faith*, viz. the doctrines of the gospel; and that was attended with blasphemy, for which they were *delivered unto Satan*, which is a phrase used by the apostle here and elsewhere, for persons being cut off from the communion of the church; upon which occasion he advises Timothy to *hold fast*

and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith, have made shipwreck, as these have done.

Now the main force of the objection seems to lie in this, that they who have made shipwreck of faith, were once true believers; therefore, such may apostatize, and so fall short of salvation.

To which it may be replied, that by *faith* here, is meant the doctrines of the gospel, which are often styled *faith*: thus it is said, that the apostle *preached the faith which once he destroyed*, Gal. i. 23. and elsewhere, *before faith came*; that is, before the gospel-dispensation began, and those doctrines were preached that were to be published therein to the world, *we were kept under the law*, chap. iii. 23. And again, *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith*, ver. 2. that is, by hearing those doctrines that are contained in the gospel. Therefore, that which he chargeth these apostates with, is making shipwreck of faith, considered objectively; they once, indeed, held the truth, but it was in unrighteousness; they had right notions of the gospel, which they afterwards lost: now the apostle advises Timothy not only to *hold faith*, that is, to retain the doctrines of the gospel, as one who had right sentiments of divine truths, but to hold it *with a good conscience*; for I take that expression, *hold faith and a good conscience*, to contain an *hendyadis*; and so it is the same as though he should say, Be not content with an assent to the truths of the gospel, but labour after a conscience void of offence towards God, that thou mayst have the testimony thereof, that thy knowledge of divine truth is practical and experimental, and then thou art out of danger of making shipwreck of faith, as these have done, who held it without a good conscience. It is not said they made shipwreck of a good conscience; for that they never have had; but *concerning faith*, which they once professed, *they made shipwreck*.

The same thing may be said concerning Judas; he apostatized from the faith, which he once made a very great profession of, being not only one of Christ's disciples, but sent forth with the rest of them, to preach the gospel, and work miracles; yet it is evident, that he had not the saving grace of faith. For our Saviour, who knew the hearts of all men, was not deceived in him (though others were) inasmuch as it is said, *He knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him*, John vi. 64. However, the principal force of the objection lies in this, that Judas must needs have been a believer, because he was given to Christ; and our Saviour says, that *those who were given him were kept by him, and none of them was lost but the son of perdition*, chap. xvii. 12. His being styled *the son of perdition*, argues him an

apostate; and his being *given to Christ* denotes that he was once a true believer; therefore he fell totally and finally. In answer to which,

(1.) Some conclude, that they who are said to be *given to Christ*, are such as were appointed, by the providence of God, to be his servants in the work of the ministry. Now it is said concerning them, that they were given to Christ, to be employed by him in this service; and that all of them were kept faithful, except the son of perdition. If this be the sense of their being given to him, it does not necessarily infer their being made partakers of special grace: it is one thing to be given to Christ, to be employed in some peculiar acts of service, in which his glory is concerned; and another thing to be given to him, as being chosen and called by him, to partake of special communion with him: if Judas had been given to him in this latter sense, he would not have been a son of perdition, but would have been kept by him, as the other disciples were; but inasmuch as he was only given to Christ, that he might serve the design of his providence, in the work of the ministry, he might be lost, or appear to be a son of perdition, and yet not fall from the truth of grace.

(2.) If, by being *given to Christ*, we understand a being given to him, as objects of his special love, we must suppose, that all who were thus given to him, were kept by him; in which sense Judas, who is called *the son of perdition*, and was not kept by him, was not given to him: accordingly the particle *but* is not exceptive, but adversative; and it is as though he should say, *All that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost; but the son of perdition is lost, I have not preserved him; for he was not the object of my special care and love; he was not given me to save, therefore he is lost.* Now it is certain, that the particle *but* is used in this sense in many other scriptures, particularly that wherein it is said, *There shall in no wise enter into it, that is, the heavenly Jerusalem, any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life, Rev. xxi. 27. q. d. ungodly men shall not enter in; but they that are written in the lamb's book of life shall\*.* Thus much concerning this objection, taken from particular persons, who are supposed to have fallen from grace.

*Obj. 2.* The next objection is taken from what the apostle Paul says concerning the church of the Jews, whom he describes as apostatized from God; and it is evident, that they are, to this day, given up to judicial blindness, and not in the least disposed to repent of that crime for which they were cast

\* See several other scriptures, in which *μὴ* is taken adversatively, Matt. xxiv. 36. Gal. i. 7. Rev. ix. 4.



off by him; concerning these he says, that they once were holy; *If the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches*, Rom. xi. 16. and afterwards he speaks of *their casting away, and some of the branches being broken off, because of unbelief*, ver. 15, 17, 19, 20. Now if the whole church apostatized, we must conclude at least, that some of them were true believers, and therefore true believers may fall from the grace of God.

*Answ.* That the church of the Jews apostatized, and were cut off for their unbelief, is sufficiently evident: but we must distinguish between the apostacy of a professing people, such as the church of the Jews were, who first rejected God, and then were cast off by him, and the apostacy of those who were truly religious among them; the apostle himself gives us ground for this distinction, when he says, *they are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children*, chap. ix. 6, 7. And elsewhere he distinguishes between one who is a *Jew*, as being partaker of the external privileges of the covenant, which that church was under, and a person's being a *Jew*, as partaking of the saving blessings thereof; as he says, *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God*, Rom. ii. 28, 29. A church may lose its external privileges, and cease to have the honourable character given it; the greatest part of them may be blinded, when, at the same time *the election*, that is, all among them who were chosen to eternal life, *obtained it*, as the apostle observes, chap. xi. 7. and thereby intimates, that some who were members of that church were faithful; those were preserved from the common apostacy, being converted to the Christian faith. Their privileges, as members of a church, were lost, but they still retained their spiritual and inseparable union with Christ, which they had as believers, and not as the result of their being the natural seed of Abraham, they were made partakers of the blessings that accompany salvation; and therefore were not separated from the love of God in Christ, whilst formal professors and hypocrites, who were Abraham's natural seed, but not his spiritual, were cast off by Christ.

*Obj. 3.* It is farther objected, that there are some who have the character of righteous persons, concerning whom it is supposed, that they may fall away or perish; particularly those mentioned in Ezek. xviii. 24. *When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall*

he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned, in the trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die: And in Heb. x. 38. it is said, *The just shall live by faith; but if any man, or, as the word should be rendered, if he draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* Therefore, since the righteous man may turn from his righteousness, and draw back to perdition, the doctrine of the saints' perseverance cannot be defended.

*Answ. 1.* As to the former of these scriptures, we must consider the sense thereof agreeably to the context, and the scope and design of the prophet therein; he had often reprov'd them for those vile abominations which they were guilty of, and had denounced the threatnings of God, which should have their accomplishment in their utter ruin; particularly, he foretells the judgments that should sweep away many of them before, and others that should befall them in the captivity: this is the subject principally insisted on by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel; whereupon sometimes they were represented as disliking the doctrine, desiring that *smooth things* might be prophesied unto them, and *the holy one of Israel might cease from before them.* At other times they are represented as complaining of the hardship of this dispensation, intimating that it was unjust and severe, and, at the same time, justifying themselves, as though they had done nothing that deserved it; but all this was to befall them for the sins of their fathers, and accordingly there was a proverbial expression often made use of by them, mentioned verse 2d of this chapter, *The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge;* by which they did not understand that we expect to perish eternally for our fathers' sins, in which sense it must be taken, if this objection has any force in it: now God, by the prophet, tells them that they had no reason to use this proverb, and so puts them upon looking into their past conduct, and enquiring, whether they had not been guilty of the same sins that their fathers were charged with? which, if they could exculpate themselves from, they should be delivered, and not die, that is, not fall by those judgments which either should go before, or follow the captivity; for that seems to be the sense of *dying*, according to the prophetic way of speaking, as we have observed elsewhere.\* For the understanding of this scripture we must consider, that the prophet addresses himself to *the house of Israel*, who are represented, ver. 25. as complaining, that *the way of the Lord was not equal;* or, that God's threatnings or judgments, which were the forerunners of the captivity, were such as they had not deserved; and therefore he tells them that he would deal with them according to their deserts, ver. 24. *When the righ-*

\* See Vol. II. page 333—335.

teous, that is, one whose conversation before this seemed to be unblemished, and he not guilty of those enormous crimes which were committed by others (which may be supposed, and yet the person not be in a state of grace) I say, when such an one *turneth away from his righteousness, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth*, that is, becomes openly vile and profligate; *shall he live?* can he expect any thing else but that God should follow him with exemplary judgments, or that he should be involved in the common destruction? *In his sin that he hath sinned shall he die.* And on the other hand, ver. 27. *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness*; that is, they who have been guilty of these abominations shall reform their lives, or turn from their idolatry, murders, adulteries, oppressions, and other vile crimes, that the people in general were charged with, by the prophet, which are assigned as the reason of God's sending this dreadful judgment of the captivity; I say, if there be such an instance of reformation, *he shall save his soul alive*; that is, either he shall be delivered from the captivity, or shall be preserved from those temporal judgments that either went before or followed after it. This reformation, and deliverance from these judgments, includes in it something less than saving grace, and a right to eternal life, which is inseparably connected with it, so that if nothing else be intended by the *righteous and wicked man*; and if the judgments threatened, or their deliverance from them, in case of reformation, includes no more than this, it is evident, that it does not in the least suppose, that any true believer shall apostatize or fall from a state of grace. As we may distinguish between eternal death and temporal judgments; so we must distinguish between a person's abstaining from the vilest abominations, as a means to escape these judgments; and his exercising those graces that accompany salvation. There may be an external reformation in those who have no special grace, if nothing farther be regarded than a person's moral character, or inoffensive behaviour in the eye of the world. If we only consider him as abstaining from those sins which are universally reckoned disreputable among those who make any pretensions to religion, and in this respect he be denominated a righteous man, such an one may turn away from his righteousness and become immoral and profligate, and so be reckoned among the number of apostates: nevertheless he cannot be said to apostatize or fall from the grace of God, since moral virtue or the exercise of righteousness in our dealings with men is as much inferior to saving grace, as a form of godliness is to the power thereof.

2. As to the other scripture, mentioned in the objection, it is generally urged against us as an unanswerable argument, taken

from the express words thereof, to prove the possibility of the saints' apostacy; and our translation is charged with a wilful mistake, to serve a turn, and make the text speak what it never intended, since all who understand the original must allow that it ought to be rendered, *If he draw back*, which supposes that the just man may apostatize, or draw back unto perdition. To which it may be replied,

(1.) That though the words, according to the form in which they are laid down, contain a supposition, it does not infer the being or reality of the thing supposed\*; but only this, that if such a thing should happen, it would be attended with what is laid down as a consequence thereof. This is very agreeable to our common mode of speaking, as when we say; if a virtuous person should commit a capital crime, he will fall under the lash of the law as much as though he had made no pretensions to virtue; nevertheless, it does not follow from hence, that such an one shall do it, or expose himself to this punishment; or, on the other hand, if a king should say to a criminal, as Solomon did to Adonijah, 'If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth,' it cannot be concluded from hence, that he will behave himself so as that his life shall be secured to him. The proposition is true, as there is a just connexion between the supposition and the consequence; yet this does not argue that the thing supposed shall come to pass. Now to apply this to the scripture, under our present consideration; the proposition is doubtless true, that if the just man should draw back, so as to become a wicked man, if he should lose the principle of grace which was implanted in regeneration, and abandon himself to the greatest impieties, he would as certainly perish as though he had never experienced the grace of God; but it must not be inferred from hence, that God will suffer such an one, who is the object both of his love and care, thus to fall and perish, so that his soul should have no pleasure in him.

(2.) If we suppose the person here spoken of, whom we consider as a true believer, to draw back, we may distinguish between backsliding or turning aside from God, by the commission of very great sins; and apostacy. Or between drawing back, by being guilty of great crimes, so as to expose himself to sore judgments; and his drawing back to perdition. The just man in this text, is said, indeed, to draw back, but he is distinguished from one that draws back to perdition; as it is said in the following verse, 'We are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul.' Such a drawing back as this, though it shall not end in perdition, inasmuch as the person shall be recovered and

\* It is a known maxim in logic, *Suppositio nihil ponit in esse.*

brought to repentance ; yet it shall be attended with very great marks of God's displeasure against believers, for those sins which they have committed, as well as others ; accordingly, *his soul having no pleasure* in them, denotes that he would, in various instances, reveal his wrath against relapsing believers, as a display of his holiness, who shall nevertheless be recovered and saved at last. If these things be duly considered, the objection seems to have no weight in it, though it should be allowed, that the words upon which it is principally founded, are not rightly translated.

However, I cannot see sufficient reason to set aside our translation, it being equally just to render the words, *if any man draw back* \* ; since the supplying the words *any man*, or *any one*, is allowed of in many other instances, both in the Old and New Testament. Therefore there is not the least incongruity in its being supplied in the text under our present consideration † ; and, if it be, the sense that we give of it, will appear very agreeable to the context ; accordingly the meaning is, 'The just shall live by faith,' or they who 'know in themselves' 'that they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance,' as in one of the foregoing verses : These shall live by faith, but as for others who do not live by faith, having only a form or shew of religion, 'whose manner is to forsake the assembling of themselves together,' as in verse 25. these are inclined to *draw back* ; therefore, let them know that *if any one*, or *whosoever draws back*, it will be at their peril ; for it will be to their own *perdition* ; yet saith the apostle, that true believers may not be discouraged by the apostacy of others, let them take notice of what is said in the following words, 'We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them

\* ΕΑΝ ὑΠΟΣΤΑΛῆΙΤΙ.

† It is certain, that the particles *τις*, *ἄνθρωπος*, and others of the like import, are often left out, and the defect thereof is to be supplied in our translation : Thus it is in Job xxxiii. 27. where the Hebrew word, which might have been rendered and he shall say, is better rendered and if any say, &c. and in Gen. xlviii. 2. instead of he told Jacob, it is better rendered one told Jacob, or somebody told him ; and in Mark ii. 1. *τις*, which is left out in the Greek text, is supplied in the translation, in which we do not read it after days, but after some days. See *Ald. Concord. Partic.* Page 41, 42. in which several texts of scripture are produced to the same purpose, and among the rest, this in Heb. x. 38. which we are at present considering as what ought to be rendered if any one draw back. In this and such like instances we may observe, that the verb personal has an impersonal signification, or that which is properly active is rendered passively ; so Eccl. ix. 15. *הוּא נִשְׁכַּח* is not rendered and he found in it, &c. but now there was found in it ; many other instances of the like nature are to be observed in the Hebrew text in the Old Testament ; and sometimes this mode of speaking is imitated by the Greek text in the New. I might also observe, with respect to the scripture under our present consideration, that the learned Grotius observes that *τις* ought to be supplied, and consequently the text ought to be rendered as it is in our translation, if any man draw back, which he observes as what is agreeable to the grammatical construction thereof, without any regard to the doctrine we are maintaining, with respect to which, he is otherwise minded.

'that believe, to the saving of the soul.' These things being duly considered, it will be sufficiently evident that this text does not militate against the doctrine of the saints' perseverance.

*Obj. 4.* There is another objection brought against the doctrine we have been endeavouring to maintain, taken from what the apostle says in Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. 'It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.' The force of this objection lies in two things, *viz.* that they are described as total and final apostates; and also, that according to the account we have of their former conversation, they appear then to have been true believers.

*Ans.* This is thought, by some, who defend the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, to be one of the most difficult objections that we generally meet with against it; especially they who cannot see how it is possible for a person to make such advances towards true godliness, and yet be no other than an hypocrite or formal professor, are obliged to take a method to set aside the force of the objection, which I cannot give into, namely, that when the apostle says, *It is impossible* that such should be renewed again to repentance; the word *impossible* denotes nothing else, but that the thing is exceeding difficult, not that they shall eventually perish; because they are supposed to be true believers; but their recovery after such a notorious instance of backsliding, shall be attended with difficulties so great that nothing can surmount, but the extraordinary power of God; and though he will recover them, yet they shall feel the smart thereof as long as they live; they shall be saved, yet so as by fire\*.

\* To give countenance to this sense of the word *impossible*, they refer to some scriptures, in which it does not denote an absolute impossibility of the thing, but only that if it comes to pass it will be with much difficulty. Thus it is said, Acts xx. 16. that the Apostle Paul hastened, if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost; where his making haste argues that the thing was not in itself impossible, but difficult. And Rom. xii. 18. we are exhorted, if it be possible, as much as in us lieth, to live peaceably with all men; which shews that it is hard indeed so to do; nevertheless, we are to use our utmost endeavours to do it, which does not argue that the thing is in itself altogether impossible. And there is another scripture they bring to justify this sense of the words in Matt. xix. 23,—26. in which our Saviour's design is to shew the difficulty of a rich man's entering into the kingdom of heaven, which he compares to a camel's going through the eye of a needle; by which very few suppose, that the beast, so called, is intended, but a cable-ropes, which is sometimes called a camel; thus the Syriack and Arabick versions translate the word.

\* The ancient Syriac is ܩܡܠܐ the modern is the same word, which is literally *καμηλο* a camel, not *καμηλο* a cable. This Eastern proverb is now well established. Vide Campbell, Clarke, &c.

But notwithstanding the word *impossible* may be sometimes taken for that which is very difficult, I cannot but conclude that the apostle is here speaking of that which is impossible, with respect to the event, and therefore, that he is giving the character of apostates who shall never be recovered. This appears, not only from the heinousness of the crime, as they are said to *crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame*; but from what is mentioned in the following verses, in which they are compared to *the earth that bringeth forth thorns and briars, which is rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned*; and from their being distinguished from those who shall be saved, concerning whom the apostle was *persuaded better things, and things that accompany salvation*; therefore he is speaking here concerning a total and final apostasy.

But that this may not appear to militate against the doctrine we are maintaining, I shall endeavour to shew, that notwithstanding the character the apostle gives of the persons he here speaks of they were destitute of the truth of grace, and therefore nothing is said concerning them, but what a formal professor may attain to: That this may appear let it be considered,

1. That they are described as *once enlightened*; but this a person may be, and yet be destitute of saving faith. If by being *enlightened* we understand their having been baptized, as some critics take the word, which was afterwards, in some following ages, used in that sense, it might easily be alleged, that a person might be baptized and yet not be a true believer: But since I question whether baptism was expressed by illumination in the apostles age \*, I would rather understand by it, their having been convinced of the truth of the gospel, or

*And a learned writer observes, that the Jews, in a proverbial way, express the difficulty of a thing by that of a cable-ropes passing through the eye of a needle. See Buxi. Lex. Talmud. Pane 1719. and Rochari Hiero. Part. 1. Lib. 2. Cap. 3. And by needle is not meant that which is used in working, but an iron, through which a small rope may be easily drawn; though it was very difficult to force a camel or cable-ropes through it; therefore they suppose our Saviour is not speaking of a thing which is absolutely impossible, but exceeding difficult; and this may be inferred from his reply to what the disciples objected, who then can be saved, when he says, with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. And to apply this to the scripture under our present consideration, they suppose that the apostle, when he speaks of the renewing of those persons to repentance, does not intend that which is absolutely impossible, but that it cannot be brought about but by the extraordinary power of God, with whom all things are possible.*

\* We do not find the word used in that sense till the second century, by Justin Martyr [Vid. ejusd. Dial. 2.] and Clemens Alexandrinus [in Pedag. Lib. 1. cap. 6.] and therefore we are not altogether to take our measures in explaining the sense of words, used in scripture, from them, who sometimes mistake the sense of the doctrine contained therein. However, if we take the word in this sense, it does not militate against our argument, since a person may be baptized, who is not in a state of grace and salvation.

yielded an assent to the doctrines contained therein. Now this a person may do, and yet be destitute of saving faith, which is seated not barely in the understanding, but in the will, and therefore supposes him not only to be rightly informed, with respect to those things which are the object of faith, but to be internally and effectually called, from whence saving faith proceeds, as has been before observed.

2. They are said to have *tasted the good word of God*; which agrees with the character before given of those who had a temporary faith \*, who seemed, for a while, pleased with the word, and their affections were raised in hearing it; as Herod is said to have *heard John the Baptist gladly, and to have done many things*; like those whom our Saviour compares to the seed sown in stony ground, which soon sprang up, but afterwards withered away. This a person may do, and yet not have saving faith; for it is one thing to approve of, and be affected with the word, and another thing to mix it with that faith which accompanies salvation. A person may entertain those doctrines contained in the word which relate to a future state of blessedness with pleasure; as all men desire to be happy, and at the same time be far from practising the duties of self-denial, taking up the cross, and following Christ, mortifying indwelling sin, and exercising an intire dependance upon, and resignation to him in all things: This contains much more than what is expressed by *tasting the good word of God*.

3. They are farther described as having *tasted the heavenly gift, and being made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and of the powers of the world to come*; all which expressions, I humbly conceive, carry in them no more than this, that they had been enabled to work miracles, or that they had a faith of miracles, which has been before described †, and proved to fall very short of saving faith ‡. Therefore these characters given of them do not argue that they were true believers, and consequently the objection, which depends on the supposition that they were, is of no force to prove that saints may totally or finally fall from grace.

*Obj.* 5. The next objection against the doctrine we have been maintaining, is taken from Heb. x. 29. *Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and*

\* See Pag. 124, 125 ante.

† See Pag. 122, 123 ante.

‡ There seems to be an *heniychia* in the apostle's mode of speaking. By the *heavenly gift* we are to understand extraordinary gifts, which are called the *Holy Ghost* elsewhere, Acts xix. 2. because they were from the *Holy Ghost* as effects of his power, and wrought to confirm the gospel dispensation, which is called the *world to come*, Heb. ii. 6. and therefore they are styled the *powers of the world to come*.



*hath done despite unto the spirit of grace.* The crime here spoken of is of the heinous nature, and the greatest punishment is said to be inflicted for it: Now, inasmuch as these are described as having been *sanctified by the blood of the covenant*, it follows, that they were true believers, and consequently true believers may apostatize, and fall short of salvation.

*Answ.* The force of the objection lies principally in those words, *the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified*; which expression is taken, by divines, in two different senses.

1. Some take the word *he* in the same sense as it is taken in the objection, as referring to the apostate; and then the difficulty which occurs, is how such an one could be said to be sanctified by the blood of the covenant, and yet not regenerate, effectually called, or a true believer: To solve this, they suppose, that by *sanctification* we are only to understand a relative holiness, which such have who are made partakers of the common grace of the gospel: Thus it is said, *Israel was holiness unto the Lord*, Jer. ii. 3. or, as the apostle Peter expresses it, *an holy nation*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. as they were God's people by an external covenant relation, and by an explicit consent to be governed by those laws which he gave them when they first became a church, Exod. xxiv. 3. and publicly avouched him to be their God, and he avouched them to be his peculiar people, which was done upon some solemn occasions, Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. Nevertheless, many of them were destitute of the special grace of sanctification, as it contains in it a thorough and universal change of heart and life. Moreover, they suppose that this privilege of being God's people, by an external covenant-relation, together with all these common gifts and graces that attend it, was purchased by, and founded on the blood of Christ, which is called *the blood of the covenant*, inasmuch as he was *given for a covenant of the people*, Isa. xlii. 6. and pursuant hereunto, he shed his blood to procure for them the external as well as the saving blessings of the covenant of grace; the former of these, the persons here described as apostates, are supposed to have been made partakers of, as the apostle says, *To them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises*, Rom. ix. 4. they worshipped him in all his ordinances, as those whom the prophet speaks of, *who seek him daily, and delight to know his ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God; they ask of him the ordinances of justice, and take delight in approaching to God*; and yet these things were not done by faith, Isa. lviii. 2. In this respect persons may be sanctified, and yet afterwards forfeit, neglect, despise and forsake these ordinances, and lose the external privileges of the covenant of grace, which they once had,

and so become apostates. This is the most common method used to solve the difficulty contained in the objection. But I would rather acquiesce in another way, which may be taken to account for the sense of those words, *the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified*. Therefore, let it be considered,

2. That the word *he* may be understood, not as referring to the apostate, but our Saviour, who is spoken of immediately before: thus the apostate is said to 'trample under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith He, that is, Christ, 'was sanctified, an unholy thing.' That this sense may appear just, it may be observed, that Christ was sanctified or set apart by the Father, to perform all the branches of his Mediatorial office, in two respects.

(1.) As he was fore-ordained or appointed, by him, to come into the world to shed his blood for the redemption of his people: thus his undertaking to redeem them is called his sanctifying, or devoting himself to perform this work, as he says, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth,' John xvii. 19. this he did in pursuance of the eternal transaction between the Father and him, relating hereunto. But it will be said, that this was antecedent to his dying for them; and therefore, properly speaking, he could not be said, in this respect, to be *sanctified by the blood of the covenant*; therefore, to this we may add,

(2.) That he was also sanctified, or set apart by the Father, to apply the work of redemption after he had purchased it; which sanctification was, in the most proper sense, the result of his shedding his blood, which was the blood of the covenant; so that as he was 'brought again from the dead,' as the apostle speaks, 'through the blood of the everlasting covenant,' Heb. xiii. 20. all the blessings which he applies to his people as the consequence hereof, are the result of his being sanctified, or set apart to carry on and perfect the work of our salvation, the foundation whereof was laid in his blood.

Moreover, that they who are here described as apostates, had not before this, the grace of faith, is evident from the context, inasmuch as they are distinguished from true believers. The apostle seems to speak of two sorts of persons, to wit, some who had cast off the ordinances of God's worship, 'forsaking the assembling of themselves together,' who are distinguished from those whom he dehorts from this sin, who *had* the grace of *faith*, whereby they were enabled to 'draw near to God in full assurance thereof, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water;' concerning these he says, 'We are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul,' chap. x. 39. Therefore we must conclude that

others are intended in the text under our present consideration, who were not true believers, and consequently it does not from hence appear that such may totally, or finally, fall from a state of grace.

The apostates spoken of in this and the foregoing objection, were probably some among the Jews, to whom the gospel was preached, who embraced the Christian faith, being convinced by those miracles which were wrought for that purpose, but afterwards revolted from it, and were more inveterately set against Christ and the gospel than they had been before they made this profession; and accordingly as they had formerly approved of the crimes of those who crucified Christ, in which respect they are said to have crucified him; now they do, in the same sense, crucify him afresh. And as they had been made partakers of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; afterwards they openly blasphemed him, and this was done with spite and malice. These texts therefore not only contain a sad instance of the apostasy of some, but prove that they were irrecoverably lost; and this comes as near the account we have in the gospels of the unpardonable sin, as any thing mentioned in scripture: nevertheless, what has been said to prove that they never were true believers, is a sufficient answer to this and the foregoing objection.

*Objec. 6.* Another objection against the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, is taken from 2 Pet. ii. 20—22. *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning; and they are said in the following verse, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them; which is compared to the dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, That though every one must conclude, that the persons, whom the apostle here speaks of, plainly appear to be apostates; yet there is nothing in their character which argues that they apostatized, or fell from the truth of grace; and it is only such whom we are at present speaking of. It may be observed, that the apostle is so far from including these apostates in the number of those to whom he writes this, with the foregoing epistle, whom he describes *as elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, and as having been begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance reserved for them in heaven, and as such, who should be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation,* 1 Pet. i. 2—5. that he plainly distinguishes them from them. For in

verse 1, of this chapter, from whence it is taken, it is said, ' There shall be false teachers among you, and many shall follow their pernicious ways ;' he does not say many, who are now of your number, but many who shall be joined to the church, when these false teachers arise. These persons, indeed, are represented as making a great shew of religion, by which they gained reputation among some professors, whom they seduced which otherwise they could not have done ; and therefore it is said, ' They had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' and that they had ' known the way of righteousness.' Such might indeed be joined to the church afterwards ; but they did not now belong to it ; and what is said concerning them, amounts to no more than an external visible reformation, together with their having attained the knowledge of Christ and divine things ; so that they were enlightened in the doctrines of the gospel ; though they made it appear, by the methods they used to deceive others, that they had not experienced the grace of the gospel themselves, and therefore they fell away from their profession, and turned aside from the faith, which once they preached. It is one thing for a formal professor, who makes a great show of religion, to turn aside from his profession, to all excess of riot ; and another thing to suppose a true believer can do so, and that to such a degree as to continue therein ; this the grace of God will keep him from.

*Objec. 7.* Another objection against the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, is taken from the parable of the debtor and creditor, in Matt. xviii. 26, &c. in which it is said, ' The servant fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt ;' but afterwards, upon his treating one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a very inconsiderable sum, with great severity, his lord exacted the debt of him, which he had before forgiven him, and so *delivered him to the tormentors*, till he should pay all that was due to him : ' So likewise,' it is said, ' shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye, from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses ;' from whence it is inferred, that a person may fall from a justified state, or that God may forgive sin at one time, and yet be provoked to alter his resolution, and inflict the punishment that is due to it, at another ; which is altogether inconsistent with the doctrine of the saints' perseverance in grace.

*Ans.* In answer to this we must observe, that our Saviour's design in his parables, is not that every word or circumstance contained in them, should be applied to signify what it seems

to import, but there is some truth in general intended to be illustrated thereby, which is principally to be regarded therein : Thus in the parable of the *judge*, in Luke xviii. 2, &c. ' which feared not God, neither regarded man,' who was moved, by a widow's importunity, to ' avenge her of her adversary ;' which after a while, he resolved to do, because the widow *troubled him*. This is applied to ' God's avenging his elect, who cry day and night unto him ;' where we must observe, that it is only in this circumstance that the parable is to be applied to them without any regard had to the injustice of the judge, or his being uneasy, by reason of the importunity which the widow expressed in pleading her cause with him.

Again, in the parable of the *steward*, in Luke xvi. 1, &c. who being accused for having *wasted his lord's goods*; and apprehending that he should be soon turned out of the stewardship, he takes an unjust method to gain the favour of his lord's debtors, by remitting a part of what they owed him, that by this means they might be induced to shew kindness to him when he was turned out of his service. It is said indeed, verse 8. that ' the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had acted wisely ; whereas, our Saviour does not design, in the account he gives of his injustice, to give the least countenance to it, as though it were to be imitated by us ; nor by his lord's commending him as acting wisely for himself, does he intend that it is lawful or commendable for wicked men to pursue the like measures to promote their future interest. But the only thing in which this parable is applied, is, that we might learn from hence, that ' the children of this world are, in their generation wiser than the children of light ;' and that men ought to endeavour, without the least appearance of injustice, to gain the friendship of others, by using what they have in the world, in such a way, as that they may be induced, out of gratitude for those favours, which they conferred upon them, to shew respect to them ; but principally, that in performing what was really their duty, they might have ground to hope that they shall be approved of God, and received into everlasting habitations.

Now to apply this rule to the parable from whence the objection is taken, we must consider, that the design hereof is not to signify that God changes his mind, as men do, by forgiving persons at one time, and afterwards condemning them, as though he did not know, when he extended this kindness to them, how they would behave towards others, or whether they would improve or forfeit this privilege ; since to suppose this would be contrary to the divine perfections. Therefore the only design of the parable is to shew, that they who now conclude that God has forgiven them, ought to forgive others, or

else they will find themselves mistaken at last: and though according to the tenor of the divine dispensations, or the revealed will of God, which is our only rule of judging concerning this matter, they think that they are in a justified state, it will appear, that the debt which they owed was not cancelled, but shall be exacted of them to the utmost, in their own persons; so that all that can be proved from hence is, that a man may fall from, or lose those seeming grounds, which we had to conclude that his sins were forgiven: but we are not to suppose that our Saviour intends hereby that God's secret purpose, relating to the forgiveness of sin, can be changed; or that he, who is really freed from condemnation, at one time, may fall under it at another: therefore, what is said in this parable, does not in the least give countenance to this objection, or overthrow the doctrine we are maintaining.

*Objec. 8.* There is another objection, taken from what the apostle Paul says concerning himself, in 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.* Now it is certain that the apostle was a true believer; yet he concludes, that if he did not behave himself so as to subdue or keep under his corrupt passions, but should commit those open scandalous crimes, which they would prompt him to, he should, in the end, become a cast-away, that is, apostatize from God, and be rejected by him.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, That though the apostle had as good ground to conclude that he had experienced the grace of God in truth, as any man, and was oftentimes favoured with a full assurance hereof; yet he did not attain this assurance by immediate revelation, so as he received those doctrines which he was to impart to the church as a rule of faith; for then it would have been impossible for him to have been mistaken as to this matter: and if this be supposed, then I would understand what he says concerning his being a *cast-away*, as denoting what would be the consequence of his *not keeping under his body*; but not implying hereby that corrupt nature should so far prevail, as that he should fall from a sanctified state. Now if he did not attain this assurance by immediate revelation, then he had it in the same way as others have, by making use of those marks and characters which are given of the truth of grace; and accordingly he argues, that though, at present, he thought himself to be in a sanctified state, from the same evidences that others conclude themselves to be so; yet if corrupt nature should prevail over him, which it would do, if he did not keep his body in subjection, or if he were guilty of those vile abominations which unregenerate persons are chargeable with, then it would appear, that this assurance

was ill grounded, his hope of salvation delusive, and he no other than an hypocrite; and so, notwithstanding his having preached to others, he would be found, in the end, among them who were false professors, and accordingly rejected of God; therefore we may observe, that it is one thing for a person to exercise that caution, and use those means to prevent sin, which, if he should commit, would prove him an hypocrite; and another thing for one that is a true believer, to be suffered to commit those sins whereby he would apostatize from God, and so miss of salvation.

And this will serve to answer another objection that is usually brought against the doctrine we are maintaining, as though it were inconsistent with that holy fear which believers ought to have of falling, as an inducement to care and watchfulness in the discharge of their duty; as it is said in Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth always*; inasmuch as we must distinguish between that fear of caution, which is a preservative against sin, and includes a watchfulness over our actions, that we may not dishonour God thereby; and an unbelieving fear, that though we are in a state of grace, and are enabled to exercise that diligence and circumspection that becomes christians, yet we have no foundation whereon to set our foot, or ground to hope for salvation. Or, it is one thing to fear, lest we should, by giving way to sin, dishonour God, grieve his Spirit, and wound our own consciences, and do that which is a disgrace to the gospel, through the prevalency of corrupt nature, whereby we shall have ground to conclude that we thought ourselves something when we were nothing, deceiving our own souls; and another thing to fear that we shall perish and fall, though our hearts are right with God, and we have reason to expect that we shall be kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation.

We shall conclude this answer with some few inferences from what has been said, to prove the doctrine of the saints' perseverance as contained therein. And,

1. Since we do not pretend to assert that all who make a profession of religion are assured that they shall never apostatize, but only true believers, let unbelievers take no encouragement from hence to conclude, that it shall be well with them in the end. Many are externally called who are not really sanctified; and presume that they shall be saved, though, without ground, inasmuch as they continue in impenitency and unbelief; such have no warrant to take comfort from the doctrine we have been maintaining.

2. We may, from what has been said, observe the difference between the security of a believer's state, as his hope is fixed on the stability of the covenant, and the promises thereof, re-

lating to his salvation, together with the Spirit's witness, with ours, concerning our own sincerity ; and that which we generally call carnal security, whereby a person thinks himself safe, or that all things shall go well with him, though he make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof : This is an unwarrantable security in a state of unregeneracy, or licentiousness, which this doctrine does not in the least give countenance to.

3. From what has been said concerning the apostasy of some from that faith which they once made a profession of, we may infer ; that it is only the grace of God experienced in truth, that will preserve us from turning aside from the faith of the gospel. The apostle speaks of some who, by embracing those doctrines that were subversive of the gospel, are *fallen from grace*, Gal. v. 4. that is, from the doctrines of grace ; concerning whom he says, that *Christ profited them nothing, or was become of no effect to them*, chap. v. 2, 4. that is, the gospel, which contains a display of the glory of Christ, was of no saving advantage to them. All the sad instances we have of many, who are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and are made a prey to those that lie in wait to deceive, proceed from their being destitute of the grace of God, which would have a tendency to preserve them from turning aside from the faith of the gospel.

4. Let us be exhorted to be as diligent and watchful against the breakings forth of corruption, and endeavour to avoid all occasions of sin, as much as though perseverance in grace were to be ascribed to our own endeavours, or as though God had given us no ground to conclude that he would enable us to persevere ; and yet, at the same time, depend on his assistance, without which this blessing cannot be attained, and hope in his mercy and faithfulness, and lay hold on the promises which he has given us, that it shall go well with us in the end, or that we shall have all joy and peace in believing.

5. Let us not only endeavour to persevere, but grow in grace ; which two blessings are joined together ; as it is said, *The righteous also shall hold on his way ; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger*, Job xvii. 9.

6. This doctrine has a great tendency to support and fortify believers, under the most adverse dispensations of providence, which, at any time, they are liable to ; and to comfort them under all the assaults of their spiritual enemies ; since though they may be suffered to discourage or give them interruption in the exercise of those graces which they have experienced, yet grace shall not be wholly extinguished. And sometimes, by the over-ruling providence of God, those things which in themselves have a tendency to weaken their faith, shall be or-



dered as a means to increase it ; so that when they can do nothing in their own strength, they may be enabled, by depending on Christ, and receiving strength from him, to prevail against all the opposition they meet with, and come off *more than conquerors*, at last, *through him that loved them*, Rom. viii. 37.

**QUEST. LXXX.** *Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation ?*

**ANSW.** Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavour to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit, enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in a state of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.

**H**AVING before considered a believer as made partaker of those graces of the Holy Spirit that accompany salvation, whereby his state is rendered safe, and also that he shall not draw back unto perdition, but shall attain the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul ; it is necessary for the establishing of his comfort and joy, that he should know himself to be interested in this privilege. It is a great blessing to be redeemed by Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit ; but it is a superadded privilege to know that we are so, or be assured that we are in a state of grace, which is the subject insisted on in this answer : In which we are led,

I. To speak something concerning the nature of assurance, and how far persons may be said to be infallibly assured of their salvation.

II. We shall endeavour to prove that this blessing is attainable in this life.

III. We shall consider the character of those to whom it belongs. And,

IV. The means whereby it may be attained.

I. Concerning the nature of assurance, and how far persons may be said to be infallibly assured of their salvation. Assurance is opposed to doubting ; which is inconsistent therewith ; so that he who has attained this privilege, is carried above all those doubts and fears respecting the truth of grace, and his interest in the love of God, which others are exposed to, whereby their lives are rendered very uncomfortable : It may also be considered as containing in it something more than our be-

ing enabled to hope that we are in a state of grace ; for though that affords relief against despair, yet it falls short of assurance, which is sometimes called a *full assurance of hope*, Heb. vi. 11. and it certainly contains a great deal more than a probability, or a conjectural persuasion relating to this matter ; which is the only thing that some will allow to be attainable by believers, especially they who deny the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, and lay the greatest stress of man's salvation on his own free-will, rather than the efficacious grace of God. All that they will own as to this matter is, that persons may be in a hopeful way to salvation, and that it is probable they may attain it at last. But they cannot be fully assured that they shall, unless they were assured concerning their perseverance, which, they suppose, no one can be ; because the carrying on of the work of grace depends on the free-will of man, as well as the first beginning of it ; and according to their notion of liberty, as has been before observed under another answer \*, viz. that he who acts freely may act the contrary ; and consequently, since every thing that is done in the carrying on of the work of grace, is done freely ; no one can be assured that this work shall not miscarry ; therefore none can attain assurance ; this is what some assert, but we deny. And it is observed in this answer, that believers may not only attain assurance that they are in a state of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation, but that they may be infallibly assured hereof, which is the highest degree of assurance. How far this is attainable by believers, may be the subject of our farther inquiry.

It is a matter of dispute among some, whether assurance admits of any degrees, or whether a person can be said to be more or less assured of a thing ? or whether that which does not amount to the highest degree of certainty, may be called assurance ? This is denied, by some, for this reason ; because assurance is the highest and strongest assent that can be given to the truth of any proposition ; accordingly the least defect of evidence on which it is supposed to be founded, leaves the mind in a proportionable degree of doubt, as to the truth of it ; in which case there may be a probability, but not an assurance. If this method of explaining the meaning of the word be true, then it is beyond dispute, that they who have attained assurance of their being in a state of grace, may be said to be infallibly assured thereof : Whether this be the sense of that expression in this answer, I will not pretend to determine ; neither shall I enter any farther into this dispute, which amounts to little more than what concerns the propriety or impropriety of the sense of the word *assurance*. All that I shall add concerning it, is, that according to our common mode of speaking it is reckon-

\* See *Quest. lxxvii. Pag. 15 ante.*

ed no absurdity for a person to say he is sure of a thing, though it be possible for him to have greater evidence of the truth thereof, and consequently a greater degree of assurance. Thus the assurance that arises from the possession of a thing cannot but be greater than that which attends the bare expectation of it : Therefore whatever be the sense of that infallible assurance, which is here spoken of ; we cannot suppose that there is any degree of assurance attainable in this life, concerning the happiness of the saints in heaven, equal to that which they have who are actually possessed of that blessedness ; to suppose this would be to confound earth and heaven together, or expectation with actual fruition.

As to what relates to our assurance thereof, there is another matter of dispute among some, which I am not desirous to enter into ; namely, whether it is possible for a believer to be as sure that he shall be saved, as he is that he exists, or that he is a sinner, and so stands in need of salvation ? or whether it is possible for a person to be as sure that he shall be saved, as he is sure of that truth which is matter of pure revelation, *viz.* that he, that believes shall be saved ? or whether it is possible for a person to be as sure that he has the truth of grace, as he may be that he performs any actions, whether natural or religious ; such as speaking, praying, reading, hearing, &c. or whether we may be as sure that we have a principle of grace, as we are that we put forth such actions, as seem to proceed from that principle, when engaged in the performance of some religious duties ? If any are disposed to defend the possibility of our attaining assurance in so great a degree as this, as what they think to be the meaning of what some divines have asserted, agreeably to what is contained in this answer, that a believer may be infallibly assured of his salvation, I will not enter the list with them ; though I very much question whether it will not be a matter of too great difficulty for them to support their argument, without the least appearance of exception to it.

Nevertheless, (that I may not extenuate or deny the privileges which some saints have been favoured with, who have been, as it were, in the suburbs of heaven, and not only had a prelibation, but a kind of sensation, of the enjoyments thereof, and expressed as full an assurance as though they had been actually in heaven) ; it cannot be denied that this, in various instances, has amounted, as near as possible, to an assurance of infallibility ; and that such a degree of assurance has been attained, by some believers, both in former and later ages, will be proved under a following head, which, I am apt to think, is what is intended in this answer, by the possibility of a believer's being infallibly assured of salvation. But let it be considered, that these are uncommon instances, in which the Spi-

rit of God, by his immediate testimony, has favoured them with, as to this matter, which are not to be reckoned as a standard, whereby we may judge of that assurance which God's children desire, and sometimes enjoy, which falls short of it : Therefore, when God is pleased to give a believer such a degree of assurance, as carries him above all his doubts and fears, with respect to his being in a state of grace, and fills him with those joys which arise from hence, that are unspeakable, and full of glory ; this is that assurance which we are now to consider, which, in this answer is called an infallible assurance ; whether it be more or less properly so called, we have nothing farther to add ; but shall proceed,

II. To prove that this privilege is attainable in this present life ; and that it may appear to be so, let it be considered,

1. That if the knowledge of other things which are of less importance, be attainable, then certainly it is possible for us to attain that which is of the greatest importance. This argument is founded on the goodness of God ; if he has given us sufficient means to lead us into the knowledge of other things, which respect our comfort and happiness in this world ; has he left us altogether destitute of those means whereby we may conclude, that it shall go well with us in a better ? God has sometimes been pleased to favour his people with some intimations concerning the blessings of common providence, which they might expect for their encouragement, under the trials and difficulties which they were to meet with in the world ; and our Saviour encourages his disciples to expect, that notwithstanding their present destitute circumstances, as to outward things ; yet their *Father*, who *knows that they had need of them*, would supply their wants ; and therefore they had no reason to be over-solicitous in *taking thought what they should eat and drink, and wherewithal they should be clothed*, Matt. vi. 31, 32. and if God, that he may encourage the faith of his people, gives them assurance that *no temptation shall befall them, but what is common to men* ; or, that they shall not be pressed down, so as to sink and despair of help from him, under the burdens and difficulties that, in the course of his providence, he lays on them ; I say, if God is pleased to give such intimations to his people, with respect to their condition in this world, that they may be assured that it shall go well with them, as to many things that concern their outward circumstances therein ; may we not conclude from hence, that the assurance of those things that concern their everlasting salvation may be attained ? or, if the promises that respect the one may be depended on so as to afford relief against all doubts and fears that may arise from our present circumstances in the world ; may we not, with as good reason, suppose, that the promises which respect the other,

to wit, the carrying on and perfecting the work of grace, afford equal matter of encouragement ; and consequently, that the one is as much to be depended on, as the other ; so that as the apostle says, they who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them, may have strong consolation arising from thence, Heb. vi. 18.

*Objec.* It will be objected to this, that the promises that respect outward blessings are not always fulfilled, and therefore we cannot be assured concerning our future condition, as to outward circumstances in the world ; though godliness, as the apostle says, hath the promise of the world that now is, as well as that which is to come. This appears from the uncommon instances of affliction, that the best men often meet with, which others are exempted from. Therefore the promises which respect the carrying on and completing the work of grace, will not afford that assurance of salvation which we suppose a believer may attain to, as founded thereon.

*Ans.* In answer to this it may be replied, that the promises of outward blessings are always fulfilled, either in kind or value. Sometimes the destitute state of believers, as to the good things of this life, is abundantly compensated with those spiritual blessings, which are, at present, bestowed on, or reserved for them hereafter ; and therefore, if their condition in the world be attended with little else but affliction, they have no reason to say that they are disappointed ; for while they are denied the lesser, they have the greater blessings instead thereof, so that their assurance of the accomplishment of the promises of outward blessings, must be understood with this limitation : but as to spiritual blessings, which God has promised to his people, there is no foundation for any distinction of their being made good in kind or in value ; if the promise of eternal life be not made good according to the letter of it, it cannot be, in any sense, said to be accomplished : therefore, since God gives his people these promises as a foundation of hope, we may conclude from thence, that the assurance of believers, relating to their salvation, is as much to be depended on as the assurance they have, founded on the promises of God, concerning any blessings which may tend to support them in their present condition in the world.

2. That assurance of justification, sanctification and salvation, may be attained in this life, is farther evident from the obligations which persons are under to pray for these privileges, and to bless God for the experience which they have of the one, and the ground which they have to expect the other. That it is our duty to pray for them is no less certain than that we stand in need of them ; this therefore being taken for granted, it may be inferred from hence, that there is some way by

which we may know that our prayers are answered, the contrary to which would be a very discouraging consideration; neither could the experience hereof be alleged as a motive to the performance of the duty of prayer, as the Psalmist says, *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come*, Psal. lxxv. 2. Nor could any believer have the least reason to say as he does elsewhere, *Verily God hath heard me, he hath attended to the voice of my prayer*, Psal. lxxvi. 19. And the apostle says, that *if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us*, 1 John v. 14, 15. and this is said in the following words, to be known by us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him; therefore it follows, that we may know from the exercise of faith in prayer, for the forgiveness of sin, that our iniquities are forgiven; the same may be said concerning the subject-matter of our prayer for all other blessings that accompany salvation; and consequently it is possible for us to know whether God has granted us these blessings or no.

But if it be replied to this, that it is not absolutely necessary that an humble suppliant should have any intimations given him, that his petition shall be granted; or that it would be a very unbecoming thing for such an one to say, that he will not ask for a favour, if he be not sure before-hand that it will be bestowed.

To this it may be answered, That we are not only to pray for saving blessings, but to praise God for our experience thereof; as it is said, *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me*, Psal. l. 23. and *praise is comely for the upright*, Psal. xxxiii. 1. Now this supposes that we know that God has bestowed the blessings we prayed for upon us. If the Psalmist calls upon his soul to *bless the Lord for forgiving him all his iniquities*, Psal. ciii. 2, 3. we must suppose that there was some method by which he attained the assurance of the blessing which he praises God for; which leads us to consider,

3. That some have attained this privilege, therefore it is not impossible for others to attain it. That some have been assured of their salvation, is evident from the account we have thereof in several scriptures. Thus the apostle tells the church he writes to, *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation*, 1 Thes. v. 7. and he says concerning himself, *I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day*, 2 Tim. i. 12.

*Objec.* To this it is objected, that though it is true, some persons of old, have experienced this privilege, yet it does not follow from hence that we have any ground to expect it; since they attained it by extraordinary revelation, in that age in which they were favoured with the spirit of inspiration, whereby they

arrived to the knowledge of things future, even such as it was impossible for them otherwise to have known, at least, they could not without these extraordinary intimations, have arrived to any more than a probable conjecture concerning this matter; and this is not denied by those who oppose the doctrine of assurance: whereas, to pretend to more than this, is to suppose that we have it by extraordinary inspiration, which, at present, can be reckoned no other than enthusiasm.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, That though God does not give the church, at present, the least ground to expect extraordinary intimations concerning their interest in spiritual and saving blessings, as he formerly did; yet we must not conclude that there is no method whereby they may attain the assurance hereof in a common and ordinary way, by the internal testimony of the Spirit; which, as will farther appear under a following head, differs very much from enthusiasm; since it is attended with, and founded on those evidences which God has given hereof in scripture, which they, in a way of self-examination, are enabled to apprehend in themselves. That this may appear, let it be considered,

(1.) That there never was any privilege conferred upon the church by extraordinary revelation, while that dispensation was continued therein, but the same, or some other which is equivalent thereunto, is still conferred in an ordinary way, provided it be absolutely necessary for the advancing the glory of God, and their edification and consolation in Christ. If this were not true, the church could hardly subsist, much less would the present dispensation of the covenant of grace excel the other which the church was under in former ages, as to those spiritual privileges which they have ground to expect. It is, I think, allowed by all, that the gospel-dispensation, not only in the beginning thereof, when extraordinary gifts were conferred, but in its continuance, now they are ceased, excels that which went before it, with respect to the spiritual privileges which are conferred therein. Now if God was pleased formerly to converse with men in an extraordinary way, and thereby give them an intimation of things relating to their salvation, but, at present, withholds not only the way and manner of revealing this to them, but the blessings conveyed thereby; then it will follow, that the church is in a worse state than it was before; or else it must be supposed that these privileges are not absolutely necessary to enable them to glorify God, which they do by offering praise to him, and to their attaining that peace and joy which they are given to expect in a way of believing; but if the church were destitute of this privilege, it would be in a very unhappy state, and retain nothing that could compensate the loss of those extraordinary gifts that are now ceased.

They who insist on this objection, and charge the doctrine of assurance as what savours of enthusiasm, are obliged, by their own method of reasoning, to apply the same objection to the doctrine of internal, special, efficacious grace, which we have, under a foregoing answer,\* proved to be the work of the Spirit; and if these internal works are confined to the extraordinary dispensation of the Spirit, then the church is at present as much destitute of sanctification as it is of assurance. Therefore we must conclude, that one no more savours of enthusiasm than the other; or that we have ground to hope for assurance of salvation, though not in an extraordinary way, as much as the saints did in former ages.

(2.) Our Saviour has promised his people the Spirit to perform what is necessary for the carrying on the work of grace in all ages, even when extraordinary gifts should cease: accordingly he says, *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*, John xiv. 26. And elsewhere it is said, *Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things*, 1 John ii. 20. And to this privilege of assurance, it is said, *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 Cor. ii. 12. And there are many other promises of the Spirit, which though they had their accomplishment, as to what respects the conferring extraordinary gifts, in the first age of the church; yet they have a farther accomplishment in what the Spirit was to bestow on the church in the following ages thereof, though in an ordinary way. This seems very evident from scripture; inasmuch as the fruits of the Spirit are said to appear in the exercise of those graces which believers have in all ages, who never had extraordinary gifts: thus it is said, *The fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*, Gal. v. 22, 23. Now if these graces be produced by the Spirit, as they are called his fruits, and the exercise thereof be not confined to any particular age of the church, then we must suppose that the Spirit's energy extends itself to all ages.

Again, believers are said, to be *led by the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 14. and this is assigned as an evidence of their being *the sons of God*; and, on the other hand, it is said, *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, ver. 9. from whence we may conclude, that there was, in the apostles' days, an effusion of the Spirit, common to all believers, besides that which was conferred in an extraordinary way, on those who were favoured with the gift of inspiration; otherwise, the having the Spirit

\* See page 54, 55, ante.



would not have been considered as a privilege belonging only to believers, and being destitute of it, an argument of a person's not belonging to Christ. As for the extraordinary dispensation of the Holy Ghost, it was not inseparably connected with salvation; for many had it who were Christians only in name, and had nothing more than a form of godliness; and on the other hand, many true believers brought forth those fruits which proceeded from the Spirit, in an ordinary way, who had not these extraordinary gifts conferred on them. Moreover the apostle speaks of believers *through the Spirit mortifying the deeds of the body*, Rom. viii. 13. Now if the work of mortification be incumbent on believers in all ages, then the influences of the Spirit, enabling hereunto, may be expected in all ages. Now to apply this to our present argument; the Spirit's bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, which is the foundation of that assurance which we are pleading for, is, together with the other fruits and effects of the Spirit but now mentioned, a privilege which believers, as such, are given to desire and hope for, and stand in as much need of as those who had this or other privileges conferred on them in an extraordinary way, in the first age of the gospel-church.

And to all this we might add, that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit at that time, were conferred on particular persons, and not on whole churches; but assurance is considered, by the apostle, as a privilege conferred on the church to which he writes, that is, the greatest part of them, from whence the denomination is taken; upon which account, the apostle speaking to the believing Corinthians, says, *We know that if our earthy house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. by which he does not only intend himself and other ministers, but the generality of believers, at that time, who are described as walking by faith: and there are many other things said concerning them in the foregoing and following verses; which makes it sufficiently evident, that the apostle intends more than himself and other ministers, when he speaks of their having assurance, since many had it who were not made partakers of extraordinary gifts. Therefore we must not conclude that the church has, at present, no ground to expect this privilege, so that they are liable to the charge of enthusiasm if they do. But that this objection may farther appear not to be sufficient to overthrow the argument we are maintaining, we may appeal to the experience of many believers in this present age, who pretend not to extraordinary revelation; and therefore let it be considered;

(3.) That many, in later ages, since extraordinary revelation has ceased, have attained this privilege, and consequently it is

now attainable. To deny this would be to offend against the generation of God's people, of whom many have given their testimony to this truth, who have declared what a comfortable sense they have had of their interest in Christ, and the sensible impressions they have enjoyed of his love shed abroad in their hearts, whereby they have had, as it were, a prelibation of the heavenly blessedness; and this has been attended with the most powerful influence of the Spirit of God enabling them to exercise those graces which have been agreeable to these comfortable experiences, whereby they have been carried through, and enabled to surmount the greatest difficulties which have attended them in this life. And many have been supported and comforted therewith, at the approach of death, in which respect the sting thereof has been taken away, and they have expressed themselves with a kind of triumph over it, in the apostle's words, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55.

That some have been favoured with this invaluable privilege is undeniable; the account we have in the history of the lives and deaths of many, who have been burning and shining lights in their generation, puts it out of all doubt. And if this were not sufficient, we might appeal to the experience of many now living, since there is scarce any age or place in which the gospel comes with power, but we have some instances of the Spirit's testimony to his own work, whereby it comes, with much assurance, a comfortable sense of God's love, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which is the first-fruits and earnest of eternal life. But since this will be particularly insisted on under a following answer \*, and farther proofs given hereof; we may, at present, take it for granted, that many have been assured of their being in a state of grace, who have not made the least pretension, to inspiration; and to charge them with enthusiasm, or a vain ungrounded delusion, is to cast a reflection on the best of men, as well as on one of the highest privileges which we can enjoy in this world.

I am sensible that it will be objected to this, that though some have indeed expressed such a degree of assurance, yet this will only afford conviction to those that have it, who are best judges of their own experience, and the evidence whereon it is founded; but this is not a sufficient proof to us, with respect to whom it is only matter of report: And it may be said, on the other hand, that it is possible they might be mistaken who have been so sure of their own salvation.

But to this it may be replied, that it is very unreasonable to suppose that all have been mistaken or deluded, who have declared that they have been favoured with this blessing; chari-

\* See Quest. lxxxiii.

ty will hardly admit of such a supposition ; and if there be no possibility of attaining this assurance, they must all have been deceived, who have concluded that they had it. Moreover, this privilege has been attained, not only by a few persons, and these the more credulous part of mankind, or by such who have not been able to assign any marks or evidences tending to support it ; but many believers have experienced it, who, at the same time, have been far from discovering any weakness of judgment, or disposition to unwarrantable credulity ; yea, they have enjoyed it at such a time when they have been most sensible of the deceitfulness of their own hearts, and could not but own that there was a peculiar hand of God herein ; and the same persons, when destitute of the Spirit's testimony, have acknowledged themselves to have used their utmost endeavours to attain it, but in vain.

As to the conviction which this will afford to us who are destitute hereof ; that though we suppose it true to a demonstration, to those who have it, as being matter of sensation to them, it is only matter of report to us ; which we are no farther bound to believe than we can depend on the credibility of their evidence, who have declared that they have experienced it. To this it may be replied, that if there be such a thing as certainty founded on report, which to deny, would be the greatest degree of scepticism ; and if this has been transmitted to us, by a great number of those who cannot be charged with any thing that looks like a disposition to deceive either themselves or others ; then we are bound to believe, from their own testimony, that there is such an assurance to be attained by those who pretend not to receive it by extraordinary inspiration from the Spirit of God. This leads us,

III. To consider the character of the persons to whom this privilege belongs. Accordingly they are described in this answer, as such who truly believe in Christ, and endeavour to walk in all good conscience before him : these only have ground to expect this privilege. It is an assurance of our having the truth of grace that we are considering ; which supposes a person truly to believe in Christ ; and accordingly it is distinguished from that unwarrantable presumption whereby many persuade themselves that they shall be saved, though they be not sanctified. It is not *the hope of the hypocrite* we are speaking of, which, as it is said, shall *perish*, and be *cut off* ; *whose trust shall be as the spider's web*, which shall be swept away with the besom of destruction, and be like the *giving up of the ghost*, which shall end in everlasting despair, Job viii. 13, 14. and chap. xi. 20. but it is a well-grounded hope, such as is accompanied with, and supported by the life of faith ; so that we are first enabled to act grace, and then to discern the

truth thereof in our own souls, and accordingly reap the comfortable fruits and effects that attend this assurance; as the apostle prays in the behalf of the believing Romans, that *the God of hope would fill them with all joy and peace in believing*; Rom. xv. 13. So that an unbeliever has no right to this privilege, and, indeed, from the nature of the thing, it is preposterous for a person to be assured of that, which in itself has no reality, as the apostle says, *If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself*, Gal. vi. 3. And if faith be necessary to assurance, then it follows, as it is farther observed in this answer, that they who have attained this privilege, walk in all good conscience before God; whereby the sincerity of their faith is evinced: Thus the apostle says, *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world*, 2 Cor. i. 12.

IV. We are now to consider the means by which assurance is to be attained, viz. not by extraordinary revelation, but by faith, founded on the promises of God. As to the former of these, we have already considered, that assurance may be attained without extraordinary revelation, as has been experienced by some in this present dispensation of the gospel, in which extraordinary revelation is ceased. And, indeed, it may be observed, in the account the scripture gives of this privilege, that it does not appear, that when extraordinary revelation was granted to many, in the first age of the gospel, that the design thereof was to lead men into the knowledge of their own state, so as that they should attain assurance of their interest in Christ, and right to eternal life that way. The main design of inspiration was to qualify ministers in an extraordinary way to preach the gospel, as the necessity of affairs seemed then to require it; it was also necessary for the imparting some doctrines which could not otherwise be known: And, inasmuch as it was an extraordinary dispensation of divine providence, it was an expedient to give conviction to the world, concerning the truth of the christian religion, since God hereby was pleased to converse in an immediate way with men, and testified by this, the great regard he had to his church, and answered the great ends of inspiration, in propagating that religion which was then to be set up in the world. But we do not find that the work of grace was ordinarily wrought, or carried on this way; nor was it God's instituted means, without which they could not attain assurance, which the saints' arrived to, in that age of extraordinary inspiration, the same way as we are to expect to attain it. It is true, God has occasionally intimated, by immediate revelation, that he would save some particular

persons, and that their *names were written in the book of life*, Phil. iv. 3. but this was a special and extraordinary instance of divine condescension, that some should be described by name, in scripture, who had obtained this privilege ; though it is not designed hereby that others should expect to attain it this way ; and therefore it will be hard to prove that the apostle Paul, and others whom he speaks of, who were assured of their salvation, though they received the knowledge of other things by inspiration, were led into the knowledge of their own state in such a way, much less may we expect to attain assurance by extraordinary revelation. And this leads us to consider the ordinary means whereby we may attain it, which is, in this answer, said to be, by faith, grounded on the truth of God's promises, and the Spirit's testimony, whereby we are enabled to discern in ourselves those graces which accompany salvation ; accordingly we must consider,

1. That in order to our arriving to a comfortable persuasion that we shall be saved, there must be promises of life and salvation revealed, which are contained in the gospel ; these are remotely necessary thereunto ; for without a promise of salvation we can have no hope of it ; but notwithstanding these promises are contained therein, yet many are destitute of it.

2. It is also necessary, in order to our attaining assurance ; that there should be some marks and evidences revealed in the word of God, as a rule for persons to try themselves by, in order to their knowing that they are in a state of grace. Now we may say concerning this, as well as the former, to wit, the promises of salvation recorded, that though it be necessary to assurance ; yet it is only an objective means for our attaining it, inasmuch as we are hereby led to see what graces experienced, or duties performed by us, have the promise of salvation annexed to them ; and therefore let me add,

3. That it is necessary that we should discern in ourselves those marks and evidences of grace to which the promise of salvation is annexed ; otherwise we have no right to lay claim to it ; accordingly it is our duty to look into ourselves, and observe what marks of grace we have, from whence we may, by the Spirit's testimony with ours, discern ourselves to be in a state of grace ; which leads us to consider,

(1.) That in order to our attaining assurance, we must exercise the duty of self-examination.

(2.) What we may truly call a mark or evidence of grace ; whereby we may discern that we are in a state of salvation.

(3.) Notwithstanding this we are to depend on, hope, and pray for, the testimony of the Spirit with our spirits, that we are the children of God, and that these evidences are found in us.

(1.) In order to our attaining assurance, it is necessary that we exercise the duty of self-examination, which is God's ordinance for this end. And in order hereunto, let it be considered,

[1.] That it is certainly a duty and privilege for us to know ourselves, not only what we do, but what we are; for without this, whatever knowledge we may have of other things, we are chargeable with great ignorance in a matter of the highest importance; neither can we be sufficiently humble for those sins we commit, or thankful for the mercies we receive. If we reckon it an advantage to know what is done in the world, and are very inquisitive into the affairs of others, it is much more necessary and reasonable for us to endeavour to know what more immediately relates to ourselves; or if we are very desirous to know those things that concern our natural or civil affairs in the world; whether we are in prosperous or adverse circumstances therein, ought we not much more to enquire, how matters stand with us, as to what concerns a better world?

[2.] We cannot know the state of our souls, without impartial self-examination. This is evident from the nature of the thing. As enquiry is the means for our attaining knowledge; so looking into ourselves is a means of attaining self-acquaintance.

[3.] Self-examination is a duty founded on a divine command, and an ordinance appointed for our attaining the knowledge of our state. Thus the apostle says, *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownelves*, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. and whatever duty God has commanded us to engage in, as expecting any spiritual privilege to attend it, that is properly an ordinance for the attaining that privilege; and if so, then it is an argument to enforce the performance of that duty. Having therefore proved self-examination to be a christian's duty, we shall now consider how it ought to be performed. And here let it be observed, that as it is God's ordinance, we are to have a due regard to his presence, and consider him as an heart searching God, and depend on his assistance, without which it cannot be performed to any great advantage; but more particularly,

1st, We are to engage in this duty deliberately. It cannot well be performed while we are in an hurry of business. As every thing is beautiful in its seasons, so time ought to be re-deemed, and we to retire from the world, to apply ourselves to this as well as other secret duties, and the rather, because a rash and hasty judgment concerning any thing, is generally faulty, and must be reckoned an argument of weakness in him that passes it, and it will be much more so when the thing to be determined is of such vast importance.

*2dly*, It ought to be done frequently ; not like those things which are to be performed but once in our lives, or only upon some extraordinary occasions, but often, at least, so often, that no presumptuous sin may be committed, nor any extraordinary judgment inflicted on us, or mercy vouchsafed to us, without a due observation thereof, in order to our improving them aright to the glory of God, and our own edification : Nevertheless, we cannot exactly determine what relates to the frequency of this duty, any more than we can prescribe to those who are in a way of trade and business in the world, how often they are to cast up their accounts, and set their books in order, that they may judge whether they go forward or backward in the world : Notwithstanding, as the neglect hereof has been detrimental to many, as to their worldly affairs ; so the neglect of self-examination has been often found an hindrance to our comfortable procedure in our christian course : However, so far as we may advise concerning the frequency of this duty, it would redound much to the glory of God and our own advantage, if, at the close of every day, we would call to mind the experiences we have had, and observe the frame of spirit with which we have engaged in all the business thereof. This the Psalmist advises when he says, *Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still*, Psal. iv. 4.

Moreover, it is adviseable for us to perform this duty whenever we engage in other solemn stated religious duties, whether public or private, that we may know what matter we have for prayer, or praise, what help we want from God, against the prevalency of corruption or temptation, or what answers of prayer we have received from him, or what success we have had under any ordinance, in which we have engaged, as well as what the present frame of our spirit is, when drawing nigh to God in any holy duty.

*3dly*, It ought to be performed with great diligence, inasmuch as it is no easy matter to arrive to such a knowledge of ourselves, and the secret working of our hearts and affections, in what respects things divine and heavenly, or to discern the truth of grace, so as not to mistake that for a saving work, which has only the external shew of godliness, without the power of it ; this requires great diligence and industry to know : Accordingly the Psalmist, in speaking concerning the performance of this duty, says, *I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search*, Psal. lxxvii. 6. The thing to be enquired into is not barely, whether we are sinners in general, or exposed to many miseries in this life, as the consequence thereof ? for this is sufficiently evident by daily experience. But we are to endeavour after a more particular knowledge of ourselves, and accordingly are to enquire : whether

sin hath dominion over us to such a degree, so that all the powers and faculties of our souls are enslaved thereby, and we commit sin in such a way, as denominates us, as our Saviour expresses it, *servants of sin*? John viii. 34. or, whether sin be loathed and abhorred, avoided and repented of? and as to our state, we are to enquire; whether we have ground to conclude that we are justified, and thereby delivered from the guilt of sin, and the condemning sentence of the law? or, whether we remain in a state of condemnation, and the wrath of God abideth on us? We must enquire, whether the work of grace be really begun, so that we are effectually called, and enabled to put forth spiritual actions from a renewed nature? and whether this work is going forward or declining? what is the strength or weakness of our faith? Also we are to enquire, what is the general tenor of our actions? whether the ends we design in all religious duties are right and warrantable? whether our improvement in grace bears any proportion to the means we are favoured with?

Moreover, we are to examine ourselves; whether we perform all those relative duties that are incumbent on us, so as to glorify God in our conversation with men, whereby we endeavour to do good to, and receive good from them, and accordingly improve our talents to the glory of God, from whom we received them? These and such like things are to be enquired into, which will be more immediately subservient to the attaining this privilege of assurance.

*4thly*, Self-examination ought to be performed with the greatest impartiality. Conscience, which is to act the part of a judge and a witness, must be faithful in its dictates and determinations, it being a matter of the greatest importance; and therefore, in passing a judgment on our state, we must proceed according to the rules of strict justice, not denying, on the one hand, what we have received from God, or resolutely concluding against ourselves, that there is no hope, when there are many things that afford matter of peace and comfort to us; nor, on the other hand, are we to think ourselves something when we are nothing.

Therefore some are obliged to conclude, as the result of this enquiry, into their state, that they are unregenerate and destitute of the saving grace of God. This sentence persons are obliged to pass on themselves, who are grossly ignorant, not sensible of the plague of their own hearts, and altogether unacquainted with the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, or the method prescribed in the gospel, for the sinner's justification or freedom from the guilt of sin, in a fiducial application of Christ's righteousness, which is the only means conducing thereunto; and who know not what is included in evangelical



repentance; how sin is to be mortified, and what it is to depend on Christ in the execution of his offices of prophet, priest, and king, at least, if they have not such a degree of the knowledge of these things, though they cannot fully and clearly describe them, as may influence their practice, and excite those graces, which all true converts are enabled to exercise, they have ground to conclude that they are in a state of unregeneracy. And to this we may add, that a person must conclude against himself, that he is destitute of the grace of God, if he allows himself in the omission of known duties, or the commission of known sins, and is content with a form of godliness, without the power thereof, or values and esteems the praise of men more than of God; such must conclude that their hearts are not right with him.

*5thly*, We must examine ourselves concerning our state, with a resolution, by the grace of God, to make a right improvement of that judgment which we are bound to pass on ourselves. And therefore, if we apprehend that we are in a state of unregeneracy, we are not to sink into despair; but to wait on God in all his appointed means and ordinances, in order to our obtaining the first grace, that, by the powerful influences of the Spirit, there may be such a true change wrought in us, that we may have ground to hope better things concerning ourselves, even things which accompany salvation. And if we find that we have experienced the grace of God in truth, we may be disposed to give him all the glory; to exercise a continued dependence on him, for what is still lacking to complete the work, and as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord to walk in him.

*6thly*, This duty must be performed with judgment; and accordingly we are to compare our hearts and actions with the rule which is prescribed in the word of God, whereby we may know whether we have those marks and evidences of grace, from whence we may conclude, that we have a good foundation to build on, and that our hope is such as shall never make ashamed; which leads us to consider,

(2.) What we may truly call a mark or evidence of grace, whereby we may discern that we are in a state of salvation. In order to our understanding this, we must consider,

1. That every thing, which is a mark or evidence of a thing, must be more known than that which is designed to be evinced thereby. The sign must always be more known than the thing signified by it; inasmuch as it is a means of our knowing that which we are at present in doubt about. As when the finger is placed in a cross-road, to direct the traveller which way he is to take.

2. A mark or evidence of a thing must contain some essen-

tial property of that which it is designed to evince: thus the inferring consequences from premises is an essential property belonging to every intelligent creature, and to none else; therefore it is a mark or evidence thereof; so to design the best end, and use those means that are conducive thereunto, is an essential property of a wise man, and consequently a mark or evidence of wisdom. And, on the other hand, there are some things, which are not essential properties, but accidental, as an healthful constitution is to man, or a particular action, that has some appearance of wisdom and goodness, but not all the necessary ingredients thereof, to a wise or good man.

Now to apply these rules to our present purpose, in determining what we may call marks or evidences of grace. With respect to the former of them, *viz.* that a mark must be more known than the thing that is evinced thereby; we may conclude, that eternal election, or the Spirit's implanting a principle of grace in regeneration, cannot be said to be marks or evidences of sanctification, since these are less known than the thing designed to be evinced thereby.

And as to the other rule, *viz.* that a mark must contain an essential property of that which it evinces: it follows from hence, that our engaging in holy duties, without the exercise of grace therein; or our extending charity to the poor, when it does not proceed from faith or love to God, &c. is no certain evidence of the truth of grace, since a person may perform these duties and yet be destitute hereof; whereas, that which is essential to a thing, is inseparable from it. Thus concerning marks of grace in general; which I could not but think necessary to premise, inasmuch as some have entertained prejudices against all marks of grace, and seem to assert, that a believer is not to judge of his state thereby; than which, nothing seems more absurd. If they who are thus prejudiced against them, have nothing to say in defence thereof, but that some assign those things to be marks of grace which are not so, and thereby lead themselves and others, into mistakes about them; what has been premised concerning the nature of a mark, or evidence, may, in some measure, fence against this prejudice, as well as prepare our way for what may be said concerning them. Therefore we shall, *First*, consider those things which can hardly be reckoned marks of grace; and, *Secondly*, what marks we may judge of ourselves by.

*First*, As to the former of these, what are not to be reckoned marks of grace.

1. We are not to conclude that a person is in a state of grace, barely because he has a strong impression on his own spirit that he is so; since that is accidental, and not essential to grace, and many are mistaken with respect to this matter. It is not

to be doubted, but they whom our Saviour represents as saying, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works*, Matt. vii. 2. had a strong persuasion founded on this evidence, that they were in a state of grace, till they found themselves mistaken, when he commanded them to *depart from him*? Nothing is more obvious than that many presume they are something when they are nothing; and, indeed, a persuasion that a person is in a state of grace, barely because he cannot think otherwise of himself, the thing being impressed on his spirit, without any other evidence, lays such an one too open to the charge of enthusiasm.

2. An external profession of religion, discovered in the performance of several holy duties, is no certain sign of the truth of grace; for this many make who are not effectually called. Of such as these Christ speaks, when he says, *Many are called, but few are chosen*, Matt. xx. 16. And to this we may add, that persons may have some degree of raised affections, when attending on the ordinances, some sudden flashes of joy, when they hear of the privileges of believers, both in this and a better world; though their conversation be not agreeable to their confident and presumptuous expectation thereof. And, on the other hand, some have their fears very much awakened under the ordinances, as the subject of their meditations has a tendency thereunto; others have such a degree of sorrow, that it gives vent to itself in a flood of tears; as Esau is said to have *sought the blessing with tears*, Heb. xii. 17. but yet there is something else wanting to evince the truth of grace. I do not deny but that it is a great blessing to have raised affections in holy duties; but when this is only in particular instances, and they are principally excited by some external motives or circumstances attending the ordinance they are engaged in; and when the impressions made on them, wear off as soon as the ordinance is over, in this case we can hardly determine a person to be in a state of grace hereby. The affections, indeed, are warmed in holy duties; but this is like an iron heated in the fire, which, when taken out, soon grows cold again; and not like that natural heat that remains in the body of man, which is an abiding sign of life.

But since this subject is to be treated on with the utmost caution, inasmuch as many are apt to conclude, that they have no grace, because they have no raised affections, in holy duties, as well as others presume they have grace merely because they are affected therein, let it be farther considered; that when we speak of raised affections, not being a certain mark of grace, we consider them as being destitute of those other evidences, which contain some essential properties of grace: the affections are

often raised by insignificant sounds, or by the tone of the voice, when there is nothing in the matter delivered, that is adapted to excite any grace, the judgment is not informed thereby, nor the will persuaded to embrace Christ, as offered in the gospel. There may be transports of joy in hearing the word, when, at the same time, corrupt nature retains its opposition to the spirituality thereof. A person may conceive the greatest pleasure in an ungrounded hope of heaven, as a state of freedom from the miseries of this life, when he has no savour or relish of that holiness which is its glory, in which respect his conversation is not in heaven; and he may be very much terrified with the wrath of God, and the punishment of sin in hell; when, at the same time, there is not a due sense of the vile and odious nature of sin, or an abhorrence of it: such instances of raised affections we intend when we speak of them as no marks or evidences of the truth of grace. But, on the other hand, when, together with raised affections, there is the exercise of suitable graces, and the impression thereof remains, when their fervency is abated or lost, this is a good sign of grace; whereas, when they are not accompanied with the exercise of any grace, they afford no mark or evidence of the truth thereof.

Now that we may not be mistaken as to this matter, let us enquire, not only what it is that has a tendency to raise the affections; but whether our understandings are rightly informed in the doctrines of the gospel, and our wills choose and embrace what is revealed therein. And if we find it a difficult matter for our affections to be raised in holy duties, let us farther enquire, whether this may not proceed from our natural constitution? and if the passions are not easily moved with any other things in the common affairs of life; we have then no reason to conclude that our being destitute hereof in the exercise of holy duties, is a sign that we have not the truth of grace, especially if Christ and divine things are the objects of our settled choice, and our hearts are fixed trusting in him.

3. The performance of those moral duties, which are materially good, is no certain sign of the truth of grace; I do not say that this is not necessary; for when we speak of a mark of grace, as containing in it what is essential thereunto, we distinguish between that which is a necessary pre-requisite, without which, none can have grace; and that which is an essential ingredient in it. Where there is no morality, there is certainly no grace; but if there be nothing more than this, there is an essential ingredient wanting, by which this matter must be determined. A person may abstain from gross enormities, such as murder, adultery, theft, reviling, extortion, covetousness, &c. and, in many respects, perform the contrary duties, and yet be destitute of faith in Christ. The Pharisee, whom

our Saviour mentions in the gospel, had as much to say on this subject as any one; yet his heart was not right with God; nor was his boasting hereof approved of by Christ. There are multitudes who perform many religious duties, when it comports with their secular interests; they adhere to Christ in a time of prosperity; but in a time of adversity they fall from him; and then, that which seemed to be most excellent in them is lost, and then they appear to be, what they always were, destitute of the truth of grace. We now proceed to consider,

*Secondly*, What are those marks by which persons may safely conclude themselves to be in a state of grace. In order to our determining this matter, we must consider what are the true and genuine effects of faith, which we find mentioned in scripture, namely, those other graces that accompany or flow from it; as when it is said to *work by love*, Gal. v. 6. or as we are hereby enabled to *overcome the world*, 1 John v. 4. or to despise the honours, riches, and pleasures thereof; especially when standing in competition with Christ; or our hearts are thereby drawn aside from him: this effect it produced in Moses, when he *refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*, Heb. xi. 24—26. and in others, who *confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*, ver. 13, 16. who *desired a better country, that is, an heavenly; whose conversation was in heaven*, Phil. iii. 10. Moreover, we are to enquire whether it has a tendency to *purify the heart*, Acts xv. 9. and so puts us upon abhorring, flying from, watching, and striving against every thing that tends to corrupt and defile the soul! and whether it tends to excite us to universal obedience, which is called *the obedience of faith*, Rom. xvi. 26. and a carefulness to *maintain good works*, Tit. iii. 6. which proceed from, and are evidences of the truth of it? as the apostle says, *Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works*, James ii. 18. or, as our Saviour says, *The tree is known by his fruit*. But that we may more particularly judge of the truth of grace by the marks and evidences thereof, we must consider its beginning and progress, or with what frame of spirit we first embraced and closed with Christ; and what our conversation has been since that time.

1. As to the former of these, to wit, our judging of the truth of grace by the first beginning thereof. Here we are to enquire, what were the motives and inducements that inclined us to accept of Christ? Did we first see ourselves lost and undone, as sinful, fallen creatures; and were we determined hereupon to have recourse to him for salvation, as the only refuge v.

could betake ourselves to? Did we first consider ourselves as guilty; and did this guilt set very uneasy upon us; and in order to the removal of it, did we betake ourselves to Christ for forgiveness? and did we consider ourselves as weak and unable to do what is good, and so apply ourselves to him for strength against indwelling sin, and victory over the temptations which prevailed against us?

Moreover, let us enquire, whether it was only a slavish fear and dread of the wrath of God, and the punishment of sin in hell, that gave the first turn to our thoughts and affections, so as to put us on altering our course of life? or, whether, besides this, we saw the evil of sin arising from its intrinsic nature, and its opposition to the holiness of God; and was this attended with shame and self-abhorrence? and, at the same time, did we see the excellency and loveliness of Christ? was he *precious* to us *as he is to them that believe*? 1 Pet. ii. 7.

Again, let us farther enquire, what were the workings of our spirits when we first closed with Christ? did we do this with judgment, duly weighing what he demands of us in a way of duty, as well as what we are encouraged to expect from him? were we made willing to accept of him in all his offices, and to have respect to all his commandments? were we earnestly desirous to have communion with him here, as well as to be glorified with him hereafter? were we content to submit to the cross of Christ, to bear his reproach, and to count this preferable to all the glories of the world? were we willing to be conformed to an humbled suffering Jesus, and to take our lot with his servants, though they may be reckoned the refuse and off-scouring of all things? And let us farther enquire; whether we did this with reliance on his assistance, as being sensible of the treachery and deceitfulness of our own hearts, and our utter inability to do what is good, without the aids of his grace? did we accordingly give up ourselves to him in hope of obtaining help from him, in order to the right discharge of every duty? did we reckon ourselves nothing, and Christ to be all in all, that all our springs are in him? This was a good beginning of the work of grace, which will prepare the way for this grace of assurance, which we are now considering.

*Obj.* Some will object against what has been said concerning our enquiring into, or being able to discern the first acts of faith, or that frame of spirit wherewith we then closed with Christ, that they know not the time of their conversion, if ever they were converted; they cannot remember or determine what was the particular ordinance or providence, that gave them the first conviction of sin, and of their need of Christ, and induced them to close with him; much less can they tell what were the workings of their hearts at such a time: It is

impossible for them to trace the footsteps of providence; so as to point out the way and manner in which this work was at first begun in their souls. This therefore is not to be laid down as a mark or evidence of grace, which so few can make use of.

*Answ.* I am not insensible that this is the case of the greatest number of believers. There are very few, who, like the apostle Paul, can tell the time and place of their conversion, and every circumstance leading to it; or like those converts, who, when the gospel was first preached by Peter, were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Acts ii. 37. or like the jailor, who broke forth into an affectionate enquiry, not much unlike to it; *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* chap. xvi. 30. though the ordinance leading to it was of a different nature. Sometimes, the way of the Spirit of God in the soul at first, is so discernable, that it cannot but be observed by them who are brought into a state of grace; but others know nothing of this, especially they who have not run into all excess of riot, and been stopped in their course on a sudden, by the grace of God; in whom the change made in conversion, was real, though it could not, from the nature of the thing be so plainly discerned in all its circumstances. Some have been regenerate from the womb; others have had a great degree of restraining grace, and been trained up in the knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel from their very childhood, and retain the impressions of a religious education; these cannot so easily discern the first beginnings of the work of grace in their souls; yet they may, and ought to enquire, whether ever they found, in the course of their lives, such a frame of spirit as has been before described, which believers have when the work of grace is first begun, and it is not very material for them to be able to discern whether these were the first actings of grace or no? The main thing to be determined is; whether they have ground to conclude, that ever they experienced the grace of God in truth? In this case, the most that some can say concerning themselves, is as the blind man says in the gospel, when the Pharisees were inquisitive about the restoring his sight, and the way and manner in which this was done; this is all that I know concerning myself, that *whereas I was blind, now I see*, John ix. 25. so the true convert says; *whereas I was once dead in trespasses and sins, I am now alive, and enabled to put forth living and spiritual actions, to the glory of God.* This evidence will give as much ground to conclude that they are in a state of grace, as though they were able to determine when they were first brought into it.

2. We may judge of the truth of grace by the method in which it has been carried on, whether we are able to determine

the way and manner in which it was first begun, or no, as a farther evidence of the truth thereof. Sanctification is a progressive work ; therefore it is not enough for us to set our faces heaven-ward ; but we must make advances towards it, and be found in the daily exercise of grace, in order to our concluding that we are in a state of grace. A believer must not only set out in the right way, but he must hold on therein ; he must live by faith if he would conclude that the work of faith is begun in truth. It is not sufficient to call upon God, or implore help from him, when under some distressing providences, and afterwards to grow remiss in, or lay aside this duty ; but it must be our constant work. A true christian is distinguished from an hypocrite, in that it is said, concerning the latter, *Will he delight himself in the Almighty ? will he always call upon God ?* Job xxvii. 20. denoting that a true believer will do so. He is either habitually or actually inclined to it ; and that in such a way as is attended with the daily exercise of those graces, which are the fruits and effects of faith, whereby he may conclude that he is in a state of grace. Thus far we have considered those marks or evidences of grace, which, in order to our attaining assurance, we must be able to discern in ourselves. But inasmuch as a believer may understand what are the marks of grace contained in scripture, and, at the same time, enquire into the state of his soul, to know whether he can apprehend in himself any evidences of the truth of grace ; and not be able to arrive to a satisfaction as to this matter, so as to have his doubts and fears removed ; let it be considered,

3. That he must depend on, hope, and pray for the testimony of the Spirit, with his spirit, that he is a child of God. It will be a difficult matter for us to conclude that we have the truth of grace, till the Spirit is pleased to shine on his own work ; which, when he does, all things will appear clear and bright to us, though before this we might walk in darkness, and have no light. In speaking concerning the inward testimony of the Spirit (which is necessary to enable a believer to discern in himself the marks of grace, on which his assurance of salvation is founded) let it be premised ; that as it is a branch of the Spirit's divine glory, by his internal influence, to deal with the hearts of his people ; so he does this various ways, according to the various faculties of the soul, which are the subjects thereof ; particularly, when by his power, he renews the will, and causes it to act those graces which are the effects of his divine power ; then he is said to sanctify a believer. But when he deals with the understanding and conscience, enabling us to discern the truth of the work of grace, that we may take the comfort of it, then he is described, in scripture, as a witness hereunto, or as witnessing with our spirits, that



we are in a state of grace, the consequence of which is, that *the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of his calling*, Eph. i. 18. accordingly he gives us to discern that he has called us by his grace; and, as the result thereof, granted us a hope of eternal life.

This is a privilege plainly mentioned in scripture; and we must not suppose that none had it but those who had extraordinary revelation, since it is so necessary to a believer's attaining that peace and joy which the church, in this present dispensation, is certainly not less possessed of, than it was in former ages. And that the Spirit gives his testimony to the work of grace in the souls of believers, though extraordinary revelation be ceased, is evident from what is matter of daily experience; since there are many instances of those who have used their utmost endeavours in examining themselves, to know whether they had any marks of grace, who have not been able to discern any, though they have been thought to be sincere believers by others, till, on a sudden, light has broke forth out of darkness, and their evidences for eternal life cleared up, so that all their doubts have been removed; and this they could not but attribute to a divine hand, inasmuch as before this they could meditate nothing but terror to themselves; and, in this case, what the apostle prays for, with respect to the church, *That the God of hope would fill them with all joy and peace in believing, that they might abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost*, Rom. xv. 13. is experienced by them: And on this account they are said to be *sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise*, Eph. i. 13. whereby their hope is established, and that is now confirmed to them by this means, which they were before in perplexity about; so that we have as much ground to conclude that the Spirit is the author of assurance in believers, as we have that he is the author of sanctification.

But that this doctrine may not appear liable to the charge of enthusiasm, let it be farther considered, that the Spirit never gives his testimony to the truth of grace in any, in whom he has not first wrought it; for that would be, as it were, a setting his seal to a blank. And to this we may add, that he, at the same time, excites the lively exercise of grace, whereby they are enabled to discern that it is true and genuine; so that their assurance, though it be not without some internal, impressive influences, which they are favoured with; yet it is not wholly dependent on them: Therefore, if you demand a reason of the hope that is in them, though they ascribe the glory hereof to the Holy Spirit, as enabling them to discern the truth of grace; yet they are able to prove their own selves, after having examined themselves, whether they are in the faith,

by discovering their evidences of the faith of God's elect; which argues that their assurance is no delusion.

**QUEST. LXXXI.** *Are all true believers, at all times, assured of their present being in the estate of grace; and that they shall be saved?*

**ANSW.** Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God, as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.

**H**AVING considered some believers as favoured with assurance of their being in a state of grace, we are, in this answer, led to speak of others who are destitute of it. And the general method in which it may be considered, is,

I. That there is something supposed, namely, that assurance of grace and salvation is not of the essence of saving faith.

II Some things are inferred from this supposition, namely.

1. That true believers may wait long before they obtain assurance. And,

2. That after the enjoyment thereof it may be weakened and intermitted; the reasons whereof are assigned, *viz.* bodily distempers, sins, temptations, and divine desertions; yet it is farther added, that they are never left without the support of the Spirit of God; whereby they are kept from sinking into utter despair.

I. As to the thing supposed in this answer, *viz.* that assurance of grace and salvation is not of the essence of faith. There are many who, in other respects, explain the nature of faith, in such a way as is unexceptionable, who, notwithstanding, assert that assurance is of the essence thereof; in which we cannot but think they express themselves very unwarily, at least, they ought to have more clearly discovered what they mean by faith, and what by assurance, being of the essence of faith; if they mean that no one has saving faith but he who has an assurance of his own salvation; they not only assert what is contrary to the experience of many believers, but lay a stumbling-block in the way of weak Christians, who will be induced from hence to conclude, that because they cannot tell whether they are true believers or no, therefore they are destitute of saving faith; upon which account it is necessary for

It is to enquire how far this supposition is to be allowed of, and in what respect denied.

It is certain, that there are many excellent divines, in our own and foreign nations, who have defined faith by assurance; which they have supposed so essential to it, that without it no one can be reckoned a believer. It may be they might be inclined thus to express themselves by the sense in which they understood several texts of scripture, in which assurance seems to be considered as a necessary ingredient in faith; as it is said, *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith*, Heb. x. 22. and when the apostle speaks of assurance, as a privilege that belonged to the church to which he wrote, *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 heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. and elsewhere, he so far blames their not knowing themselves, or being destitute of this assurance, that he will hardly allow them to have any faith, who were without it; *Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates*, chap. xiii. 5. From such like expressions as these, they who plead for assurance being of the essence of faith, are ready to conclude, that they who are destitute of it, can hardly be called believers.

But, that this matter may be set in a true light, we must distinguish between assurance of the object, viz. the great and important doctrines of the gospel, being of the essence of faith; and assurance of our interest in Christ being so. The former of these we will not deny; for no one can come to Christ, who is not assured that he will receive him, nor trust in him till he is fully assured that he is able to save him: but the latter we must take leave to deny; for if no one is a believer but he that knows himself to be so, then he that doubts of his salvation, must be concluded to be no believer; which is certainly a very discouraging doctrine to weak Christians. And also, when we lose the comfortable persuasion we once had, of our interest in Christ, we are bound to question all our former experiences, and to determine ourselves to be in a state of unregeneracy, which is, in effect to deny to give God the glory of that powerful work which was formerly wrought in us, which we then thought to be a work of grace.

If they, indeed, mean by assurance, being of the essence of faith, that an assurance of our interest in Christ is essential to the highest or most comfortable acts of faith, designing thereby to put us upon pressing after it, if we have not attained to it; and that hereby God is very much glorified, and a foundation laid for our offering praise to him, for the experience we have had of his grace, which a doubting Christian cannot be said to do; we have nothing to say against it. Or, if they should

assert, that doubting is no ingredient in faith, nor a commendable excellency in a Christian; this we do not deny. All that we are contending for is, that there may be a direct act of faith, or a faith of reliance, in those who are destitute of assurance that they are in a state of grace; which is the thing supposed in this answer, when it is said, that assurance is not of the essence of faith. That this may be better understood, and we be led into the sense of those scriptures that describe believers as having assurance, such as those but now mentioned, and others to the like purpose, let it be considered, that there are many scriptures, in which believers are said to have such an assurance, as only respects the objects of faith, *viz.* the person, offices, and glory of Christ, the truth of the gospel, and the promises thereof; which we do not deny to be of the essence of faith. Thus, when the apostle prays for the church, *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ,* Col. ii. 2. and when elsewhere he says, *Our gospel came to you in much assurance,* 1 Thess. i. 5. and when he exhorts persons to draw near to God, *with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,* Heb. x. 22. it is probable, that he means in these, and several other scriptures of the like import, no more than an assurance of the object of faith. And as for that scripture but now mentioned, in 2 Cor. xiii. 5. where he seems to assert, that all who are destitute of this privilege are reprobates; some understand the word, which we translate *reprobates*, as only signifying injudicious Christians; and if so, this is not inconsistent with the character of believers: but others, with an equal degree of probability, render it *disapproved*;<sup>\*</sup> and so the mean-

\* The word *ἀδύναμι*, though it be sometimes used to signify such as are rejected as objects of God's hatred, as in Heb. vi. 8. and consequently is inconsistent with the character of believers; yet, in other places it may be taken according to the grammatical construction thereof, as opposed to *ἐμπιστι*; which signifies persons approved, 2 Tim. ii. 15. and so it signifies a person whose conduct is blame-worthy, or whose actions are not to be approved of; and this may be applied to some who are not altogether destitute of faith, though they are not able to vindicate themselves in all respects as blameless. That the apostle uses the word in this sense here, seems probable from the application he makes of it to himself; it is said, ver. 3. *Ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, ἐμπιστι λέγω;* and verse 6. he says, *I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates;* so we render the words *ἀδύναμι* *δι' οὗτις γινώσκετε οὗτις ἡμεῖς ἢ ὅτι οὐκ ἀδύναμι*; but it would be more agreeable to what is said in verse 4. if we should render them, *I trust that ye shall know that we are not disapproved, or that ye shall find a proof of Christ speaking in us:* and in verse 7. he further says, *I pray to God, not that we should appear approved.* *ἢ ἵνα ἡμεῖς ἐμπιστι φανώμεθα,* that is, *I am not so much concerned about your finding a proof of Christ speaking in us; but that ye should do that which is honest, &c. I am more concerned for you than myself, though we be as reprobates, ἡμεῖς δι' οὗτις ἀδύναμι ἡμεῖς;* that is, *whether you think we have a proof of Christ's speaking in us or no, or his approving us in the course of our ministry, my great concern is, that you may be approved; so that it is plain the apostle uses the word ἀδύναμι, as signifying disapproved; and therefore as it is ap-*

ing is, that if you know not your ownelves, to wit, that Christ is in you, you are greatly to be blamed, or disapproved; especially because this proceeds from your neglect of the duty of self-examination; by which means you have no proof of Christ's being in you, who are so ready to demand a proof of his speaking in his ministers, as in verse 3. Therefore it does not appear from this text, that every one who endeavours to know that he is in a state of grace, by diligent self-examination, but cannot conclude that he is so, must be determined to be destitute of faith; which would necessarily follow from our asserting that assurance of our interest in Christ, is of the essence of saving faith.

There are other scriptures which speak of assurance as a distinguishing character of Christians in general; which are usually brought to prove, that assurance is of the essence of faith, viz. 2 Cor. v. 1. *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 heavens;* and, 1 John v. 19. *we know that we are of God:* and in several places in the New Testament, in which the apostle addresses his discourse to whole churches, as having assurance, as well as the grace of faith: thus the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. speaks of them as *loving Christ, believing in him, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their soul;* which could hardly be said of them, if they were destitute of assurance of their own salvation. All that I would infer from these and such-like scriptures is, that it seems probable that assurance was a privilege more commonly experienced in that age of the church than it is in our day; and there may be two reasons assigned for this,

(1.) Because the change that passed upon them, when they were converted, was so apparent, that it was hardly possible for it not to be discerned. They turned from dead idols, and the practice of the vilest abominations, to serve the living God; which two extremes are so opposite, that their being brought from one to the other could not but be remarked by, and consequently more visible to themselves, than if it had been otherwise; but,

(2.) That which may be assigned as the principal reason of this is, because the church was called, at this time, to bear a

*plied to those he speaks of in verse 5. the meaning in this; you seek to know whether we are approved of God as ministers; therefore I would advise you to examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith, and to prove your ownelves: and if you know not yourselves, you are in this respect blame-worthy, or to be disapproved; especially because you seem to have been negligent as to the duty of self-examination. Whether he who is diligent in the exercise of this duty, and yet cannot apprehend that he is in a state of grace, be, in this respect to be disapproved or no, it is certain, that he who is a stranger to himself, because of the neglect hereof, is disapproved.*

public testimony to the gospel, by enduring persecutions of various kinds; and some of them were to resist unto blood. Therefore, that God might prepare them for these sufferings, and that he might encourage others to embrace the faith of the gospel, which was then in its infant state, he was pleased to favour them with this great privilege. And it may be hereafter, if God should call the church to endure like trials, he may in mercy grant them a greater degree of assurance than is ordinarily experienced.

Nevertheless, it may be questioned; whether those scriptures which speak of assurance, as though it were a privilege common to the whole church, are not to be understood as applicable to the greater part of them, rather than to every individual believer among them. For though the apostle, in one of the scriptures before-mentioned, considers the church at Corinth, as enjoying this privilege, and concluding that it should go well with them in another world; when this earthly tabernacle was dissolved; yet he speaks of some of them, in the same epistle, as not knowing their own selves, how that Jesus Christ was in them. And the apostle John, notwithstanding what he says to the church, *We know that we are of God*, in 1 John v. 19. which argues that many of them had assurance, plainly intimates that all had it not, from what he says, ver. 13. *These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life: and though in another scripture, but now mentioned, the apostle Peter speaks to the church to which he writes, as having joy unspeakable and full of glory consequent upon their faith, which argues that they had assurance; yet he exhorts others of them to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10. these therefore are supposed, at that time, not to have it: from all which it may be concluded, that assurance of grace and salvation, is not of the essence of saving faith; which is the thing supposed in this answer. (a)*

II. We proceed to consider those things that are inferred from this supposition, *viz.*

1. That a believer may wait long before he attains it: this appears from what is matter of daily experience and observation. The sovereignty of God discovers itself herein, as much as it does when he makes the ordinances effectual to salvation, in giving converting grace unto those who attend upon them. Some are called early to be made partakers of that salvation that is in Christ, others late. The same may be said with respect to God's giving assurance. Some are favoured with this privilege soon after, or when first they believe; others are like those whom the apostle speaks of, *who, through fear of death, are all their life-time subject to bondage*, Heb. ii. 15. Many have

(a) Vide Bellamy's Works, 3 Vol. p. 81—83.

often enquired into the state of their souls, that cannot discern any marks or evidences of grace in themselves; whose conversation is such, that others cannot but conclude them to be true believers; their spirits are deprest, doubts and fears prevail, and tend to make their lives very uncomfortable; they wait and pray for the evidence and sense of God's love to them, but cannot immediately find it: this the Psalmist speaks of, either in his own person, or thereby represents the case of many who had the truth of grace, but not the assurance thereof, when he says, *O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee; I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted*, Psal. lxxxviii. compared with the xv. God suffers it to be thus with them for wise ends. Hereby he lets them know, that assurance of his love is a special gift and work of the Spirit; without which they remain destitute of it, and cannot take comfort, either from their former or present experiences.

2. They who once enjoyed assurance, may have it weakened and intermitted; whether it may be entirely lost will be considered under a following head, when we speak concerning the supports that believers have, and how far they are kept hereby from sinking into utter despair: it is one thing to fall from the truth of grace, another thing to lose the comfortable sense thereof. The joy of faith may be suspended, when the acts and habits of faith remain firm and unshaken. The brightest morning may afterwards be followed with clouds and tempests; even so our clearest discoveries of our interest in the love of God may be followed with the withdrawalment of the light of his countenance, and we be left under many discouraging circumstances concerning our state, having lost the assurance we once had.

If it be inquired, what reason may be assigned for this? I answer, that it must, in a great measure, be resolved into the sovereignty of God, who will bring his people which way he pleases, to heaven; and may take those comforts which had their first rise from himself; and, at the same time, none must say, why dost thou thus? However, we may observe some particular reasons, which the providence of God points out to us, to which we may in other respects, ascribe our want of assurance; and these may be reduced to four heads, particularly mentioned in this answer.

(1.) It is sometimes occasioned by manifold distempers, or bodily diseases: the soul and body are so closely joined to, and dependant on each other, that the one can hardly suffer without the other. Hence it is that bodily distempers affect the mind, excite and give disturbance to the passions; which is a great addition to the uneasiness that ensues hereupon.

When the spirits are deprest, and we are under the prevalency of a melancholy disposition, we are oftentimes inclined to think that we are not in a state of grace; and though we were before this disposed to comfort others in like cases, we are at this time unable to take the least encouragement ourselves. All things look black and dismal; our former hope is reckoned no other than delusive, and we brought to the very brink of despair. And it may be observed, that these sad and melancholy apprehensions concerning our state, increase or abate, as the distemper that gives occasion thereunto more or less prevails.

Now that we may be able to determine whether our want of assurance proceeds from some natural cause or bodily distemper, we must enquire; whether, before this, we have endeavoured to walk in all good conscience in the sight of God? to hate every false way, and make religion the great business of life, so that we cannot assign any reigning sin as the cause of our present desponding frame? And also, whether we have been diligent in performing the duty of self-examination, and have been sensible that we stood in need of the Spirit's witness with ours, in order to our arriving to a comfortable persuasion that we are in a state of grace? And if, as the result of these enquiries, we cannot see any cause leading to this dejection of spirit, but the unavoidable infirmities, which we are daily liable to, then we may probably conclude, that it arises from a distemper of body. And, in order to our determining this matter, we must farther inquire; whether some afflictive providence has not had an influence upon us, to bring us into a melancholy temper? and whether this does not appear in what relates to our secular, as well as our spiritual concerns? and if this be the case, though it be very afflictive, it is not attended with that guilt as it would be, had it been occasioned by some presumptuous sin; and there are other medicines to be used when it arises from this cause, besides those which are of a spiritual nature, that are contained in the gospel; but what they are, it is not our business, in this place, to determine.

(2.) There are many sins which are the occasion of a person's being destitute of assurance. As all the troubles of life are brought upon us by sin; so are all our doubts and fears, arising from the want of a comfortable sense of, or interest in, the love of God. It pleases God, in the method of his providence, thus to deal with his people, that he may humble them for presumptuous sins; more especially those that are committed against light and conviction of conscience, that he may bring to remembrance their sins of omission, or neglect to exercise those graces in which the life of faith consists, that hereby they may feel the effect of their stupidity, indifferency, and carnal security, or their engaging in religious duties, in their own



strength, without dependence on the Spirit and grace of God, or a due sense of their inability to perform any duty in a right way. Or, sometimes, as has been before observed, they want assurance, because they do not examine themselves, which is God's ordinance for the attaining this privilege; or, if they do, they neglect to give that glory to the Holy Spirit which is due to him, by depending on his enlightening influence, whereby they may arrive to a comfortable persuasion of their interest in Christ.

(3.) Assurance is oftentimes weakened and intermitted through manifold temptations. Satan is very active in this matter, and shews his enmity against the interest of Christ in the souls of his people, as much as lies in his power, with this intent, that though it is impossible for him to ruin the soul, by rooting out that grace that is implanted in it; yet he may disturb its peace, and weaken its assurance, and, if not prevented, hurry it into despair. In this case the general design of his temptations is to represent God as a sin-revenging Judge, a consuming fire, and to present to our view, the threatenings whereby his wrath is revealed against sinners; and to endeavour to set aside the promises of the gospel, from which alone relief may be had.

Moreover, he puts us upon considering sin, not only as heinously aggravated, (which may, for the most part be done with justice) but also as altogether unpardonable; and, at the same time pretends to insinuate to us that we are not elected, or that Christ did not die for us; and therefore, what he has done and suffered will not redound to our advantage. Now there is apparently the hand of Satan in this matter; inasmuch as he attempts, by false methods of reasoning, to persuade us that we are not in a state of grace, or that God is an enemy to us; and therefore our condition is desperate; in which he uses the arts of the old serpent, that he may deceive us by drawing conclusions against ourselves from false premises, *e. g.* because we daily experience the internal workings of corrupt nature, which inclines us to many sins, both of omission and commission; therefore there is no room for us to expect mercy and forgiveness from God. And from our barrenness and unprofitableness under the means of grace, our improvements not being proportioned to the obligations we have been laid under. Or because we have had great reason to charge ourselves with many declensions and backslidings, which afford matter for deep humiliation, and should put us upon sincere repentance, he endeavours to persuade us that we are altogether destitute of special grace. And whenever we are unprepared or indisposed for the right performance of holy duties, and our affections are not suitably raised, but grow stupid, remiss, and carc-

less therein ; he puts us upon concluding that it is a vain thing for us to draw nigh to God, and that he has utterly rejected, both our persons and services. Or, if we are not favoured with immediate returns of prayer, and sensible communion with God therein ; he tempts us to infer, that we shall never obtain the blessing we are pressing after ; and therefore we may as well lay aside this duty, and say, why should I wait on the Lord any longer ? And if by this method he cannot discourage us from engaging in holy duties, he sometimes injects blasphemous thoughts or unbecoming conceptions of the divine Majesty, which fills the soul with the greatest grief and uneasiness, that hereby he might give us occasion to conclude that we sin in persisting therein ; and by all these temptations he endeavours to plunge us into the depths of despair.

As to what concerns the purpose of God relating to the event of things : when we are led to determine that we are not elected, this is alleged without sufficient ground, and therein he deceives us, by pursuing the same false methods of reasoning, and puts us upon presuming to enter into those secret things which do not belong to us, because we deserve to be cast off by him for our sins, instead of giving diligence to make our calling and election sure. It is one thing not to be able to conclude that we are elected ; and another thing to say that we are not so : the former of these is the consequence of our present doubts and desponding apprehensions concerning our state ; the latter is plainly a temptation of Satan : this we are often subject to, when we have lost that assurance of our interest in Christ that we once enjoyed.

(4.) A believer's want of assurance is, for the most part, attended with, and arises from divine desertion ; not that we are to suppose that God will cast off his people, whom he has foreknown, effectually called and preserved hitherto, so as to forsake them utterly ; for that is inconsistent with his everlasting love, and the promises of the covenant of grace, which respect their salvation. But that which we understand by divine desertions, is God's withdrawing his comforting presence, and withholding the witness of his Spirit to the work of grace in the soul, from whence arises those doubts and fears which attend the want thereof ; as God says to his people, *For a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with great mercies will I gather thee*, Isa. liv. 7. In this respect they are destitute of God's comforting presence ; though at the same time they may be favoured with his supporting presence, and those powerful influences which are necessary to maintain the work of grace ; which, at present, appears to be very weak and languishing.

And this leads us to consider the last thing mentioned in this answer, &c. That though they are thus described, they are not

left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God, as keeps them from sinking into utter despair. This observation ought to be explained and considered, with certain limitations, lest while on the one hand, we assert that which affords matter of encouragement to believers, when they have some degree of hope, we should, on the other hand, throw discouragements in the way of others, who will be apt to imagine, when they are ready to sink into despair, that this is wholly inconsistent with any direct act of faith. I dare not say that no believer was ever so far deserted as to be left to despair of his interest in Christ: inasmuch as scripture and daily experience give us instances of some, whose conversation in many respects discovers them to have had the truth of grace; whom God has been pleased for wise ends, to leave to the terror of their own thoughts, and they have remained for some time, in the depths of despair; and others have gone out of the world under a cloud, concerning whom there has been ground to hope their state was safe. Therefore it is somewhat difficult to determine what is meant in this answer, by a believer's being kept from sinking into utter despair: if the meaning is, that they have the supports of the Spirit of God, so as to be kept from relapsing into a state of unregeneracy, in their despairing condition, that may be easily accounted for; or, if we are to understand by it, that believers are not generally given up to the greatest degree of despair; especially such as is inconsistent with the exercise of any grace, that is not to be denied. But I would rather say, that though a believer may have despairing apprehensions concerning his state, and the guilt of sin lie upon him like a great weight, so as to depress his spirits, yet he shall not sink into endless misery; for though darkness may continue for a night, light and joy shall come in the morning; and accordingly we may consider,

[1.] That though there are many who are far from having assurance, yet they are at some times, favoured with a small glimmering of hope, which keeps them from utter despair.

[2.] If they are in deep despair, yet they are not so far left as not to desire grace, though they conclude themselves to be destitute of it, or not to lament the loss of those comforts, and their being unable to exercise those graces which once they thought themselves possessed of.

[3.] A believer, when in a despairing way, is notwithstanding enabled, by a direct act of faith, to give up himself to Christ, though he cannot see his interest in him, and so, long for those experiences and comforts which he once enjoyed; and when he is at the worst, he can say with Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*, Job xiii. 15.

[4.] In this case a person has generally such a degree of the

presence of God, as that he is enabled to justify him in all his dealings with him, and lay the blame of all the troubles that he is under, on himself; and this is attended with shame and confusion of face, self-abhorrence, and godly sorrow.

[5.] Despairing believers have, notwithstanding, such a presence of God with them, as keeps them from abandoning his interest, or running, with sinners, into all excess of riot, which would give occasion to others to conclude that they never had the truth of grace.

From what has been said concerning true believers being destitute of assurance, and yet having some degree of the presence of God with them at the same time, we may infer,

1st, That this is not inconsistent with what has been said concerning a believer's perseverance in grace; yet it must be considered with this limitation, that though the truth of grace shall not be lost, yet the comforts and evidences thereof may, and often are.

2dly, This should put us upon circumspect walking and watchfulness against presumptuous sins, which, as has been before observed, are often the occasion of the loss of assurance; and also on the exercise of a faith of reliance on Christ, for the maintaining the acts of grace, as well as restoring the comforts thereof.

3dly, This should instruct believers what to do when destitute of this privilege of assurance. We have observed that this is attended with divine desertion, which is generally occasioned by sins committed. Therefore let us say with Job, *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me*, chap. x. 2. let me know what are those secret sins by which I have provoked thee to leave me destitute of thy comforting presence; enable me to be affected with, humbled for, and unfeignedly repent of them; and exercise that faith in Christ which may be a means of my recovering that hope or assurance which I am, at present, destitute of.

4thly, What has been said concerning a believer's being destitute of assurance, should put us upon sympathizing with those who are in a despairing way, and using endeavours to administer comfort to them, rather than censure them, or conclude them to be in an unregenerate state; as Job's friends did him, because the hand of God had touched him, and he was destitute of his comforting presence.

5thly, From what has been said concerning that degree of the presence of God which believers enjoy, which has a tendency to keep them from utter despair, at least, from sinking into perdition, how disconsolate soever their case may be at present; we may be induced to admire the goodness and faithfulness of God in his dealings with his people, who will not

lay more on them than he will enable them to bear; though they are comfortless and hopeless, yet they shall not be destroyed; and, in the end, they shall be satisfied with God's loving kindness; and when the clouds are all dispersed, they shall have a bright and glorious day in his immediate presence, where *there is fulness of joy*, and at his *right hand where there are pleasures for evermore*, Psal. xvi. 11.

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**QUEST. LXXXII.** *What is the communion in glory, which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?*

**ANSW.** The communion in glory, which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is, in this life, immediately after death; and at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.

**A**FTER having considered believers, or the members of the invisible church, as enjoying this privilege of union with Christ, and, as the immediate consequence hereof, communion with him. It has been farther observed, that this communion with him, is either in grace, or glory. Their communion with him in grace consists in their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their justification, adoption, and sanctification; which have been particularly considered, together with other graces and comforts that accompany or flow from them. We are now led to speak concerning the communion which they have with him in glory; which contains the highest privilege they are capable of receiving; consisting in his giving them some right discoveries of the glory which they behold and enjoy by faith, in this life, and also of that which shall be immediate, and, in some respects, complete, after death; and, at the resurrection and day of judgment, be brought, in all respects, to the utmost degree of perfection; when their joy, as well as their happiness, shall be full, and continued throughout all the ages of eternity. These are the subjects insisted on in several following answers, which remain to be considered in this first part of the Catechism.

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**QUEST. LXXXIII.** *What is the communion in glory, with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy in this life?*

**ANSW.** The members of the invisible church have communicated to them in this life, the first-fruits of glory with Christ, as they are members of him—his head, and so, in him, are

interested in that glory which he is fully possessed of ; and as an earnest thereof, enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and hope of glory ; as, on the contrary, the sense of God's revenging wrath, horror of conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment, are, to the wicked, the beginning of their torments which they shall endure after death.

**T**HERE are two sorts of persons mentioned in this answer, namely, the righteous and the wicked, and the different condition of each of them considered,

I. With respect to the righteous, who are here styled the members of the invisible church. There are several invaluable privileges which they are made partakers of in this life, in which they are said to have a degree of communion in glory with Christ ; particularly as they enjoy the first-fruits or earnest of that glory which they shall have with him hereafter : And that,

1. As they are members of him, their head ; and accordingly may be said, in some respects, to be interested in that glory which he is fully possessed of.

2. As they have a comfortable sense of his love to them, attended with peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and an hope of glory.

II. We have an account, on the other hand, of the dreadful condition of impenitent sinners, when God sets their iniquities in order before them ; which is represented in a very moving way. Thus they are said to be filled with a sense of God's revenging wrath, horror of conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment ; which is considered as the beginning of those torments which they shall endure after death.

I. There are several invaluable privileges which the righteous enjoy in this life, that are styled the first-fruits or earnest of glory. Though Christ has reserved the fulness of glory for his people hereafter, when he brings them to heaven ; yet there are some small degrees thereof, which they enjoy in their way to it. *The crown of righteousness*, as the apostle speaks, is *laid up for them, which the righteous Judge shall give them at that day*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. to wit, when we shall come to judgment ; then their joy shall be full ; they shall be satisfied in his likeness, and made compleatly blessed : Nevertheless there are some prelibations, or foretastes, which they have hereof, for their support and encouragement, while they are in this imperfect state. For the understanding of this it may be premised,

1. That we are not to suppose that the present enjoyments which believers experience in the highest degree, do fully come up to those that are reserved for them. There is a great dif-

ference as to the degree thereof. As a child that is newly born has something in common with what he shall have when arrived at a state of manhood; but there are several degrees, and other circumstances, in which he falls short of it: or, as a few drops are of the same nature with the whole collection of water in the ocean; yet there is a very small proportion between one and the other: so the brightest discovery of the glory of God, which we are capable of enjoying in this world; or the comfortable foretastes that believers have of heaven, fall very much short of that which they shall be possessed of, when they are received into it. And there are very great allays, and many things that tend to interrupt and abate their happiness, agreeably to the imperfection of this present state. Whatever grace they are enabled to act, though in an uncommon degree, is attended with a mixture of corruption; and as their graces are imperfect, so are the comforts that arise from thence, which are interwoven with many things very afflictive; so that they are not what they shall be, but are travelling through this wilderness to a better country, and exposed to many evils in their way thither.

2. All believers do not enjoy these delights and pleasures that some are favoured with in their way to heaven; the comforts, as well as the graces, of the Holy Spirit, are bestowed in a way of sovereignty, to some more, and to others less: Some have reason to say with the apostle, *Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ*, 2 Cor. ii. 14. others are filled with doubts concerning their interest in him, and go mourning after him all the day; and if they have, at some times a small glimpse of his glory, by which they conclude themselves to be, as it were, in the suburbs of heaven, they soon lose it, and find themselves to be in the valley of the shadow of death, as the disciples, when they were with Christ at his transfiguration, which was an emblem of the heavenly blessedness, when his *face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light*; which occasioned them to say, *it is good for us to be here*; before they had done speaking, or had time to reflect on their present enjoyment they were deprived of it when *the cloud overshadowed them*, Matt. xvii. 2,—5. so the believer is not to expect uninterrupted communion with God, or perfect fruition with him here. However, that which we are at present to consider, is that degree thereof which some enjoy; which is here called the first-fruits and earnest of glory. The scripture sets it forth under both these expressions.

(1.) They are said to receive the first-fruits thereof; or as the apostle styles it, *The first-fruits of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 23. that is, the graces and comforts of the Holy Ghost, which are the first-fruits of that blessedness, that they are said to wait

for ; which is called *the adoption*, viz. those privileges which God's children shall be made partakers of ; or, *the glorious liberty* which they shall hereafter enjoy. This is styled, *the first-fruits*, as alluding to the cluster of grapes, which they who were sent to spy out the land of Canaan, were ordered to bring to the Israelites in the wilderness, that hereby they might be encouraged in their expectation of the great plenty that was to be enjoyed when they were brought to it. Or, it has reference to the feast of ingathering, before the harvest, when they were to bring the sheaf which was first to be cut down, and *wave it before the Lord*, Lev. xxiii. 10, 11. compared with Deut. xxvi. 10, 11. with thankfulness and joy, in expectation of the full harvest, which would be the reward of the industry and labour of the husbandman. Thus believers are given not only to expect, but to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

(2.) This is also called an earnest of glory. Thus believers are said to be *sealed with that holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of their inheritance*, Eph. i. 13, 14. and elsewhere it is said, *God hath given us the earnest of his Spirit*, 2 Cor. i. 5. An earnest is a small sum, given in part of payment ; whereby they who receive it, are encouraged hereafter to expect the whole : So a believer may conclude, that as sure as he now enjoys those spiritual privileges that accompany salvation, he shall not fail of that glory which they are an earnest of. In this respect God is pleased to give his people a wonderful instance of his condescending love, that they may hereby be led to know what the happiness of the heavenly state is, in a greater degree than can be learned from all the descriptions that are given of it, by those who are destitute of this privilege. Heaven is the port to which every believer is bound, the reward of all those labours and difficulties which he sustains in his way to it ; and to quicken him to the greater diligence in pursuing after it, it is necessary that he should have his thoughts, meditation, and conversation there. The reason why God is pleased to give his people some foretastes thereof, is, that they may love and long for Christ's appearing, when they shall reap the full harvest of glory. Now this earnest, prelibation, or first-fruits of the heavenly blessedness which believers enjoy in this life, is considered in this answer.

[1.] As it is included in that glory which Christ is possessed of as their head and Mediator.

[2.] As they have those graces wrought in them, and comforts flowing from thence, which bear some small resemblance to what they shall hereafter be made partakers of.

[1.] Christ's being possessed of the heavenly blessedness, as the head of his people, is an earnest of their salvation. For the understanding of which, let it be considered, that our Lord



Jesus sustained this character, not only in what he suffered for them, that he might redeem them from the curse of the law ; but in the glory which he was afterwards advanced to : Thus it is said, that *he is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. and accordingly they are said to be *risen with him*, Col. iii. 1. as respecting that communion which they have with him herein ; and when, after this, he ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, his people are said to *sit together in heavenly places in him*, Eph. ii. 6. not that we are to suppose that they are made partakers of any branch of his mediatorial glory, or joined with him in the work which he there performs, as their exalted head : But his being considered as their representative, appearing in the presence of God for them, is a foundation of their hope that they shall be brought hither at last ; and therefore, when he is about to depart out of this world, he gave an intimation to his people, whom he left behind him in it, that he *went to prepare a place for them*, John xiv. 3. and assures them, that *because he lives they shall live also*, ver. 19.

[2.] The graces and comforts of the Holy Spirit, which believers are made partakers of, may also be said to be a pledge and earnest of eternal life. Heaven is a state in which grace is brought to perfection, which, at present, is only begun in the soul : nevertheless, the beginning thereof affords ground of hope that it shall be completed. As a curious artist, when he draws the first lines of a picture, does not design to leave it unfinished ; or he that lays the foundation of a building, determines to carry it on gradually, till he has laid the top-stone of it ; so the work of grace, when begun by the Spirit, is a ground of hope that it shall not be left unfinished. As God would never have brought his people out of Egypt with an high hand and an outstretched arm, and divided the red sea before them, if he had not designed to bring them into the promised land ; so we may conclude, that when God has magnified his grace in delivering his people from the dominion of darkness, and translating them into the kingdom of his dear Son ; when he has helped them hitherto, and given them a fair and beautiful prospect of the good land to which they are going, he will not leave his work imperfect, nor suffer them to fall and perish in the way to it. Christ, in believers, is said to be *the hope of glory*, Col. i. 27. and the joy which they have in believing, is said not only to be *unspeakable*, but *full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. that is, it bears a small resemblance to that joy which they shall be filled with, when brought to glory, and therefore may well be styled the earnest or first-fruits of it.

Now, that this may farther appear, let it be considered, that the happiness of heaven consists in the immediate vision and

fruition of God, where the saints behold his face in light and glory \*, and enjoy all those comfortable fruits and effects that arise from thence, which tend to make them compleatly happy. Thus it is said, *They shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. and they are said to *enter into the joy of their Lord*, Matt. xxv. 21. Believers, it is true, are not in all respects, said to be partakers of this blessedness here ; and their highest enjoyments bear but a very small proportion to it : Yet, when we speak of some as having the foretastes of it, we must consider, that there is something in the lively exercise of faith, and the joy that arises from it, when believers have attained the full assurance of the love of God, and have those sensible manifestations of his comfortable presence with them, that bears some small resemblance to a life of glory.

That which in some respects resembles the beatific vision, is a sight of God's reconciled face, and of their interest in all the blessings of the covenant of grace, by faith. It is true, the views which they have of the glory of God here, are not immediate, but at a distance ; and therefore they are said to *behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Thus we see things at a distance, as through a perspective glass, which enlarges the object †, and brings it, as it were, near to the eye, though in reality, it be at a great distance from it ; and so gives us a clear discerning of that which could otherwise hardly be discovered : So faith gives us clearer views of this glory than we could have any other way. Hereby we are said to *see him that is invisible*, Heb. xi. 27. Thus, when God bade Moses go up to the top of Pisgah, and strengthened his sight, he took a view of the whole land of Canaan, though without this he could only have beheld a small part thereof : So when God not only gives an eye of faith, but strengthens it in proportion to the views he designs it shall take of the heavenly state, that lies at so great a distance, the soul is enabled to see it, and herein has a faint emblem of the beatific vision.

Moreover, as heaven is a state, in which the saints have the perfect fruition of those blessings which tend to make them compleatly happy ; the view which a believer is enabled, by faith, to take of his interest in Christ, and the glory he shall be made partaker of with him, is sometimes attended with such an extasy of joy and triumph, as is a kind of anticipation of that glory which he is not yet fully possessed of. Such an one is like an heir who wants but a few days of being of age ; who does not look upon his estate with that distant view which he before did, but with the satisfaction and pleasure that arises from his being ready to enter into the possession of it ; or like one who after a long and tedious voyage, is within sight of his

\* See *Quest. lxxxvi. xc.*

† Reflecting as mirrors, or beholding as by mirrors.

harbour, which he cannot but behold with a pleasure, which very much resembles that which he shall have when he enters into it ; this is more than a bare hope of heaven ; it is a full assurance, attended with a kind of sensation of those joys which are inexpressible, which render the believer a wonder to himself, and afford the most convincing proof to others, that there is something real and substantial in the heavenly glory, whereof God is pleased to favour some of his people with the prelibations. That some have enjoyed such-like manifestations of the divine love to them, and been filled with those raptures of joy, accompanying that assurance which they have had of their salvation, is evident from the experience which they have had of it in some extraordinary and memorable occurrences in life ; and others at the approach of death.

Of this there are multitudes of instances transmitted to us in history : I shall content myself with a brief extract of some passages which we meet with in the life and death of some who appear to have had as comfortable a foretaste of the joys of heaven, as it is possible for any one to have in this world. And the first that I shall mention is that eminently learned and pious Dr. Rivet ; who, in his last sickness seemed to be in the very suburbs of heaven, signifying to all about him, what intimate communion he had with God, and fore-views of the heavenly state ; his assurance of being admitted into it ; and how earnestly he longed to be there : and, in the very close of life, one who stood by him could not forbear expressing himself to this purpose ; I cannot but think that he is now enjoying the vision of God, which gave him occasion to signify that it was so, as well as he was able to express himself, which account, and much more to the same purpose, is not only mentioned by the author of his last hours, but is taken notice of in a public funeral oration, occasioned by his death.\*

And what a very worthy writer observes,† concerning that excellent servant of Christ, Mr. Rutherford, who recites some

\* *Vid. Dauberi orat. Funeb. ad front. Et Hor. Noviss. ad calc. Tom. 3. Riveti operum : in which he is represented as saying, Nolite mei causa dolere, ultima hæc momenta nihil habent funesti ; corpus languet quidem, at anima robore Et consolatione plena est, nec impedit paries iste intergerimus, nebula ista exigua, quo minus lucem Dei videam. Atq; exinde magis magisque optavit dissolvi Et cum Christo esse. Sufficit mi Deus exclamabat subinde, sufficit, suscipe animam meam : Non tamen moram impunitier fero. Expecto, credo, persevero, dimoveri nequeo, Dei Spiritus meo spiritui testatur, me ex filiis suis esse. O amorem ineffabilem ! id quod sentio, omnem expressionem alte transcendit. Veni Domine Jesu, veni, etenim deficio, non quidem impatiens Domine, sed anima mea respicit te ut terra sicca. Preces Et votum, ut Deus Paradisum aperiret, Et huic fideli servo suo faciem suam ostenderet ; his verbis supplevit ; cum animabus justorem sanctificatis ; Amen, Amen. Exinde lingua præpedita verbo affirmare ; mox ad vocem adstantium, ipsum jam visione Dei frui, annuere ; paulo post sub medium decimam matutinum placide in Domino obdormiit.*

† See Fleming's Fulfilling of the Scripture, in fol. Part 1. page 287.

of his last words to this purpose, is very remarkable, who says, "I shall shine, I shall see him as he is, and all the fair company with him, and shall have my large share. It is no easy thing to be a Christian; but as for me, I have got the victory; and Christ is holding forth his arms to embrace me. I have had my fears and faintings, as another sinful man, to be carried through creditably; but as sure as ever he spake to me in his word, his Spirit witnessed to my heart, saying, Fear not; he had accepted my suffering, and the outgate should not be matter of prayer, but of praise." And a little before his death, after some fainting, he said, "Now I feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoice, I feed on manna, I have angels' food, my eyes shall see my Redeemer; I know that he shall stand, at the latter day, on the earth, and I shall be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air. I sleep in Christ; and when I awake I shall be satisfied with his likeness; O for arms to embrace him!" And to one speaking concerning his painfulness in the ministry, he cried out, "I disdain all; the port I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveness of sins through his blood." And thus, full of the Spirit; yea, as it were overcome with sensible enjoyment, he breathes out his soul, his last words being these; "Glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land."

To this I may add the account given of that great man Dr. Goodwin, in some memoirs of his life, composed out of his own papers published by his son,\* who intimates that he rejoiced in the thoughts that he was dying, and going to have a full and uninterrupted communion with God; "I am going," said he, to the three Persons with whom I have had communion; they have taken me, I did not take them; I shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye; all my lusts and corruptions I shall be rid of, which I could not be here; those croaking toads will fall off in a moment." And mentioning those great examples of faith, Heb. xi. said he, "All these died in faith. I could not have imagined I should ever had such a measure of faith in this hour; no, I could never have imagined it. My bow abides in strength. Is Christ divided? No, I have the whole of his righteousness; I am found in him, not in my own righteousness, which is of the law; but in the righteousness which is of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Christ cannot love me better than he doth; I think I cannot love Christ better than I do; I am swallowed up in God:" and then he says, "Now shall I ever be with the Lord." With this assurance of faith, and fulness of joy his soul left this

\* See Dr. Goodwin's Works, Vol. 5. in his life, page 19.

world, and went to see and enjoy the reality of that blessed state of glory.

There is also an account, in the life and death of Mr. John Janeway, of the great assurance and joy which he had in his last sickness, in which he expresses himself to this purpose ; “ I am, through mercy, quite above the fears of death, and am “ going unto him whom I love above life. O that I could let “ you know what I now feel ! O that I could shew you what “ I see ! O that I could express the thousandth part of that “ sweetness which now I find in Christ ! you would all then “ think it worth the while to make it your business to be reli- “ gious. O my dear friends, you little think what a Christ is “ worth upon a death-bed ! I would not, for a world, nay, for “ millions of worlds, be now without Christ and a pardon. O “ the glory ! the unspeakable glory that I behold ! My heart “ is full, my heart is full ; Christ smiles and I cannot choose “ but smile. Can you find in your heart to stop me, who am “ now going to the complete and eternal enjoyment of Christ ? “ Would you keep me from my crown ? The arms of my “ blessed Saviour are open to embrace me ; the angels stand “ ready to carry my soul into his bosom. O did you but see “ what I see, you would all cry out with me, How long dear “ Lord, come Lord Jesus, come quickly ? Or why are his “ chariot-wheels so long a coming ? ” Much more to the same purpose may be found in the life of that excellent man, which is exceedingly affecting.

And there is another who does not come short of him in his death-bed triumphs ; \* who says concerning himself, “ Death “ is not terrible, it is unsting<sup>ed</sup> ; the curse of the fiery law is “ done away : I bless his name I found him ; I am taken up “ in blessing him ; I am dying rejoicing in the Lord ; I long “ to be in the promised land ; I wait for thy salvation ; how “ long ! Come sweet Lord Jesus, take me by the hand ; I wait “ for thy salvation, as the watchman watcheth for the morn- “ ing ; I am weary with delays ; I faint for thy salvation : Why “ are his chariot-wheels so long a coming ? What means he to “ stay so long ? I am like to faint with delays. ” After that he “ said, O Sirs, I could not believe that I could have born, and “ born cheerfully this rod so long : This is a miracle, pain with- “ out pain. And this is not a fancy of a man disordered in his “ brain, but of one lying in full composure : O blessed be God “ that ever I was born ; O if I were where he is ! And yet, for “ all this, God’s withdrawing from me would make me as weak “ as water : all this I enjoy, though it be a miracle upon mira- “ cle, would not make me stand without new supply from God ;

\* See the *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Haliburton*, Chap. 6.

“ the thing I rejoice in is, that God is altogether full ; and that  
 “ in the Mediator Christ Jesus, there is all the fulness of the  
 “ Godhead, and it will never run out. I am wonderfully helped  
 “ beyond the power of nature, though my body be sufficiently  
 “ teased, yet my spirit is untouched.” Much more to this pur-  
 pose we have in the latter part of his life, which I shall close  
 with one thing that is very remarkable. When he was appre-  
 hensive that he was very near his death, he said, “ When I  
 “ fall so low that I am not able to speak, I’ll shew you a sign  
 “ of triumph, when I am near glory, if I be able ;” which ac-  
 cordingly he did, by lifting up his hands, and clapping them  
 together, when he was speechless, and in the agonies of death.

Many more instances might have been given to illustrate this  
 argument, whereby it will evidently appear, that God is pleased,  
 sometimes, to deal familiarly with men, by giving them extra-  
 ordinary manifestations of his presence, before he brings them  
 into the immediate enjoyment of himself in heaven ; which  
 may be well called an earnest or prelibation thereof.\* And it  
 may serve as a farther illustration of an argument before in-  
 sisted on, † to prove that assurance of God’s love is attainable  
 in this life, from the various instances of those who have been  
 favoured with it. This assurance, as it may be observed, is  
 accompanied with the lively acts of faith, by which it appears  
 to be well grounded ; so that, as the apostle says, *The God of  
 hope is pleased to fill them with all joy and peace in believing ;  
 whereby they abound in hope, through the power of the Holy  
 Ghost, Rom. xv. 13.* in which respect it may be said, to use  
 the prophet’s words, that *they joy before thee, according to the  
 joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil,*  
*Isa. ix. 3.* This is like the appearing of the morning-star, which  
 ushers in a bright and glorious day, and gives a full discovery  
 to themselves and others, that there is much of heaven enjoyed  
 in the way to it, by those whom God delights to honour. Thus  
 concerning the communion in glory, which the members of the  
 invisible church sometimes enjoy in this life ; which leads us  
 to consider,

II. The miserable condition of the wicked in this life, when  
 God is provoked, as a sin-revenging Judge, to fill them with  
 a sense of his wrath ; from whence arises horror of conscience,

\* See this argument improved by Mr. Fleming, in his *Fulfilling of the Scripture*,  
 Edit. in Fol. page 394, & seq. in which he takes several remarkable passages out of  
 Melchoir Adam’s *Lives*, and gives several instances of that extraordinary commu-  
 nion which some have had with God, both in life and death ; whose conversation was  
 well known in Scotland ; so that he mentions it as what is a matter undeniably true :  
 and he relates other things concerning the assurance and joy which some have had ;  
 which has afforded them the sweetest comforts in prisons and dungeons, and given  
 them a foretaste of heaven, when they have been called to suffer death for Christ’s sake.

† See Page 252, ante.

and a fearful expectation of judgment ; which is the beginning of those torments which they shall endure after death, as it is observed in the latter part of this answer. We have many instances in scripture, of the punishment of sin in this world, in whom God is said to *reprove and set their iniquities in order before their eyes*, Psal. l. 21. which fills them with horror of conscience,\* and leaves them in utter despair. They who once thought themselves in a prosperous condition, concerning whom it is said, *Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish*, Psal. lxxiii. 7. yet their end was terrible, when it appears that they were *set in slippery places, being cast down into destruction, brought into desolation as in a moment, and utterly consumed with terrors*, ver. 18, 19.

We have a sad instance of this in Cain, after he had slain his brother, and fell under the curse of God, whereby he was sentenced to be a fugitive and vagabond in the earth. He separated himself indeed from the presence of the Lord, and the place in which he was worshipped ; but could not fly from the terrors of his own thoughts, or get any relief under the uneasiness of a guilty conscience ; which made him fear that he should be slain by the hand of every one that met him ; and complain, *My punishment is greater than I can bear*, Gen. iv. 13.

And some understand that expression of Lamech in the same sense, when he says, *I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven-fold*, Gen. iv. 23, 24. The wrath of God was also denounced against Pashur ; as it is said, *the Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib ; for thus saith the Lord, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends*, Jer. xx. 3, 4.

And Judas, after he had betrayed our Saviour, was filled with the terrors of an accusing conscience, which forced him to confess, not as a believing penitent, but a despairing criminal ; *I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood* ; after which it is said, *He departed, and went and hanged himself*, Matt. xxvii. 4, 5. Nothing is more terrible than this remorse of conscience, which renders sinners inexpressibly miserable. This is a punishment inflicted on those who sin wilfully, presumptuously, and obstinately against the checks of conscience and rebukes of providence, and various warnings to the contrary, who treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath ; who are *contentious, and do not obey the truth* ; that is, they are so far from obeying it, that they persecute and oppose it ; and, on the other hand, *obey unrighteousness* : to these belong, as the apostle says, *indignation and wrath, tribulation*

\* See Vol. II. page 154.

and anguish, Rom. ii. 5, 8, 9. This not only waits for them, as laid up in store, and sealed up among God's treasures, to whom vengeance belongeth, Deut. xxxii. 34, 35. but they are made to taste the bitterness of that cup, which shall afterwards be poured forth without mixture. In this world *their eyes shall see their destruction, and afterwards they shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty*, Job xxi. 20. This is a most affecting subject; how awful a thing is it to see a person surrounded with miseries, and, at the same time, shut up in darkness, and left destitute of hope! With what horror and anguish was the soul of Saul filled, when he uttered that doleful complaint; *I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me*, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. much more for a person to apprehend himself fallen into the hands of the living God, who is a consuming fire; and having nothing left but the fearful expectation of future judgment, and an abyss of woes that will ensue hereupon. These are the evils that some endure in this life; which is no less terrible to them than the comfortable foretastes of the love of God are joyful to the saints.

From the different view of the end of the wicked, and the righteous, many useful instructions may be learned.

1. When we consider the wicked as distressed with the afflicting sense of what they feel, and with the dread of that wrath which they would fain flee from, but cannot, we may infer,

(1.) That a state of unregeneracy, whatever advantages may attend it, as to the outward blessings of common providence, is a very sad and deplorable condition, far from being the object of choice to those who duly consider the consequences hereof. The present amusements that arise from the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, from whence the sinner concludes himself to be happy, is the most miserable instance of self-deceit, and will appear to be so, if we consider the end thereof, or that *the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment*, Job xx. 5. and after that, nothing shall remain but what wounds his spirit, and makes his misery intolerable.

(2.) When we meet with instances of persons sunk in the depths of despair, and tormenting themselves with the fore-views of hell and destruction, let this be a warning to others to flee from the wrath to come. I would not be peremptory in passing a judgment on the state of those who apprehend themselves to be irretrievably lost, and feel those terrors in their consciences which no tongue can express. A person can hardly read the account of the despair of poor Spira, soon after the reformation; and how much his sentiments concerning



himself, resembled the punishment of sin in hell, without trembling: he was, indeed, a sad instance of the wrath of God breaking in upon conscience; and is set up as a monument to warn others, to take heed of apostacy; and in this, and such-like instances, we have a convincing proof of the reality of a future state of misery; or, that the punishment of sin in hell is not an ungrounded fancy: nevertheless, it is not for us to enter into those secrets which belong not to us, or to reckon him among the damned in another world, because he reckoned himself among them in this. And as for any others that we may see in the like circumstances, we are not so much to pass a judgment concerning their future state, as to infer the desperate estate of sinners, when left of God, and to bless him that it is not our case. And on the other hand, let not unregenerate sinners think that they are safe, merely because their consciences are quiet, or rather stupid, since that false peace, which they have, is no better than *the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish, and be cut off*; and *his trust shall be as a spider's web*, if he continue in his present condition.

From what has been said concerning the happiness of the righteous, in the enjoyment they have of the first fruits of the heavenly glory, we may learn,

(1.) That this may afford farther conviction to us, that there is a state of complete blessedness reserved for the saints in another world; since, besides the arguments we have to prove this taken from scripture, we have others founded in experience, so far as it is possible for any to attain to the joys of heaven before they come there. Though the instances we have here given thereof are uncommon, yet this inference from them is just, and may afford matter of conviction to those who are wholly taken up with earthly things, and have no taste of, nor delight in things spiritual, that religion has its own rewards attending it, and consequently that a believer is the only happy man in the world.

(2.) This may serve as an encouraging motive to induce Christians to hold on their way. Whatever difficulties or distressing providences they may meet with in this life, if they have the earnest and foretastes of heaven at any time, this will make their afflictions seem light; inasmuch as they work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And if they are rather waiting and hoping for them, than actually enjoying them, let them adore and depend on the sovereignty of God, who dispenses these comforts when he pleases: and if they are destitute of the joy of faith, let them endeavour to be found in the lively exercise of the direct acts thereof, trusting in Christ, though they have not such sensible communion with him as others have; and let them bless God, (though they have

not those foretastes of the heavenly glory, which accompany a full assurance thereof,) if they have a quiet, composed frame of spirit, and are not given up to desponding thoughts, or unbelieving fears, and have ground to conclude, that though their state be not so comfortable as that of others; yet it is no less safe, and shall, at last, issue into the fruition of that felicity of which others have the first-fruits here on earth.

(3.) Let them who are at any time favoured with this privilege of assurance, and the joy that arises from it, walk very humbly with God, as being sensible that this frame of spirit is not owing to themselves, but to the quickening and sealing influences of the Holy Ghost; and if, by neglecting to depend on him for the continuance thereof, we provoke him to leave us to ourselves, we shall soon lose this desirable frame, and be left in darkness: since as without him we can do nothing, so without his continued presence we can enjoy none of those privileges which tend to make our lives comfortable, and give us an anticipation of future glory.

**QUEST. LXXXIV.** *Shall all men die?*

**ANSW.** Death being threatened as the wages of sin, it is appointed unto all men once to die; for that all have sinned.

**QUEST. LXXXV.** *Death being the wages of sin, why are not the righteous delivered from death, seeing all their sins are forgiven in Christ?*

**ANSW.** The righteous shall be delivered from death itself at the last day, and even in death are delivered from the sting and curse of it; so that, although they die, yet it is out of God's love, to free them perfectly from sin and misery, and to make them capable of farther communion with Christ in glory, which they then enter upon.

**I**N these answers we have an account,

**I.** Of the unalterable purpose of God, or his appointment that all men once must die; which is also considered as the wages of sin.

**II.** It is supposed, that death has a sting and curse attending it with respect to force.

**III.** It is the peculiar privilege of the righteous, that though they shall not be delivered from death, yet this shall redound to their advantage: For,

1. The sting and curse of it is taken from them.

2. Their dying is the result of God's love to them; and that in three respects,

(1.) As they are thereby freed from sin and misery.

(2.) As they are made capable of farther communion with Christ in glory, beyond what they can have in this world.

(3.) As they shall immediately enter upon that glorious and blessed state when they die.

I. God has determined, by an unalterable purpose and decree, that all men must die. Whatever different sentiments persons may have about other things, this remains an incontestable truth. We have as much reason to conclude that we shall leave the world, as, at present, we have that we live in it. *I know*, says Job, *that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living*, Job xxx. 23. and upon this account the Psalmist says, *I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were*, Psal. xxxix. 12. And if scripture had been wholly silent about the frailty of man, daily experience would have afforded a sufficient proof of it. We have much said concerning man's mortality in the writings of the heathen; but they are at a loss to determine the origin or first cause of it; and therefore they consider it as the unavoidable consequence of the frame of nature, arising from the contexture thereof, as that which is formed out of the dust must be resolved into its first principle; or that which is composed of flesh and blood, cannot but be liable to corruption. But we have this matter set in a true light in scripture, which considers death as the consequence of man's first apostacy from God. Before this he was immortal, and would have always remained so, had he not violated the covenant, in which the continuance of his immortality was secured to him; the care of providence would have prevented a dissolution, either from the decays of nature, or any external means leading to it. And therefore some of the Socinian writers have been very bold in contradicting the express account we have hereof in Scripture, when they assert that death was, at first, the consequence of nature;\* for which reason man would have been liable to it, though he had not sinned; whereas the apostle says, *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*, Rom. v. 12.

We have a particular account of this in the sentence God passed on our first parents immediately after their fall; when having denounced a curse upon the ground for their sake, he says, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*, Gen. iii. 19. And it may be observed, that as this is unavoidable, pursuant to the decree of God, so the constitution of our nature, as well as the external dispensations of providence, lead to it. This sentence no sooner took place, but the temperament of

\* *Sequela nature.*

human bodies was altered,\* the jarring principles of nature, on the due temperament whereof life and health depends, could not but have a tendency by degrees to destroy the frame thereof; if there be too great a confluence of humours, or a defect thereof; if heat or cold immoderately prevails; if the circulation of the blood and juices be too swift or slow: or if the food on which we live, or the air which we breathe be not agreeable to the constitution of our nature, or any external violence be offered to it; all these things have a necessary tendency to weaken the frame of nature, and bring on a dissolution. David includes the various means by which men die, in three general heads, speaking concerning Saul, *The Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle, and perish: the Lord shall smite him*, 1 Sam. xxvi. 10. denotes a person's dying by a sudden stroke of providence, in which there is the more immediate hand of God; and his *falling into battle*, a violent death by the hands of men; in both which respects men die before that time which they might have lived to, according to the course of nature; and what is said concerning his *day's coming to die*; that is, a person's dying what we call a natural death, or when nature is so spent and wasted that it can no longer subsist by all the skill of the physicians, or virtue of medicine; and then the soul leaves its habitation, when it is not longer able to perform the functions of life.

We might here consider those diseases that are the fore-runners of death, which sometimes are more acute; and by this means, as one elegantly expresses it, nature feels the cruel victory before it yields to the enemy. As a ship that is tossed by a mighty tempest, and by the concussion of the winds and waves, loses its rudder and masts, takes water in every part, and gradually sinks into the ocean: so in the shipwreck of nature, the body is so shaken and weakened by the violence of a disease, that the senses, the animal and vital operations decline, and, at last, are extinguished in death.† This seemed so formidable to good Hezekiah, that he utters that mournful complaint, *Mine age is departed and removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver, my life; he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till the morning, that as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me*, Isa. xxxvii. 12, 13.

We might here consider the empire of death as universal; as the wise man says, *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh*, Eccl. i. 4. and then they pass away also, like the ebbing and flowing of the sea. Death spares none; the

\* Before this there was what some call *temperamentum ad pondus*, which was lost by sin; and a broken constitution, leading to mortality ensued thereupon.

† See Dr. Bates on Death, chap. ii.

strongest constitution can no more withstand its stroke, than the weakest; no age of man is exempted from it. This is beautifully described by Job; *One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet: his breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow: and another dieth in the bitterness of his soul; and never eateth with pleasure: they shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them,* Job **xxi. 23—26.**

We might also consider the body after death, as a prey for worms, the seat of corruption; and lodged in the grave, the house appointed for all living; and then an end is put to all the actions, as well as enjoyments of this life; and, as the Psalmist speaks, *In that very day all their thoughts perish,* Psal. **cxlvi. 4.** Whatever they have been projecting, whatever schemes they have laid, either for themselves or others, are all broken: as the historian observes concerning the Roman emperor, that when he had formed great designs for the advantage of the empire,\* death broke all his measures, and prevented the execution thereof.

We might also consider it as putting an end to our present enjoyments, removing us from the society of our dearest friends, to a dismal and frightful solitude. This was one of the consequences thereof, that was very afflictive to Hezekiah, when he says, *I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world,* Isa. **xxxviii. 11.** It also strips us of all our possessions, and the honours we have been advanced to in this world, as the Psalmist speaks, *When he dieth he shall carry nothing away, his glory shall not descend after him,* Psal. **xlix. 27.**

We might also consider the time of life and death as being in God's hand. As we were brought into the world by the sovereignty of his providence, so we are called out of it at his pleasure; concerning whom it is said, *Our times are in his hand,* Psal. **xxxix. 15.** So that as nothing is more certain than death, nothing is more uncertain to us than the time when. This God has concealed from us for wise ends. Did we know that we should soon die, it would discourage us from attempting any thing great in life; and did we know that the lease of life was long, and we should certainly arrive to old age; this might occasion the delaying all concerns about our soul's welfare, as presuming that it was time enough to think of the affairs of religion and another world, when we apprehend ourselves to be near the confines thereof; and therefore, God has by this, made it our wisdom, as well as our duty, to be waiting all the days of our appointed time, till our change come.

From what has been said under this head, we may learn,

1. The vanity of man as mortal. Indeed, if we look on believers as enjoying that happiness which lies beyond the grave,

\* *Vid. Sueton. in Vit. Jul. Cæs. Talia agentem atq; meditantem mors prevenit.*

there is a very different view of things ; but as to what respects the world we have reason to say as the Psalmist does, *Verily, every man at his best estate is altogether vanity*, Psal. xxxix. 5. We may see the vanity of all those honours and carnal pleasures which many pursue with so much eagerness, as though they had nothing else to mind, nothing to make provision for but the flesh, which they do at the expence of that which is in itself most excellent and desirable : We may also infer,

2. That this affords an undeniable and universal motive to humility ; since death knows no distinction of persons, regards the rich no more than the poor ; puts no mark of distinction between the remains of a prince and a peasant ; and not only takes away every thing that men value themselves upon, but levels the highest part of mankind with common dust : They who boast of their extract, descent, and kindred, are obliged, with Job, to say, *to corruption, Thou art my father ; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister*, Job xvii. 14. Shall we be proud of our habitations, *who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust ?* chap. iv. 19. Are any proud of their youth and beauty ? this is, at best, but like a flower that does not abide long in its bloom, and when cut down, it withers. The finest features are not only spoiled by death, but rendered unpleasant and ghastly to behold ; and accordingly are removed out of sight, and laid in the grave.

3. From the consideration of man's liableness to death, and those diseases that lead to it, as the wages of sin, we may infer ; that sin is a bitter and formidable evil. The cause is to be judged of by its effects. As death, accompanied with all those diseases which are the forerunners of it, is the greatest natural evil that we are liable to ; sin, from whence it took its rise, must be the greatest moral evil ; we should never reflect on the one without lying low before God in a sense of the other. The Psalmist, when meditating on his own mortality, traces it to the spring thereof ; and ascribes it to those *rebukes* with which *God corrects men for their iniquities*, that they die, and their *beauty consumes away like a moth*, Psal. xxxix. 11. And elsewhere, when he compares the life of man to the *grass*, which *in the morning flourisheth, and groweth up ; and in the evening is cut down and withereth*, he immediately adds ; *thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance*, Psal. xc. 6, 8. And when Hezekiah had an intimation of his recovery, after he had the sentence of death within himself, he speaks of his deliverance from the *pit of corruption*, Isa. xxxviii. 17. as that which was accompanied with *God's casting all his sins behind his back*. And since we cannot be delivered from these sad effects of sin, till the frame of

nature is dissolved, and afterwards rebuilt; it should put us upon using those proper methods whereby we may be freed from the guilt and dominion thereof; and accordingly it should have a tendency to promote a life of holiness in us.

4. From the uncertainty of life, let us be induced to improve our present time, and endeavour so to live, as that, when God calls us hence, we may be ready. And therefore, we ought to pray with the Psalmist, *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*, Psal. xc. 12. that by this means, that which deprives us of all earthly enjoyments, may give us an admission into a better world, and be the gate to eternal life. This leads us to consider,

II. That death has a sting and curse annexed to it, with respect to some. Thus the apostle expressly says, *The sting of death is sin*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. As sin at first brought death into the world; so it is the guilt thereof, lying on the consciences of men, which is the principal thing that makes them afraid to leave the world; not but that death is, in itself, an evil that nature cannot think of without some reluctance. And therefore the apostle Paul, although he expresses that assurance which he had of happiness in another world, which he *groaned* after, and *earnestly* longed to be possessed of; yet had it been put to his choice, he would have wished that he could have been *clothed upon with the house which is from heaven*, 2 Cor. v. 2. that is, had it been the will of God, that he might have been brought to heaven without going the way of all the earth, this would have been more agreeable to nature. But when the two evils of death meet together, namely, that which is abhorrent to nature, and the sting which makes it much more formidable, this is, beyond measure, distressing. In this answer, the sting and curse of death are both put together, as implying the same thing. Accordingly, it is that whereby a person apprehends himself liable to the condemning sentence of the law, separated from God, and excluded from his favour, so that death appears to him to be the beginning of sorrows; this is that which tends to embitter it, and fills him with dread and horror at the thoughts of it. Which leads us,

III. To shew that it is the peculiar privilege of the righteous, that though they shall not be delivered from death, yet this shall redound to their advantage. That they shall not be exempted from death is evident; because the decree of God relating hereunto, extends to all men. We read, indeed, of two that escaped the grave, *viz.* Enoch, who was translated that he should not see death, and Elijah, who was carried to heaven in a fiery chariot; but these are extraordinary instances, not designed as precedents, by which we may judge of the common lot of believers. And the saints that shall be found

alive at Christ's second coming, shall undergo a change \*, as the apostle speaks ; which though it be equivalent to death, it cannot properly be styled a dying ; inasmuch as he opposes it thereunto, when he says, *We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*, 1 Cor. xv. 51. and he speaks of it as a future dispensation of providence, which does not immediately concern us in this present age. Therefore we must not conclude that believers are delivered from the stroke of death ; nevertheless. this is ordered for their good, as the apostle says, with a particular application to himself, *For me to die is gain*, Phil. i. 21. And when he speaks of the many blessings that believers have in possession or in reversion, he says, *Death is yours* ; as though he should say, it shall redound to your advantage ; and this it does if we consider,

1. That the sting of death is taken away from them. This is the result of their being in a justified state ; for since a person's being liable to the condemning sentence of the law is the principal thing that has a tendency to make him uneasy, and may be truly called the sting that wounds the conscience ; so a sense of his interest in forgiveness through the blood of Christ, tends to give peace to it ; such an one can say, who shall lay any thing to my charge ? It is God that justifieth ; or though I have contracted guilt, which renders me unworthy of his favour ; yet I am persuaded that this guilt is removed ; and therefore iniquity shall not be my ruin ; and even death itself shall bring me to the possession of those blessings that were purchased for me by the blood of Christ, which I have been enabled to apply to myself by faith ; and with this confidence he can say with the apostle, *O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?* 1 Cor. xv. 55.

2. Their dying is an instance of God's love to them. As those whom Christ is said to have *loved in the world, he loved unto the end* of his life ; so he loves them to the end of theirs, John xiii. 1. And as nothing has hitherto separated them from this love, nothing shall be able to do it. There are *three* instances wherein the love of God to dying believers discovers itself.

(1.) In that they are hereby freed from sin and misery ; this they never were, nor can be till then. As for sin, there are the remainders thereof in the best of men, which give them great disturbance, and occasion for that daily conflict which there is between flesh and spirit, as has been before observed. But at death the conflict will be at an end, and the victory which they shall obtain over it, compleat. There shall be no law in the members warring against the law of the mind ; no propensity or inclination to what is evil ; nor any guilt or defilement con-

\* See more of this in *Quest. lxxxvii.*



tracted ; which would be inconsistent with a state of perfect holiness. And as it is a state of perfect happiness, there is an entire freedom from all those miseries which sin brought into this lower world. These are either internal or external, personal or relative ; none of which shall occur to allay, or give any disturbance to the saints' blessedness after death. But more of this will be considered under a following answer ; in which we shall be led to speak of the happiness of the righteous at the day of judgment, both in soul and body \* ; and therefore we proceed to consider,

(2.) That the death of a believer appears to be an instance of divine love, in that hereby he is made capable of farther communion with Christ in glory. Persons must be made meet for heaven before they are admitted to it. Though our present season and day of grace is a time in which God is training his people up for glory ; and there is an habitual preparation for it, when the work of grace is begun ; which is what the apostle intends when he speaks of some who are *made meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, Col. ii. 12. when they were first translated into Christ's kingdom : nevertheless this falls very short of that actual meetness which the saints must have when they are brought to the possession of the heavenly blessedness. Then they shall be made perfect in holiness, as will be observed in the next answer ; otherwise there can be no perfect happiness.

And besides this, the soul must be more enlarged, that hereby it may be enabled to receive the immediate discoveries of the divine glory, or to converse with the heavenly inhabitants, than it can be here. The frame of nature must be changed ; which is what the apostle intends, when he says, *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*, 1 Cor. xv. 50. accordingly he adds, ver. 53. *This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality* ; whereby he intimates, that frail, mortal, and corruptible man, is not able to bear that glory which is reserved for a state of immortality. Therefore the soul must be so changed as to be rendered receptive thereof ; and in order thereto, all its powers and faculties must be greatly enlarged ; otherwise it can no more receive the immediate rays of the divine glory, than the weak and distempered eye can look steady on the sun shining in its meridian brightness. In this world our ideas of divine things are very imperfect, by reason of the narrowness of our capacities, and God condescends to reveal himself to us in proportion thereto ; but when the saints shall see him as he is, or have a perfect and immediate vision and fruition of his glory, they shall be made recep-

\* See Quest. xc.

tive of it ; this is done at death ; whereby they are rendered capable of farther communion with Christ in glory. (a)

(a) The belief of a separate state is very ancient. Cicero and Seneca have asserted, that all nations believed the immortality of the soul. Yet we know there were not only individuals, but sects who were exceptions. Saul the first king of Israel believed that the soul survived the death of the body, or he would neither have made laws against necromancers, nor have applied to one in his distresses. If Samuel was raised, it is a fact, directly in point, but the words though express, are probably an accommodation to the sentiments of men. The son of Sirach who lived two hundred years before Christ, says that Samuel prophesied after he was dead. (Ecclus. c. 46. v. 20.) And Josephus in his account of the life of Saul, shows his belief to be that Samuel actually arose. The same fears of apparitions which the disciples had, still exist with the common people, and are proofs that they entertain the same sentiment.

Some of the Pharisees, who are represented as believing a separate state, thought souls might return to other bodies. This was the opinion of Josephus with respect to the virtuous ; and also of those Jews, who supposed that Jesus was Elijah or Jeremiah ; but the question of the disciples, whether a man had been born blind for his own sins, implies a possibility of a return also of the wicked into other bodies. Nevertheless the prevailing opinion of the Pharisees was of a separate state ; otherwise Paul's professing their sentiments, which must have been known to him, was disingenuous ; nor, if they had known the difference, would they have protected him. The approbation of the multitude when he proved the doctrine from the words of Jehovah to Moses at the bush, (Matt. xxii. 32.) and the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, evince that the common opinion was such.

This subject, has been enlightened, not first brought to light, through the Gospel, but plainly asserted ; *this day shalt thou be with me in paradise. At home in the body, and absent from the Lord, absent from the body, and present with the Lord, is descriptive but of two states. The desire to depart to be with Christ, shows an immediate expectation. And otherwise it cannot be said that the spirits of just men are made perfect.*

The Jews, Greeks, and Romans assigned the Heaven to the gods, earth to men, and under the earth (*Ἅδης, adns, inferi*) to the dead. The passages "the spirit shall return to God," and "the spirit of a man goeth upwards" are not exceptions, for then they would prove that the evil, as well as the good, went to heaven. That the spirit is disposed of by God, and that the spirit of a man survives the death of the body, seem to be all that is respectively implied. Samuel was believed to come out of, and return to his place under the earth ; and Saul was to be with him, below the earth ; but, possibly, in a different apartment. Thus Abraham and Lazarus were in sight of, and only divided from the man in torments by a gulph.

Under the gospel the place of separate saints is represented to be in Heaven. Heaven had been always assigned to God among the Jews, and even the heathens thought it the most honourable place : Virgil assigned it to Cæsar. Jesus declared he came from thence, and would return thither ; and for the comfort of his disciples, told them, he would prepare a place for them, and take them to himself. They saw him actually ascend. He is to come from thence, and to bring them with him to judgment.

This change of representation implies no contradiction, for pure spirits are not confined to place. Our souls are connected with our bodies, and therefore go and come with, or rather in them. But when the connexion is broken, the soul cannot be said to be in one place more than another, except as it is occupied with material objects. It can attend to one thing only at once, and therefore when in, it cannot be out of the body, and must be wherever occupied, but not in any place, except concerned with material objects. The infinite Spirit had no connexion with space in all the eternity which preceded creation ; since time began

(3.) At death believers immediately enter upon, and are admitted into the possession of this glory. At the same time that the soul is enlarged and fitted for the work and enjoyment of heaven, it is received into it; where it shall have an uninterrupted communion with Christ in glory; which is the subject insisted on in the following answer.

**QUEST. LXXXVI.** *What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?*

**ANSW.** The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which, even in death, continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls: Whereas the souls of the wicked are at death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, till the resurrection and judgment of the great day.

**H**AVING considered the soul as separated from the body by death; the next thing that will be enquired into, is what becomes of it, and how it is disposed of in its separate state? and here we find that there is a vast difference between the righteous and the wicked in this respect: the former have communion with Christ in glory, the latter are in a state of banishment and separation from him; being cast into hell, and there remaining in torments and utter darkness. Both these are particularly insisted on in this answer. In speaking to which, we must consider,

as every thing is known and supported by him, he is said to be in all places. But the idea of place is not necessary to our conceptions of Spirit.

To speak of the planets as the residence of spirits, and to talk of souls flying through the *visible* Heavens in quest of paradise is idle. If all souls must ascend to Heaven, from India they go in a direction opposite to our course thither.

There is no sun nor moon enjoyed by saints in glory; the Lord is their light. And spiritual bodies are not flesh and blood, nor belly, nor meats; nor corruptible nor mortal; but fit for the society of spirits. The soul at death is discharged from the prison of these bodies, and not confined to place. It receives new faculties, which entertain it with more than substitutes for the sensations it had in the body; it obtains a perception of light more *vivid* than in dreams, and permanent. It enjoys the discernment, society, and communion of other Spirits; the presence of God and the Redeemer; and progresses in the knowledge and love of God, and so in holiness and happiness forever.

I. That there is something supposed; namely, that the soul of man is immortal; otherwise it could not be capable of happiness or misery.

II. We shall consider the happiness which the members of the invisible church enjoy; which is called communion with Christ in glory.

III. The misery which the souls of the wicked endure at death; which is contained in the latter part of the answer.

I. To speak concerning the thing supposed in this answer; namely, that the soul of man is immortal. This is a subject of that importance, that we must be first convinced of the truth of it before we can conclude that there is a state of happiness or misery in another world. But before we proceed to the proof of it, it is necessary for us to explain what we are to understand thereby; accordingly let it be premised,

1. That we read, in scripture, of the death of the soul, in a spiritual sense, as separated by sin, from God, the fountain of life and blessedness, and as being destitute of a principle of grace; whereby it is utterly indisposed to perform any actions that are spiritually good, as much as a dead man is unable to perform the functions of life. In this sense we are to understand the apostle's words, *She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth*, 1 Tim. v. 6. And in this respect unregenerate persons are said to be *dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. ii. 1. and a condemned state, which is the consequence hereof, is a state of death. Now that which is opposed hereunto, is called, in scripture, a spiritual life, or immortality; but this is not the sense in which we are to consider it in our present argument.

2. Immortality may be considered as an attribute peculiar to God, as the apostle says, *he only hath immortality*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. the meaning of which is, that his life, which includes his Being, and all his perfections, is necessary and independent; but in this respect no creature is immortal; but their life is maintained by the will and providence of God, which gave being to it at first.

3. When we speak of creatures being immortal, we must consider them either as not having any thing in the constitution of their nature, that tends to a dissolution, which cannot be effected by any second cause; or their eternal existence, pursuant to the will of God, who could, had he pleased, have annihilated them. It is in both these senses that we are to consider the immortality of the soul.

That it is in its own nature immortal, has been allowed by many of the Heathens, who have had just conceptions of the spirituality of its nature, possessed due regards to the providence of God, and those marks of distinction that he puts be-

tween good and bad men, as the consequence of their behaviour in this life. That the soul survives the body, has been reckoned, by some of the Heathens, as an opinion that has almost universally obtained in the world \*. Thus Plato introduces Socrates † as discoursing largely on this subject, immediately before his death: and, in some other of his writings, not only asserts, but gives as good proofs of this doctrine as any one, destitute of scripture-light, could do. One of his followers, in the account he gives of his doctrine, recommends and insists on an argument which he brings to prove it, which is not without its weight, namely, that the soul acts from a principle seated in its own nature, and not by the influence of some external cause, as things material do ‡. And Strabo speaks of the ancient Brachmans, among the Indians, as entertaining some notions of the immortality of the soul, and the judgment passed upon it in its separate state; agreeable to what Plato advances on that subject §.

Some, indeed, have thought that this notion took its rise from Thales, the Milesian, who lived between two and three hundred years before Plato, and about six hundred years before the Christian Æra, from an occasional passage mentioned by Diogenes Laertius, in his life, which is hardly sufficient to justify this supposition; which he brings in only as matter of report \*: And Cicero † supposes it was first propagated by Pherecydes, who was cotemporary with him; though Diogenes Laertius makes no mention of it. But it may be inferred from many things in Homer, the oldest writer in the Greek tongue, who lived above three hundred years before Thales, that the world had entertained some confused ideas of it in his time: As we often find him bringing in the souls of the deceased heroes appearing in a form, and speaking with a voice like that which they had when living, to their surviving friends. And he not only supposes, but plainly intimates that their souls existed in a separate state ‡. And in other places he represents some suf-

\* Vid. Senec. Epist. 117. Cum de animarum immortalitate loquimur, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum, aut timentium inferos, aut colentium. Utur hac per suasionem publica. Et. Cic. Tusc. Quest. Lib. 1. permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium; qui in sede maneat, qualesque sint ratione dicendum est.

† In Phæd.

‡ Vid. Alcibi. de doct. Plat. Cap. xxxv. Αυτακινή δὲ φρεσὶ τῆ ψυχῆ; οὐτι συμφορῶν ἔχῃ τὰν ζῶντ, αὐ ἐπιγύσασιν καὶ αὐτῶν.

§ Vid. Strab. Geog. Lib. xv. Παραπικισὶ δὲ καὶ μυθῶς, ἀσπίρ καὶ πλατῶν περὶ τῆ ἀθάνατος ψυχῆς, καὶ τῶν καὶ ἀδὲ κρίσεως, καὶ ἀλλῶ οὐκ ἴστω, περὶ μὲ τῆς Βραχμανῶν τῶντα ἀγῶν.

\* Vid. Diog. Laert. in Vit. Thal.

† Vid. Cic. Tusc. Quest. Lib. 1.

‡ Vid. Hom. Iliad. 23. Vers. 65. & seq.

fering punishment for their crimes committed here on earth \* ; which plainly argues, whatever fabulous account we have of the nature of punishment, or the person suffering it, that it was an opinion, generally received at that time, that the soul existed in a separate state.

And, indeed, this may be inferred from the doctrine of Dæmons, or the superstitious worship of the heathens, which they paid to the souls of those heroes who formerly lived on earth, and had done some things which they thought rendered them the peculiar favourites of God, and the objects of worship by men ; and that their souls existed with God in great honour and favour in a separate state †. But passing this by, it may be farther observed, that whatever notions some of the heathens had of the immortality of the soul in general ; they were very much at a loss, many of them, in determining the place, or many things relating to the state in which they were ; and therefore many of them, with Pythagoras, asserted the doctrine of transmigration of souls, or their passing from one body to another ; and being condemned to reside in vile and dishonourable bodies ; which, though it perverts, yet doth not overthrow the doctrine of the soul's immortality ; and others seemed to doubt whether, after four or five courses of transmigration of souls from one body to another, they might not at last shrivel into nothing.

It must also be acknowledged, that there was a considerable

Ἦλθε δ' ἐπὶ ψυχῇ Πατρόκλου δεικνῶν,  
 Παντ' αὐτοῦ μέγας τε καὶ ἄμματα κατ' ἄκρας,  
 Καὶ φωνῆ καὶ τοῖα περὶ χροῦ ἕματα ἔστο.  
 Στῆ δ' ἄρ' ὑπὲρ κερῶν, καὶ μὴ σπέρ μεδόν ὤρω,

*In which, after he had killed Hector, he addresses himself to his friend Patroclus, signifying that he had done this to revenge his death ; upon which, the poet brings in Patroclus as appearing to him.*

\* *Vid. Odys. Lib. xi. lin. 575. & seq. in which he speaks of the punishment of Tityus and Tantalus. In this, as well as many other things, he is imitated by Virgils. See Æneid. Lib. vi. lin. 595, & seq.*

† *See this argument managed with a great deal of learning and judgment by Mede, in his apostasy of the latter times, who proves that the gods whom the heathens worshipped, were the souls of men deified or canonized after death, from many of their own writers, chap. iv. and Voss. de orig. & c. idol. Lib. 1. cap. xi, xii, xiii. who refers to Lanct. Lib. 1. de fals. Relig. cap. v. his words are these ; Quos imperiti, & insipientes, tanquam Deos & nuncupant, & adorant, nemo est tam inconsideratus, qui non intelligat fuisse mortales. Quomodo ergo, inquit aliquis, Dii crediti sunt ? Numirum quia reges maximi, ac potentissimi fuerunt, ob merita virtutum suarum, aut munerum, aut artium repertarum, cum chari fuissent iis, quibus imperitaverunt, in memoriam sunt consecrati. Quod si quis dubitet, res eorum gestas, & facta, consideret : que universa tum poete, tum historici veteres, protulerunt. Et August. de Civ. Dei, Lib. viii. cap. v. Ipsi etiam majorum gentium Dii, quos Cicero in Tusculanis, tacitis nominibus videtur attingere, Jupiter, Jumo, Saturnus, Vulcanus, Vesta, & alii plurimi, quos Varro conatur ad mundi partes, sive elementa transferre homines fuisse produuntur. Et Cic. Lib. 1. de nat. Deor. Quid, qui aut fortes, aut potentes viros tradunt post mortem ad Deos pervenisse ; eiq ; ipsos quos, nos colere, precari, venerariq ; soleamus ?*

party among the heathen that adhered to the sentiments of Epicurus, who denied the immortality of the soul, as supposing it to be material. And the Sadducees are represented, in scripture, as imbibing that notion; who are said to deny both angels and spirits, Acts xxiii. 8. In this respect they gave into his philosophy, as to what concerns his denying the immortality of the soul, or its existence in a future state\*: But passing this by, we may observe, that notwithstanding all that has been said concerning this doctrine, by the better and wiser part of the heathen in their writings; yet their notions seem very defective, if we trace them farther than what concerns the bare separate existence of the soul; or, if they attempt to speak any thing concerning its happiness in a future state, they then discover that they know but little of this matter; and many of them, though they cannot deny the soul's immortality, yet they seem to hesitate about it; and therefore we may say with the apostle, that *life and immortality is brought to light through the gospel*, 2 Tim. i. 10. that is, if we would be sure of the immortality of the soul, and know its state and enjoyments in another world, we must look farther than the light of nature for it; and in seeking for arguments in scripture, we shall find great satisfaction concerning this matter, which we cannot do from the writers before mentioned.

That some of the heathen were in doubt about this important truth, is very evident from their writings; for Plato himself †, notwithstanding the many things which he represents Socrates as saying, concerning a state of immortality after death, endeavouring to convince his friend Cebes about that matter, and apprehending that he had so far prevailed in the argument, as that his antagonist allowed that the soul survived the body, but yet held the transmigration of souls into other bodies; this he seems to allow him, and adds, that it is uncertain whether the soul, having worn out many bodies, may not at last perish with one that it is united to ‡. And he farther says to him, that

\* *Some have wondered how the Sadducees could deny angels, and yet receive the five books of Moses, in which there is so frequent mention of the appearance of angels; and it might as well be wondered how they could make any pretensions to religion, who denied the immortality of the soul; but as to both these, it may be said concerning them, that they were the most irreligious part of the Jewish nation. To make them consistent with themselves, is past the skill of any who treat on this subject. Some suppose that they understand all those scriptures that speak concerning the appearance of angels, as importing nothing else but a bodily shape, appearing for a time, and conversing with those to whom it was sent, moved and actuated by the divine power, and then disappearing and vanishing into nothing.*

† *In Phaed.*

‡ *His words are these: Κεως δὲ μοι ἰδοῦς τὸ μὲν μοι εἶναι χερσὶν, πολυχρονιωτὸν γὰρ καὶ ψυχῆ σωματώδῃ ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἀποθανῆναι, μὴ πολλὰ δὲ σωματὰ καὶ πολλὰς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἢ ψυχῆ, το τρωταίαν, σωμα καταλείπειν οὐκ αὐτὴ ἀπαλλοιωταί· καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ τῶν θανάτων, ψυχὴς αὐτῆς σωμα γὰρ εἰς ἀπολλυμένην οὐδὲν πανταίαι.*

I must now die, and you shall live ; but which of us is in the better state God only knows \*.

As for Aristotle, though, in many places of his writings, he seems to maintain the immortality of the soul ; yet in others it appears that he is in doubt about it ; and seems to assert, that neither good nor evil happens to any man after his death †. And the Stoicks, who did not altogether deny this doctrine ; yet they supposed that in process of time, it would be dissolved ‡. And even Cicero himself, notwithstanding all that he says, by which he seems to give into this doctrine ; yet sometimes speaks with great hesitation about it §. And notwithstanding what Seneca says concerning the immortality of the soul, as has been often before observed ; yet he speaks doubtfully of it ¶ ; so that we must have recourse to scripture, and those consequences that are deduced from it, as well as those things that may be inferred from the nature of the soul to prove that it is immortal. And,

(1.) For the proof of this doctrine, let it be considered, that the soul is immaterial ; which appears from its being capable of thought, whereby it is conversant about, and takes in ideas of things divine and spiritual, which no creature below man can do. It has a power of inferring consequences from premises, and accordingly is the subject of moral government, capable of conversing with God here, and expecting rewards or punishments from him hereafter ; all this cannot be produced by matter or motion : As for matter, that is in itself altogether unactive ; and when motion is impressed upon it, the only change that is made therein, is in the situation and contexture of its parts, which cannot give it life, sensation or perception, much less a power of judging and willing, or being conversant about things spiritual and immaterial.

\* Ὅποῦτος ἔ μιν ἐ χροῖαι ὅτι ἀμείων ἔραγμα, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι ὄλων ἢ το βίαι.

† Vid. ejusd. moral. Lib. iii. cap. ix.

‡ Vid. Diog. Laert. in Vit. Zen. Τὴν ψυχὴν μὲν εἰς εἰς αἰὼν ἐκίμεναι, φησὶν ἔ μιν. upon which occasion Cicero says, That though they assert that they shall continue a great while in being, yet they deny that they shall exist for ever. Vid. ejusd. in Tusc. Quæst. Lib. 1. Stoici ueram nobis languunt, tanquam cornicibus ; deus mansuros animos ajunt ; semper negant.

§ Et ibid. Ea quæ vis, ut potero, explicabo, nec tamen quasi Pythia Apollo certa ut sint, et fixa quæ dicere, sed ut humunculus unus e multis, probabilia conjectura sequens ; ultra eam quo progrediar quam ut verisimilia videam, non habeo ; which Lactantius observes, speaking of him as in doubt about it. Vid. Lactant. de Vit. Beat. Lib. vii. § 8. And elsewhere he says, in Lib. de Amicitia. Sin autem illa veriora, ut idem iteritus sit animum, et corporum, nec ullus sensus maneat : Ut nihil boni est in morte, sic certe nihil est mali ; Et in Lib. de Senect. Quod si in hoc erro, quod animus hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro : Nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo. Sin mortuus, ut quidam vident philosophi censent, nihil sentiam ; non timeor, ne hunc errorem meum philosophi minuti irideant : Quod si non sumus immortales futuri, tamen extinguam hominem suo tempore, optabile est.

¶ Epist. 102. Credebam opinionibus magnorum virorum rem gratissimam præstitissent, mag isquam præbentium.



(2.) This power of thinking or reasoning was not derived from the body to which it was united ; for that which has not in itself those superior endowments, cannot communicate them to another : Its union with the soul cannot impart them to it ; for whatever sensation the body has, (which is below the power of reasoning,) is derived from the soul, as appears from its being wholly destitute thereof, when the union between the soul and body is broken : And therefore, since those superior powers, or excellencies of the soul, are produced by another cause, we must conclude, that they are immediately from God : This evidently appears from scripture ; the body of Adam was first formed, and then it is said, *God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*, Gen. ii. 7. that is, he put into it that soul which was the spring and fountain of all living actions ; and then it follows, man became a living soul : And it is considered as a peculiar display of the glory of God, that he *formeth the spirit of man within him*, Zech. xii. 2.

(3.) It follows from hence, that the dissolution of the body makes no alteration in the powers and faculties of the soul ; which is not hereby rendered subject to death. For, as it did not derive those powers from the body, as was before observed, it could not be said to lose them in the ruin of the body : Thus our Saviour speaks of the soul as not being affected with those injuries that tend to the bodies destruction, when he says, *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul*, Mat. x. 28.

(4.) We have a particular account in scripture, of the soul when separated from the body, as disposed of in a different way from it ; it does not go down to the earth as the body does, from whence it was, but *returns to God who gave it*, Eccl. xii. 7. Its return to God supposes that it was accountable to him for its actions performed in the body, or the way and manner in which the faculties were exerted ; and accordingly, when separate from it, it is represented as returning to God to give an account of its behaviour in the body, and to reap the fruits and effects thereof. And as it is said to return to God ; so believers breathe forth their souls, and resign them by faith into the hand of God, as our Saviour expresses it, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, Luke xxiii. 46. or, as Stephen says, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit*, Acts vii. 59.

(5.) The soul's immortality may be proved from the extent of the capacities thereof, and the small improvement men make of them in this world, especially the greatest part of mankind. What a multitude are there who never had the faculties of the soul deduced into act, in whom the powers of reasoning were altogether useless, while in this world ; I mean in those whose souls are separated from their bodies as soon as they are born ;

others die in their childhood, before reason comes to maturity ; and how great a part of the world live to old age, whose souls have not been employed in any thing great or excellent, in proportion to their capacities? Were these made in vain? or did God design, when he brought them into, or continued them either a longer or a shorter time in the world, that they should never be employed in any thing that is worthy of these noble faculties? Therefore we must conclude that there is another state, in which the soul shall act more agreeably to those capacities which it is endowed with.

(6.) This may be farther proved, not only from the natural desires, which there are in all men, of immortality ; but more especially those desires, which the saints have, of enjoying some things in God, which cannot be attained in this life. The natural desire of immortality is what belongs to all : With what reluctance does the soul and body part ; which arises from a natural aversion to a dissolution, unless there be a well-grounded hope of a life of blessedness that shall ensue? Moreover there is not only a desire but an expectation of the soul's living for ever, when separated from the body, in a state of happiness ; which believers are made partakers of, as a peculiar blessing from God : Therefore we must conclude, that he that gave them will satisfy them ; so that as they have a thirst after happiness, which is the effect of a supernatural power, they shall not be disappointed or destitute of it ; which they must be if the soul does not survive the body.

(7.) The immortality of the soul may be proved from the justice of God as the Governor of the world. This divine perfection renders it necessary that rewards and punishments should be distributed according to men's behaviour in this life. We observe, under a foregoing head, that man is supposed to be accountable to God, from the consideration of the spirit's returning to him : And it also follows, from what was said under another head, concerning the soul's being the subject of moral government : But this argument will be farther improved under a following answer, when we consider our Saviour's coming to judge the world \*. All the use therefore that we shall at present make thereof, is, that the soul being thus accountable to God, has reason to expect some peculiar marks of favour beyond what it receives in this world ; or to fear some punishment as the consequence of crimes committed, from the hand of the supreme Judge of all : Thus it is said, *God will render to every man according to his deeds*, Rom. ii. 6. And elsewhere, *Every one shall receive according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 10. Now that which makes for our present argument, is, that the best

\* See Quest. lxxxviii. lxxxix

men in the world do not receive those peculiar marks of divine favour, as to what respects their outward condition therein, as some of the vilest men often do : This the prophet Jeremiah takes notice of, when he says, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee ; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments : Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously ?* Jer. xiii.

1. And the Psalmist, when observing the prosperity of the wicked, says, *They are not in trouble like other men ; neither are they plagued like other men*, Psal. lxxiii. 5. that is, not exposed to those rebukes of providence, as to what concerns outward things, as good men are.

That which is alledged by some to solve this difficulty, is, that virtue has its own reward ; and therefore, the good man cannot but be happy, whatever troubles he meets with in this life, since he has something within himself that makes him so. But to this it may be replied, that this cannot give the least satisfaction, that the divine distributions are just and equal, to those who are destitute of this inward comfort ; and the principal ingredient in that internal happiness which arises from the exercise of religion and virtue, consists in the divine approbation, and the interest which such have in that love, which shall discover itself more fully, when the soul, being separate from the body, shall enjoy the happiness resulting from it in another world : Therefore, this is so far from militating against the doctrine we are maintaining, that it affords a considerable argument to support it.

If it be objected also, on the other hand, that sin brings its own punishment along with it, in that uneasiness which the wicked find in their own breasts ; concerning whom it is said, *They are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest ; whose waters cast up mire and dirt*, Isa. lvii. 20. This also proves the immortality of the soul ; inasmuch as this fear arises from a sense of guilt, whereby persons are liable to punishment in another world, who are not in the least concerned about the punishment of sin in this, and are ready to conclude themselves out of the reach of human judicature ; therefore, that which they are afraid of, is God's righteous judgments in another world, which they cannot, by any means, free themselves from the dread of. We must therefore conclude that this is as natural to man, considered as sinful, as the hope of future blessedness is to one that is righteous ; and both these are the result of a divine impression enstamped on the souls of men, which affords an evident proof of their immortality.

The objections against this doctrine, are generally such as carry in them the lowest and most abject thoughts of human nature in those who may truly be said to despise their own

souls. When they pretend, as was before observed, that they are material, this is to set the soul on a level with the body; for matter, how much soever it be refined, when it is resolved into the particles of which it consists, has no excellency above other material beings.

As to the objections that are brought against this doctrine from scripture, by which the frailty of this present life is set forth: These do not in the least tend to overthrow the immortality of the soul. Thus, when it is said in Eccles. iii. 19, 20. *That which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them: As the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; all go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.* It is plain, that Solomon here speaks of the inferior part of man, in which he has no pre-eminence above the beasts, as the body is resolved into dust, as well as the bodies of the brute creatures; but then the following words sufficiently confute the objection, in which it is said, *the spirit of man goeth upward*; whereby he asserts, not only the superior excellency, but the immortality of the soul.

Again, when it is said in chap. ix. 5. *The living know that they must die, but the dead know not any thing; neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.* This is sufficiently answered by only reading the following words; by which it appears, that their memory is forgotten; and they are said to have no farther reward in this world; or, as it is expressed, *They have no more any portion for ever, in any thing that is done under the sun*; but this does not in the least intimate that they have no portion in what respects the things of another world; and, indeed, their labour being unrewarded here, affords us an incontestible argument, that they shall have it hereafter, when the soul leaves this world.

And as for other scriptures, that seem to intimate as though death put an end to all those actions of religion which were performed by good men in this life, as in Psal. xxx. 9. 'When I go down to the pit, shall the dust praise thee, shall it declare thy truth?' and, 'The dead praise not the Lord; neither any that go down into silence,' Psal. cxv. 17. and what Hezekiah says to the same purpose, 'The grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth,' Isa. xxxviii. 18. These and such-like expressions intend nothing else but this; that the praises of God cannot be celebrated by those who are in the state of the dead, in such a way as they were by them while they lived in this world, viz. in the assemblies of his saints, from which they are separated, being no longer considered as members of the militant church; neither are they apprized of, or affected with the

things done in this lower world, in which respect they are said to know nothing: But this does not in the least, militate against their praising God with the church triumphant, and having those privileges conferred upon them, which are adapted to a state of immortality and eternal life.

As to what is farther objected by others, that the immortality of the soul respects only the righteous; because the apostle says in 1 John ii. 17. 'The world passes away, and the lust thereof, but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.' This sense given of the words contradicts all those scriptures that speak of the punishment of sin in another world; for if none are said to *abide for ever*, but the righteous, or they who do the will of God; the wicked must necessarily go unpunished. Therefore we must understand the word *abiding* in the same sense as the Psalmist does, when he says, 'The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous,' Psal. i. 5. which does not signify their not existing in a future state, but not being admitted into the congregation of the righteous, or made happy with them therein. (a)

(a) The doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and of the resurrection of the body equally rest upon the will and word of God. But when viewed with the eye of natural reason, they have been deemed to possess very unequal grounds of probability. The properties of matter and of mind are so very different, they have been distinguished by almost all. If the mind be not matter, no argument for its extermination can be drawn from the dissolution of the body; and as its materiality has never been shown, no premises have been found from which its death can be inferred. Some wise men who had not the scriptures, have indeed withholden their belief; but the reason is discernible, they have demanded proofs which the God of nature has not vouchsafed; and their rejection of the preponderating evidence of probability, argues weakness and fastidiousness.

The resurrection of the body has been held to be impossible. If so, the impossibility should either consist in the absolute incapacity in the dead body to be raised; but this it does not, for death can only reduce the body to its first element, and the dust which has been a body is not any more unfit to be reanimated, than it was to receive life in the first instance; or it must be owing to some defect of wisdom or power, or of both in him, who should raise the body; but God is unchangeable, and in all respects as able to raise him from the dead, as to create man at the first; and there is no contradiction implied in the thing, which should prevent the exertion of his power; a resurrection is therefore possible.

The usual arguments for its probability drawn from analogy to the return of day, of spring, of vegetation, &c. are not conclusive. But those drawn from the resurrection of Christ, from the identity of man considered as a compound from the removal of moral evil, from which natural evils arise, from the earnest expectation of animal nature for a better condition, and from the perfection of the future state, seem to raise a presumption which is probable; yet these are not appreciated by the natural man; hence the world has so generally denied a resurrection of the body.

The testimony of the Holy Spirit on both points has been always the same, but not with equal lustre.

Jesus Christ explicitly affirmed both, and brought his proofs from the old testament, pressed them as motives of comfort or terror to saints and sinners; and so connected their truth with that of his own character, that every thing

II. We shall consider the happiness that the members of the invisible church enjoy ; which is called communion with Christ in glory, as it includes in it perfect holiness ; accordingly we read of *the spirits of just men made perfect*, Heb. xii. 23. This perfection consists in the rooting out all those remainders of corruption, and those habitual inclinations to sin, that they were never wholly freed from in this world. The most that can be said concerning a believer at present, is, that he has a principle of spiritual life and grace, which inclines him to oppose, and stand his ground against, the assaults of sin that dwelleth in him, whereby it is mortified, but not wholly destroyed. The work of sanctification is daily growing to perfection, though it does not fully attain to it : But when the soul leaves the world, it arrives to perfection in a moment ; so that the power which man had at first, to yield sinless obedience, which was lost by the fall of our first parents, is regained with great advantage. For this perfection of holiness not only denotes a sinless state, but the soul's being confirmed therein ; and accordingly it is said to be received into the highest heaven, the place into which no unclean thing can enter ; where there is spotless purity, as well as everlasting happiness ; and here they are described as beholding the face of God in light and glory. These things need not be particularly insisted on in this place, since the same privileges are said, in a following answer, to belong to believers after the day of judgment, both in their souls and bodies, when they shall be received into heaven, and be made perfectly holy and happy, and be blest with the immediate vision of God \* ; Therefore all that we shall consider at present, with relation hereunto, is,

1. That the soul is immediately made partaker of this blessedness on its separation from the body.

2. It is farther described as waiting for the full redemption of the body, which is still supposed to continue under the dominion of death, though united to Christ, and consequently under his special protection : Upon which account believers are said, when they die, to rest in their graves as in their beds, till their bodies are again united to their souls at the last day.

1. We shall consider that the soul is made partaker of this

\* See *Quest. xc.*

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which proves the latter, is a proof of the former. Not only did his actually raising the dead, and arising himself, prove that the dead shall rise, but every prophecy accomplished in him, and every miracle wrought by him and his apostles, the continuance of his church, the purity of his system of doctrines, the doctrines of election, redemption, justification, regeneration and perseverance, as well as the express declarations on this subject, both in the old and new testament, all form a solid mass of evidence upon which the hopes of the christian may firmly rest.

blessedness immediately after its separation from the body, as it is observed in this answer ; which seems to militate against three opinions that have been advanced relating to the state of separate souls.

[1.] That of the Papists, who maintain that the soul is not made perfect in holiness at death, but enters into a middle-state, which they call purgatory, in which it is to endure exquisite torments, designed partly as a punishment inflicted for those sins committed in this life, which have not been expiated by satisfaction made by them, and partly to free them from the sin which they brought with them into that state.

[2.] Another opinion which seems to be opposed in this answer, is what was maintained by some of the ancient Fathers ; namely, that the souls of believers do not immediately enter into the highest heaven before they are reunited to their bodies, but into paradise ; not to suffer, as the Papists pretend that they do who are in purgatory ; but to enjoy those pleasures which are reserved for them in a place not much inferior to heaven.

[3.] There is another opinion which is subversive of the doctrine contained in this answer ; namely, that the soul, at its separation from the body, sleeps till the resurrection ; and consequently, in that intermediate space of time in which it is separate, it is no more capable of happiness or misery than the body that lies in the grave. The absurdity of these opinions we shall take occasion farther to consider. And,

[1.] That of the Papists concerning a middle-state, into which they suppose, souls enter at death, in order to their being cleansed from the remainders of sin, whereby they are made meet for heaven. This doctrine, how ludicrous and ungrounded soever it may appear to be, they are so fond of, that it will be as hard a matter to convince them of the absurdity thereof, as it was of old to convince the worshippers of Diana at Ephesus, of their stupid idolatry ; because it tends to promote their secular interest. They first endeavour to persuade the poor deluded people, that they must suffer very great torments after death, unless they be relieved by the prayers of their surviving friends ; and then, to induce them to shew this favour to them, as well as that they may merit some abatement of these torments or a speedy release from them, they tell them, that it is their duty and interest to leave their estates, by their last will and testament to pious uses ; such as building of churches, endowing of monasteries, &c. by which means they have got a great part of the estates of the people into their own hands. And to carry on this cheat, they give particular instances, in some of their writings, of souls being released from this dreadful place by their prayers.

The account they give of this middle-state, between heaven

and hell, is not only that they are not admitted into the immediate presence of God ; but are exposed to grievous torments by fire, little short of those that are endured in hell ; and if they are not helped by the prayers of the church, they are in danger of being sent from thence directly to hell, from whence there is no release. They also add, that the punishment, in this state, is either longer or shorter, in proportion to the crimes committed in this world ; for which satisfaction has not been made by penances endured, or money given to compensate for them. Some, indeed, are allowed, by them, to pass immediately into heaven, without being detained here ; namely, those who have performed works of supererogation ; or if by their entering into a vow of poverty, they have parted with their estates, while living in the world, for the use of the church, in which case no end could be answered, by telling them of this fable of purgatory. Others are told that they may escape it, by entering into a vow of chastity and canonical obedience ; which belongs more especially to the priests, when entering into holy orders ; whereby they take care to make provision for themselves, that so the deluded people may have a greater regard to their prayers, since they will find none in purgatory to perform that service for them. This is so vile and absurd an opinion, that it cannot but expose the church of Rome to the scorn and contempt of all who are not given up to strong delusions.

But though it sufficiently appears, that secular interest is the main foundation of this doctrine ; yet there are some arguments, which they take from scripture, to support it ; which is the only thing that requires our notice.

One scripture brought to this purpose, is in Isa. iv. 4. where the prophet speaks concerning the *Lord's purging the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning* ; supposing that this should have its accomplishment when the soul left the body, and was detained in this place of torment. But this is very remote from the design of the Holy Ghost herein ; for it only contains a metaphorical description of some judgments which God would inflict on people in this life, and as a means to reclaim them from them : therefore we often read, in the prophets, of God's refining his people *in the furnace of affliction*, Isa. xlvi. 10. and accordingly it is said, that *the Lord's fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem*, chap. xxxi. 9. denoting the sore judgments they should undergo in this world, as a punishment for their idolatry.

Another scripture, which is miserably perverted, to support this doctrine, is that in Zech. ix. 11. *By the blood of thy covenant have I sent forth thy prisoners, out of the pit wherein is*



*no water*; which they suppose, is to be understood of some state after this life; because it is called *the pit*; and it is also described as a place of misery, inasmuch as there is no water, that is, no refreshing comforts; and they add, that the prophet does not speak of hell because some persons are described as *sent forth*, or released from it; therefore it must needs be understood of this middle-state, between heaven and hell. But this is far from being the sense of the text, since it contains a prediction of their being delivered from the Babylonish captivity, which, in a metaphorical way of speaking, is called *the pit, wherein is no water*, to denote the great distress that the people were to be brought under therein; thus the prophet Isaiah, speaking of their deliverance from the captivity, says, *The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit*, Isa. li. 14. Or else it denotes some future deliverance, which the church was to expect after great calamities undergone by them; and this is said to be *by the blood of the covenant*, denoting that all the happiness the church shall enjoy in this world, as well as the other is founded in the blood of Christ, pursuant to the covenant of grace: and if the text must necessarily be understood of a deliverance from evil after death, it may be considered as a prediction of our being delivered from eternal destruction, by the blood of Jesus.

Again, another scripture which they bring to support this fabulous doctrine, is in 1 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15. *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is, If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire*. The reason why this scripture is forced into that cause which they maintain, is, because we read of persons being *saved so as by fire*; and this they suppose to respect that which should follow after the particular judgment of every one at death in which, a scrutiny shall be made concerning their works, or their behaviour in this world; and if they are found faulty, they may, notwithstanding, be saved after they have endured those sufferings which are there allotted for them.

But there is nothing in the text that gives the least countenance to this notion, since the apostle seems to be speaking concerning those ministers who preach false doctrines, that is, propagate errors not directly subversive of the fundamental articles of faith, but such as tend to embarrass the consciences of men, and, in many respects, lead them out of the way; or of others, who have been perverted by them, and have embraced pernicious errors, which, in their consequences, are subversive

of the faith, but yet do not hold those consequences : these may be saved, but their salvation shall be attended with some difficulty, arising from the mistaken notions which they have imbibed. Some compare this to a person whose house is in flames, and he saves his life with difficulty, being scorched thereby. God will, in his own time, take some method to discover what notions we have received in religion ; and he is said to do it by fire. Whether this, as a learned writer observes, is to be understood of the clear gospel-dispensation,\* or else respects some trying dispensation of providence, accompanied with a greater measure of the effusion of the Spirit, that shall lead men into the knowledge of their mistakes, and set them in the right way, I will not determine. But whether the one or the other of these senses of the texts seems most agreeable to the mind of the apostle, it is sufficiently evident that no countenance is given, either in this or any other scripture, to this absurd doctrine of the Papists.

Another scripture which they bring for the proof of this doctrine, is in 1 Pet. iii. 19. in which it is said, that our Saviour *went and preached unto the spirits in prison*. The sense they give of that text, compared with the foregoing verse, is, that as our Saviour, after his death, visited those repositories, where the Old Testament-saints were lodged, and preached the gospel to them, which they embraced ; and pursuant hereupon, were admitted into heaven : so he went down into this subterraneous prison, and preached to them also ; but whether this was attended with the same success, or no, they pretend not to determine ; but only allege this as a proof that there is such a place : and to give countenance to this sense they say, that by the prison here spoken of, the prison of hell cannot be intended ; inasmuch as there is no hope of salvation there, and consequently no preaching of the gospel. And it cannot be meant of his preaching to any in this world ; for they suppose, that he went after he left the world, and *preached to spirits*, that is, to persons, whose souls were separate from their bodies ; therefore he went, as they argue, and preached to those that are in purgatory : but in giving this sense of the text, they are obliged to take no notice of what follows, which, if duly considered, would plainly overthrow it.

The meaning of this scripture therefore is this, that our Saviour preached by his Spirit, to the old world, in the ministry of Noah, while he was preparing the ark ; but they being disobedient, were not only destroyed by the flood, but shut up in

\* See Dr. Edward's exercit. Part II. on 1 Cor. iii. 15. who, to give countenance to this opinion, produces two scriptures, viz. Mark xiv. 54. and Luke xxii. 56. where the word *ergo*, is put for *fire* ; from whence he supposes, that *ergo* and *ergo*, are used promiscuously.

the prison of hell; in which respect it is said he preached to those that are now in prison: so that this scripture makes nothing for that doctrine which we are opposing; nor any other that is or can be brought; so that all the arguments pretended to be taken from it, are a manifest perversion thereof.

However, there is one method of reasoning which they make use of, that I cannot pass over; inasmuch as they apprehend that it contains a *dilemma* that is unanswerable; namely, that there is some place in which persons are perfectly freed from sin, which must be either this world, or heaven, or some middle state between them both. It is allowed by all, that there is no perfect freedom from sin in this world; and to suppose that persons are perfectly freed from sin after they come to heaven, is to conclude that that is a state of probation, in which the gospel must be preached, and persons that attend upon it, inclined to embrace it, which is not agreeable to a state of perfection: and this is contrary to scripture, which speaks of no unclean thing entering therein. Therefore it follows, that the state in which they are fitted for it, must be this which they plead for, to wit, a middle-state, in which they are first purged, and then received into heaven.

But to this it may be replied, that it is true, believers are not perfectly freed from sin in this world, nor do they enter into heaven, either with the guilt or pollution of their sins upon them; but they are made perfect in an instant, in passing out of this world into heaven: the same stroke which separates the soul from the body takes away the remainders of corruption, and fits it for the heavenly state; it passes out of this world perfect, though it was imperfect while in it; in like manner as the body being raised out of the grave is rendered incorruptible thereby, so that we have no occasion to invent a middle state, into which the saints are brought. Therefore it follows, as it is expressed in this answer, that the souls of believers, immediately after death, are made perfect in holiness.

[2.] There is another opinion embraced by some of the Jews, and several of the Fathers, in which they are followed by some modern writers; namely, that the souls of believers, at death, enter into paradise, where they continue till they are reunited to their bodies, and, after the day of judgment, are received into the highest heaven: thus they understand our Saviour's words to the penitent thief on the cross, *To day thou shalt be with me in paradise*, in a literal sense, as contra-distinguished from heaven. And these assert, that the soul of our Saviour, when separate from his body, went immediately into paradise, and not into heaven, till after his resurrection. This is supposed to import the same thing as *Abraham's bosom* does in the

parable; and indeed, the Greek word,\* in the metaphorical sense thereof, which we translate *bosom*, signifies a port or haven; which is, as it were, a bosom for shipping.

This is described as very distinct from the Popish doctrine of purgatory; for it is not a place of suffering, but of delight and pleasure. Tertullian, who gave into this notion,† describes it as a place of divine pleasure, designed for the reception of the spirits of holy men, being separate either from the world, or other places near it, by an inclosure of fire, designed to keep the wicked out.

This is what they suppose the apostle Paul speaks of when he says, that he was *caught up into paradise*, 2 Cor. xii. 5. and they conclude that this vision or rapture which he mentions, includes in it what he experienced at two several times; and that this is agreeable to what he mentions in verse 1. where he speaks not of one single vision, but of *visions* and *revelations*. Accordingly they suppose that he had first of all a vision of the glory of heaven, and then he had another of paradise: thus a late writer understands the text.‡ However, I cannot think that this can be sufficiently inferred from the apostle's words, which are, as it were, a preface to introduce the account which he gives of himself, when he says, *I will come to visions and revelations*; that is, I will now tell you how God sometimes favours his people with extraordinary visions and revelations: then he proceeds to give an instance hereof in himself, as being *caught up into the third heaven*, or into paradise; for I cannot suppose that he speaks of two visions, or distinguishes paradise from heaven; and therefore I am obliged not to pay that deference to the sentiments of the Fathers he mentions, as he does, but must conclude the notion to be altogether ungrounded, though it is supported by the credit of Irenæus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, Methodius, as well as of several Jewish writers; such as Philo, and some others,§

[3.] We shall now consider another doctrine, maintained by some, which is inconsistent with what is said in this answer, concerning the souls of believers being made perfect in holiness, and entering immediately into heaven, when separate from their bodies, *viz.* that at death the soul sleeps as well as the body, till the resurrection, when one shall be raised, and the other awakened out of its sleep. These do not suppose that the soul ceases to exist; but that it enters into, and continues in, a state of inactivity, without any power to exercise the facul-

\* ΚΟΛΠΟΣ. Sinus, a bosom, coast, or haven.

† Vid. Tertull. Apologet. Cap. xlvii. *Et si paradisiim nominemus, locum divine amenitatis recipiendis sanctorum spiritibus destinatum, materia quidem ignea illius Zone segregatum.*

‡ See Whitby in loc.

§ See also his notes on Luke xxiii. 43.

ty of-thinking, and, as a consequence thereof, whilst remaining in this state, it must be incapable either of happiness or misery. These do not assert that there shall be no rewards and punishments in a future state; but that there will be a deferring thereof until the last day.

This doctrine was generally maintained by the Socinians, as may be seen in several of their writings referred to by a learned author, who opposes them;\* and the arguments by which it is usually supported, are taken partly from the possibility of the soul's being destitute of thought, and partly from those scriptures that compare death to a sleep; by which they understand not only a cessation of action in the body, but likewise in the soul. In defence of the former of these, viz. that it is possible for the soul to be without the exercise of thought, they argue, that the soul of a new-born infant, (or, at least, before it is born,) has no ideas: though there be a power of reasoning, which is essential, to the soul; yet this is not deduced into act, so as to produce thought, or actual reasoning, from whence moral good or evil would proceed, and a sense of happiness or misery, arise from it. And this notion is carried somewhat farther by a late celebrated writer; † who, though he takes no notice of the tendency of his assertion to support this opinion concerning the soul's sleeping at death; yet others make a handle of it, to defend it with a greater shew of reason than what was formerly discovered in maintaining this argument.

He asserts, that the souls of those that are adult do not always think; and particularly when a person is in a sound sleep, that he has no thought; how much soever there may be the exercise of thought, though confused and irregular, in those who, between sleeping and waking, not only dream a thousand things which they never thought of before, but also remember those dreams when they awake. That a person, in a sound sleep,

\* *Vid. Hoornbeck Socin. Confut. Tom. III. Lib. v. Cap. 1. who quotes some passages out of several Socinian writers, among whom I shall only mention what is said by two of them, with whom several others of their brethren agree herein. Vid. Socin. in Epist. v. ad Volkel. Tantum id mihi videtur statui posse, post hanc vitam, animam, sive animum hominis non ita per se subsistere ut premia ulla pœnarum sentiat: vel etiam ista sentiendi sit capax, quæ mea firma opinio facile potest colligi ex multis quæ a me dicuntur, &c. Et Smalc. in Exam. Error. Pag. 33. Animam vel spiritum hominis post mortem aliquid sentire, vel aliqua re perfrui, nec ratio permittit nec scriptura testatur: ut enim corpus sine anima, sic etiam anima sine corpore, nullas operationes exercere potest; Et perinde sic ac si anima illorum nulla esset, etiam suo modo sit, quia scilicet nullius rei sensum habeat, aut per se voluptate aliqua frui possit. And elsewhere the same author is so hasty as to term the contrary doctrine no other than a fable, in Lib. de Dei filio, Cap. vi. Pag. 43. Quod verò de vita animarum disserit, hoc inatur fabulæ est, &c. Spiritum hominis ad Deum redire testatur sacra scriptura, et eum vivere vita, ut ait Smiglecius, spirituum, Et vel aliquid intelligere, vel voluptate frui hoc extra, Et contra scripturam dicitur.*

† See Locke's Essay concerning human understanding, Lib. ii. Chap. 1. § ix. to the xix.

has no dreams, and consequently is destitute of thought, he attempts to prove; inasmuch as when any one is suddenly waked out of a sound sleep, he can give no account of what he had been thinking of; and he supposes it impossible for a person who was thinking, to forget the next moment what his thoughts were conversant about. This is the principal argument whereby he supports this notion; and he has so far the advantage thereof, as that it is impossible for us to prove the contrary from any thing that we know or experience concerning ourselves: Nevertheless, it will not appear very convincing, when we consider that there are innumerable thoughts which we have when awake, that we can hardly give an account of the next minute: And if the thoughts are very active in those that dream, (who are as much asleep as others that do not dream; though the sleep may not be so refreshing as if it were otherwise,) I cannot see how this consequence can be inferred, that sleep is inconsistent with thought. Moreover, a person who is delirious, or distracted, undoubtedly thinks, though his thoughts are disordered; but when the *delirium* or distraction is over, he can no more remember what he thought of, than a person that is waked out of the soundest sleep: This argument therefore tends rather to amuse, or embarrass the cause they maintain, than to give sufficient conviction.

Now from this method of reasoning it is inferred, that when the soul is separated from the body, it is altogether destitute of the exercise of thought, which is what they mean by the soul's sleeping: And to give farther countenance to this matter, they produce several scriptures, in which death is compared to a sleep; as when God speaks of the death of Moses, he says, *Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers*, Deut. xxxi. 26. and Job speaks of *sleeping in the dust*, Job vii. 21. And concerning the resurrection after death, he says, *That man lieth down and riseth not, till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep*, chap. xiv. 12. and David prays, *Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death*, Psal. xlii. 3. and our Saviour, speaking concerning Lazarus, when dead, says, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep*, John xi. 11. which he afterwards explains, ver. 14. when he says, *Lazarus is dead*. There are several other scriptures to the like purpose, they bring to prove that the soul sleeps in death, taking the word in the literal sense thereof.

But to this it may be replied, that as to what respects the possibility of the soul's being rendered incapable of thinking, when separate from the body; it is no just way of reasoning to infer from the possibility of a thing, the actual being of it: Therefore if it could be proved to a demonstration, (as the author above-mentioned supposes he has done, though, I think,

without sufficient ground,) that sleep deprives a person of thought; yet it will not follow from hence, that the soul, when separate from the body, ceases to think. When the powers and faculties of the soul are deduced into act, experience tells us, that they are greatly improved and strengthened; and therefore the exercise thereof cannot be so easily impeded as is pretended; especially when we consider that it does not derive this from the body, which contributes very little to those ideas it has of things immaterial, which are not the objects of sense; and how much soever bodily diseases may weaken or interrupt the soul in its actings, we do not find that they so far destroy those powers, but that, when the distemper ceases, the former actings return, like the spring of a watch, which may be stopped by something that hinders the motion of the wheels, which, when it is removed, continues to give motion to them as it had done before: The body, at most, can be considered but as a clog and impediment to the activity of the soul; and consequently it may be argued from thence, that in a state of separation the soul is so far from being impeded in its actings, that it becomes more active than before.

But that which I would principally insist on, as what will sufficiently overthrow this doctrine, is, the account which we have in many scriptures; and several just consequences which may be deduced from them, by which it will appear, that nothing that has been said concerning the possibility of the soul's being unactive, when separate from the body, can enervate the force of the argument taken from thence to support the contrary doctrine. It is true, the scripture oftentimes represents death as a *sleep*, as in the places before-mentioned; and it is sometimes described as a state of rest, which is of the same import with sleep; but this is explained as a state of peace, holiness, and happiness, and not a cessation from action. Thus it is said, *He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness*, Isa. lvii. 2. which is plainly meant of the death of the righteous, as appears from the preceding verse, where it is said, *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart*. Now these are said to *enter into peace*; which supposes that they are capable of the enjoyment of those blessings which the soul shall then be possessed of, and they are said to *walk in their uprightness*; which signifies their being active in what respects the glory of God, which is very inconsistent with the soul's sleeping, when separate from the body. Rest and sleep are metaphorical expressions, when applied to this doctrine; and nothing is more common than for such figurative ways of speaking to be used in the sacred writings; and therefore it is very absurd for us to understand the words otherwise in this instance before us.

We will now proceed to consider those proofs we have from scripture, of the soul's being in a state of activity when separate from the body.

The first scripture that may be brought to prove this, is what the apostle says in 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, 4. when speaking concerning himself as *caught up into the third heaven*; and not knowing whether he was at the same time, *in, or out of the body*. If he was in the body, his senses were locked up, and he must be supposed to have been in a trance; which militates against the supposition that the soul's power of acting may be impeded either by sleep or some bodily disease, in which there is not the exercise of the senses. Or if, on the other hand, he was *out of the body*, his *hearing unspeakable words* plainly proves our argument, *viz.* that the soul is capable of action, and consequently of enjoying the heavenly glory, when separate from the body.

Moreover, this is evident from our Saviour's words to the penitent thief on the cross, *Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43. To be in paradise is certainly to be in heaven in a state of compleat blessedness, where the soul delights itself in the enjoyment of God, which is altogether inconsistent with a state of insensibility. Were it otherwise, it ought rather to have been said, thou shalt be with me in paradise after the resurrection of the body, than to day. The method which some take to evade the force of the argument, who say, that *to day*, refers not to the time of his being admitted into heaven, but to the time when Christ spake these words, is so low and trifling, that it doth not deserve an answer.

There is another scripture which fully proves this doctrine, namely, what the apostle says, *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better*, Phil. i. 23. In which he takes it for granted, that as soon as he departed out of this world, he should be with Christ; which denotes that he should be in his immediate presence, beholding his glory; which is inconsistent with the supposition that the soul sleeps at death. And this is farther evident from what he says, that this is *far better*, which could not be said to be, if the notion we are opposing were true; for it is so much better for a saint to be serving Christ's interest in this world, and made so eminently useful in promoting his glory, as the apostle was, than to be in a state of inactivity, wherein the soul is not capable of doing any thing for him, nor enjoying any thing from him, that there is no comparison between them; and whereas he was *in a strait* which of these two he should chuse, had it been referred to him, the matter might easily have been determined in favour of his continuing in this world; for there he was useful; whereas, in the other, he would not only



be useless, but incapable of enjoying those privileges which he was made partaker of here.

My next argument shall be taken from what is said in 2 Cor. v. 8. *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*; where one infers the other, without any intimation of his waiting till the soul is united again to the body, before he is admitted into Christ's presence.

Again, this farther appears from the words of Solomon, in Eccl. iv. 2. *I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive*. By which we are to understand, that the state of believers, when they die, is much more happy than it can be in this life; which supposes that they are capable of happiness, and consequently that the soul, when separated from the body, is not in a state of insensibility; which is altogether inconsistent with happiness.

And to all this we may add what our Saviour says in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; the *beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom: The rich man also died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments*, Luke xvi. 22, 23. In which parable we have an account of the different state of the souls of the righteous and wicked at death, and not barely what shall follow upon the resurrection of the body; for when the rich man is represented as being in torments, he says, in a following part of the parable, *I have five brethren*; and he would have had Lazarus sent to testify to them, lest they should also come into that place of torment; to which it is replied, *They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them*, ver. 28, 29. which plainly intimates, that the parable refers to the state of separate souls, before the resurrection, whilst others enjoyed the means of grace; and consequently it proves that the soul, when separate from the body, is capable of happiness or misery; and which is more, is fixed in one or the other of them.

As to those scriptures that speak of the happiness or misery of men, as deferred to the end of the world. It is intimated in the parable of the tares, that *the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just*, Mat. xiii. 9. and the former are said to be *cast into a furnace of fire*, ver. 49, 50. and the latter, viz. the righteous, to *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*, ver. 43. which respects the dealings of God with man, in the end of time. Moreover our Saviour speaks of his people as *blessed and recompensed at the resurrection of the just*, Luke xiv. 14. And the apostle Paul expresses his hope of a *crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give him at that day*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. that is, the day of his coming to judgment; and several other scriptures that speak

of what is consequent to the resurrection. To this it may be replied, that these scriptures respect not the beginning, but consummation of the happiness of the saints, or their compleat blessedness in soul and body, which is not inconsistent with the happiness that separate souls enjoy before the resurrection. Nor is the misery that is consequent upon the resurrection, inconsistent with that which sinners endure before it, when their souls are separate from their bodies. Thus concerning the happiness of the souls of believers at death ; which leads us to consider.

2. What is farther observed in this answer, concerning the soul's waiting for the full redemption of the body ; which though it continues under the dominion of death, is notwithstanding united to Christ ; and accordingly believers are said to rest in their graves as in their beds, till the resurrection.

The souls of believers are described as waiting for the full redemption of their bodies ; which is the same expression that the apostle uses, Rom. viii. 23. where redemption denotes a full discharge from that prison, or state of confinement in the grave ; in which the body was rendered incapable of answering the end for which it was redeemed by Christ, and, at the same time, the soul was destitute of that happiness which its re-union therewith shall convey to it. Its enjoyments were all spiritual, and, in their kind perfect ; but yet it was naked, or, as the apostle expresses it unclothed ; inasmuch as it wanted that which was designed to be a constituent part, necessary to compleat the human nature ; without which it was indisposed for those actions and enjoyments which arise from its union with the body. This it is said to wait for, as a desire of re-union therewith is natural to it. Nevertheless it waits without impatience, or any diminution of its intellectual happiness.

(2.) As to what respects the bodies of believers, they are said to continue united to Christ, which is the result of their being redeemed by him, and of his condescending to dwell in them by his Spirit. Accordingly his love extends itself to their lower part, as well as to their souls ; and, as the apostle says, *Nothing shall separate a believer from his love, no, not death itself*, ver. 38, 39. upon which account they are said to *sleep in Jesus*, 1 Thes. iv. 14. or to *die in the Lord*, Rev. xiv. 14. They are indeed buried in the grave, and seem to lie neglected like common dust : nevertheless it is said, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*, Psal. cxvi. 15. Christ reckons every particle of their dust among *his jewels*, Mal. iii. 17. and is no more ashamed to own them as his peculiar care, than he was when they were in their most flourishing state in this world ; and for this reason they are also said to rest in their graves as in their beds. This is a scripture-expression, as the

Psalmist says, *My flesh shall rest in hope*, Psal. xvi. 9. and the prophet Isaiah, *He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds*, Isa. lvii. 2. The body, indeed, remains, at the same time, under the external part of the curse due to man for sin; yet it is freed from that which is the most bitter ingredient therein; which will be abundantly demonstrated when death shall be compleatly swallowed up in victory. In this the bodies of believers have the advantage of all others. The frame of nature indeed is dissolved; there is no visible mark of distinction from the wicked put upon them in the grave; yet there is a vast difference in God's account, which one elegantly compares to the removing of the tabernacle in the wilderness: when the Israelites changed their stations, all the parts thereof were carefully taken down and delivered to the Levites' charge, in order to its being raised again with honour; whereas, the house incurably infected with the leprosy, was plucked down with violence, and thrown into an unclean place with execration. The bodies of the saints are committed to the bosom of the earth, as the repository Christ has appointed for them; from whence he will call them forth at last, when their souls shall be again united to them in the glorious morning of the resurrection. This leads us to consider,

III. The misery which the souls of the wicked endure at death, which is contained in the latter part of this answer.

We have here a different scene opened, the final estate of the wicked described in words adapted to strike dread and terror into those who have, at present, no sense of their future misery: their souls are considered as cast into, or shut up in hell; their bodies imprisoned in the grave, and both, the objects of divine wrath. We shall have occasion, under a following answer,\* farther to speak concerning the punishment that shall be inflicted on sinners, whose torments shall be inexpressible, both in body and soul, after the day of judgment: and therefore we shall, at present, consider the misery which the souls of the wicked shall undergo before they are united to their bodies. The soul, which carries out of the world with it the power of reflecting on itself as happy or miserable, immediately sees itself separate from the comfortable presence of God, the fountain of blessedness. And that which tends to enhance its misery beyond what it is capable of in this life, will be the enlargement of its faculties; as the apprehension shall be more clear and its sensation of the wrath of God more pungent; when it is not oppressed with that drowsiness and stupidity as it was before; nor will it be possible for it to delude itself, with those vain hopes, which it once conceived, of escaping that misery, which it is now plunged into; when all the waves and billows

\* *Quest. lxxxix.*

of the Almighty shall overwhelm and swallow it up. The soul is, in a peculiar manner, the subject of misery, as it is made uneasy by its own thoughts; which are compared to the worm that dieth not. While it looks backwards, and calls to mind the actions of his past life, and all his sins are charged upon him, this fills it with such a sense of guilt and confusion as is inexpressibly tormenting; and when he looks forward, there is nothing but what administers despair, which increases his misery to the highest degree. These torments the soul endures before it is reunited to the body, and thereby rendered receptive of others, which we generally call the punishment of sense, that are conveyed by it.

The place of punishment is the same that is allotted for soul and body, *viz.* hell; and this is called utter darkness; which is an expression used to signify the greatest degree of misery. As for their bodies, they dread the thoughts of being united to them again; inasmuch as that will bring with it new accessions of torment. These are considered as liable to a double dishonour; not only that which arises from their being in a state of corruption in common with all mankind; but in their being detained in the grave, as prisoners to the justice of God, from whence they shall not be released as persons acquitted or discharged, but remanded from that prison to another, from whence there is no deliverance. But more of this under a following answer.

**QUEST. LXXXVII.** *What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?*

**ANSW.** We are to believe, that at the last day there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; when they that are then found alive, shall, in a moment, be changed; and the self-same bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls for ever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ; the bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of his resurrection, as their head, shall be raised in power, spiritual, incorruptible, and made like to his glorious body; and the bodies of the wicked shall be raised up in dishonour, by him, as an offended Judge.

**I**N the foregoing answers, we have considered the soul and body as separated by death, the body turned to corruption, and the soul immediately entering into a state of happiness or misery; and are now led to insist on the doctrine of the resur-

fection, when these two constituent parts of man shall be reunited. And accordingly we shall endeavour,

I. To explain what we are to understand by the resurrection of the dead.

II. We shall prove that there is nothing in this doctrine contrary to reason, at least, if we consider it as a supernatural and divine work.

III. We shall farther observe, that this doctrine could not be known by the light of nature; and therefore we believe it as founded in divine revelation.

IV. What arguments are contained in scripture for the proof thereof; some of which might be taken from the Old Testament, and others from the New, in which it is more clearly revealed.

V. We shall answer some of the most material objections brought against it.

VI. We shall consider it as universal, as it is here styled a general resurrection of the dead, from the beginning of time to Christ's second coming; yet with this exception, that they who are found alive shall be changed. And,

VII. The condition in which the body shall be raised; and those circumstances of honour and glory, which respect, more especially, the resurrection of the just. And, on the other hand, we shall consider the resurrection of the wicked, as being in dishonour, by Christ, as an offended Judge.

I. What are we to understand by the resurrection of the dead. We sometimes find the word taken, in scripture, in a metaphorical sense, for God's doing those things for his church, which could not be brought about any otherwise than by his extraordinary and supernatural power. Sometimes the work of regeneration is set forth by this figurative way of speaking; whereby they who are dead in trespasses and sins, are said to be quickened; and our Saviour speaks of this when he says, *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live,* John v. 25. But we are to understand it in a proper sense, as denoting that change which shall pass upon the body, when it shall be delivered from the state of corruption, into which it was brought at death, and reunited to the soul; which is distinguished in a following verse; from this metaphorical sense of it, when he says, *All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation,* ver. 28. This includes in it not barely the repairing, but the rebuilding the frame of nature; which was not only decayed, but dissolved in death; or the gathering together those particles of matter, of which the body was before constituted;

which was not only turned into corruption, but common dust; whereby a new body, as to the form and qualities thereof, is erected out of its old materials; otherwise it could not be called a resurrection. It is said, indeed, that the body shall not, in all respects, be the same that it was when separated from the soul; as the apostle compares it to a *grain of wheat* sown in the ground, which, when it springs up, is not altogether the same as it was before; for *God giveth it a body, (a) as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body*, 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38. It is the same for substance, as it consists of the same materials, but very different as to its qualities; as will be farther considered, when we speak concerning the condition of the body when raised from the dead; and as it is raised with a design that it should be re-united to the soul, which will immediately follow upon it; and this union shall be indissoluble and eternal.

II. We shall now consider that there is nothing contrary to reason, or impossible, from the nature of the thing, which might have a tendency to overthrow this doctrine; especially if we consider it as a supernatural and divine work, brought about by the almighty power of God.

If we look no farther than the power of natural causes, we may conclude it to be impossible for a creature to effect, as much as it was at first to produce the body of man out of the dust of the ground; but this is not impossible with God: He that gave life and being to all things; and, by his sovereign will, puts a period to that life, which had been, for some time continued by his power and providence, can give a new life to it; especially if there be nothing in this work that renders it unmeet for it to be performed by him.

That there is nothing in the nature of the thing that renders a resurrection impossible, appears, in that death, though it be a dissolution of the frame of nature, does not annihilate the

(a) "By affirming, that the grain produced from the seed sown, is not the very body which is sown, the apostle I think insinuates, that the body to be raised is not numerically the same with the body deposited at death, but something of the same kind formed by the energy of God. Having such an example of the divine power before our eyes, we cannot think the reproduction of the body impossible, though its parts be utterly dissipated. Farther, although the very numerical body is not raised, yet the body is truly raised, because what is raised, being united to the soul, there will arise in the man thus completed, a consciousness of his identity, by which he will be sensible of the justice of the retribution which is made to him for his deeds. Besides, this new body, will more than supply the place of the old, by serving every purpose necessary to the perfection and happiness of the man in his new state. According to this view of the subject, the objection taken from the scattering of the particles of the body that dies, has no place; because it does not seem necessary, that the body to be raised, should be composed of them. For the scripture nowhere affirms, that the same numerical body is to be raised. What it teaches is, that the dead shall be raised."

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**body.** If the body, indeed, were annihilated at death, then it would be impossible, or contrary to the nature of things, that there should be a resurrection thereof; since the bringing it again into a state of existence would be a new creation; which, though it would not be too great a work for omnipotency, yet it could not be styled a resurrection, or restoring the same body to life that was separated from the soul, to which it was once united. But when we suppose that the matter of which the body consisted is still in being, and nothing is necessary to the raising it from the dead but the recollecting the various particles thereof, and forming it again into a body, fitted to receive the soul: this is not in its own nature impossible; nor does it infer a contradiction, so as that we should argue from thence, that it cannot be brought about by divine power.

That this may more fully appear, let it be considered, that nothing which God has brought into being, can be annihilated, but by an act of his will; since nothing can defeat or disannul his providence, which upholdeth all things that were brought into being by the word of his power. It is also certain, that God has given us no ground to conclude that any part of his material creation has been, or shall be turned into nothing; from whence it follows, that the particles of all the bodies of men, that once lived in this world, though turned to corruption or dust, are as much in being as ever they were, though not in the same form.

Again, it is certain that God, who made and upholdeth all things, has a perfect knowledge of that which is the object of his power, since his understanding is infinite: therefore he knows where the scattered dust, or the smallest particles of matter that once constituted the bodies of men, are reserved: and when we speak of a resurrection from the dead, we understand hereby the gathering them together, and disposing them in such a way as that new bodies shall be framed out of them: therefore, though this could not be done by any but God, it is not impossible, from the nature of the thing, for him to do it; and that he will do it will be considered, when we come more directly to the proof of this doctrine. We shall therefore proceed,

III. To consider it as a matter of pure revelation, such as we could not have known by the light of nature, without the assistance of scripture-light. Something, indeed, might be known by reason concerning the immortality of the soul, and its being not only capable of happiness or misery in a future state, but dealt with therein according to its behaviour in this world: nevertheless, when we enquire into that part, which the body shall bear therein; whether it shall be raised and reunited to the soul, to be for ever a partner with it in what re-

spects its state in another world, or shall remain for ever in a state of corruption; this cannot be known by the light of nature.

There are, indeed, many things which we find in the writings of the Heathen, that discover them to have had some notion of what bears a resemblance to a resurrection: as when they speak concerning the transmigration of souls, or their living in other bodies, when separated from those which they formerly were united to. And others of them speak concerning the general conflagration, and the restoration of all things, immediately after, to their former state, as well as give some hints which are contained in their writings, concerning particular persons that have been raised from the dead, at least, pretended to have been so. What we find of this nature therein, very much resembles the fabulous account we have in the Popish legends of miracles, said to have been wrought, though without proof: thus we are told of one Aristeas, the Proconnesian, who had a power of expiring and returning to life at pleasure, and relating what he had seen in a separate state.\* The same is reported of one Hermotimus of Clazomena.† But the most famous story of this kind, is what is related by Plato,‡ and transcribed from him by Eusebius,§ concerning one Er, the son of Armenius; who, after he was slain in battle, and had continued ten days among other dead bodies, was brought home to his house; and two days after, being laid on his funeral pile, came to life again: this Plato, while he is relating it, calls little better than a fable. ¶ And it was treated by others with ridicule, how much soever believed by some who regarded reports more than solid evidence of the truth thereof.

I might also mention others, who are said, by Heathen writers to have been translated into heaven in their bodies and

\* This is reported in a very fabulous manner, and is reckoned no more than an idle tale by Pliny, who mentions it among other stories of the like nature. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. vii. Cap. lii. *Animam Aristaei etiam visam evolentem ex ore, in Proconneo, corvi effigie, magna quae sequitur subulositate.* This is also mentioned as a fable by Origen. Vid. Origin. Lib. iii. Contr. Cels.

† Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. Cap. lii. *Reperimus inter exempla Hermotimi Clazomenii animam relicto corpore, errare solitam, vagamque; e longinquo multa annuntiare. quae nisi a praesenti nosci non possent; but by the following words he speaks of him as not dead, but in a kind of deliquium; corpore interim renianimi; but yet it was given out by many, that he died and rose again very often. This Lucian himself laughs at as a foolish tale. Vid. Lucian. Enc. Musc.*

‡ Vid. Plat. de Repub. Lib. x.

§ Vid. Euseb. Preparat. Evang. Lib. xi. Cap. lxxiv. It is mentioned by Ptolemaeus, Symp. Lib. ix. Cap. v.

¶ Macrobius speaking concerning it, in *Sonn. Scip. Lib. 1. Cap. 1.* represents Cicero as being under a great concern, that this story of Er was ridiculed, by many who did not stick to say, *Visum fuisse Erem, vitam effundere, animamque; recipere, quam revera non omiserat.* See more to this purpose in *Huet. Demons. Evang. Prop. ix. Cap. cclii.*



souls \* : Which might take its first rise from what they had received by tradition, concerning the translation of Enoch and Elijah ; as the stories of those that were raised from the dead might be first invented by them with this view, that their religion might have as great reputation as that of the Jews.

But notwithstanding these particular instances related by them, of some translated, or others raised from the dead ; there were very few of them that believed the doctrine of the resurrection ; and some treated it with as much contempt as we do the before-mentioned account which they give of particular persons raised from the dead †. This agrees very well with what we read in scripture, concerning the treatment the apostle Paul met with, when he encountered the Epicureans and Stoicks at Athens, *preaching to them Jesus and the resurrection*, Acts xvii. 18. upon which occasion they call him *babbler* ; and insinuated that he seemed to be *a setter forth of strange gods*. Oecumenius and Chrysostom think, that they supposed he reckoned the *resurrection among the gods* ‡, as well as *Jesus*, whose divinity he doubtless maintained ; but whether they were so stupid as thus to wrest his words, is not material. It is no wonder to find the Epicureans treating this doctrine with ridicule ; for they, denying the immortality of the soul, could not entertain the least idea of the resurrection of the body in any sense : Whereas the Stoicks, though they did not own the doctrine of the resurrection, yet they could not think it so strange a doctrine as some others might do ; since they held that the soul, after death, continued at least, as long as the body ; and they knew very well, that many of the philosophers strenuously maintained the transmigration of souls ; and, indeed, this was held by many of them, as well as the Platonists and Pythagoreans ; and therefore the resurrection, though it differed from it, could not seem so strange and unheard of a

\* See a late learned writer, *Hody on the resurrection of the same body ; who refers to several places in Heathen writers, of whom some believed it ; others exposed it as fabulous, Pag. 13—16.*

† Thus Pliny, who a little before related several stories of persons raised from the dead, notwithstanding calls the doctrine of the resurrection, *puerile deliramentum*. *Vid. Ejuod. Nat. Hist. Lib. vii. Cap. lv. and elsewhere he speaks of it as a thing in its own nature impossible ; and therefore concludes it to be one of those things which God cannot do. Lib. ii. Cap. vii. Ne Deum quidem posse omnia, nec mortales aternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos. And Minutius Felix. Vid. Ejuod. Octav. Cap. xi. brings in a Heathen, who was his friend, railing at it, without any decency, as though it was no better than an old wives fable ; and the principal argument he produces, is, because he supposes it impossible for a body that was burnt to ashes, to spring up into life again. And Celsus, speaking concerning the impossibility of God's doing any thing contrary to nature, reckons this among those things. Vid. Orig. Contr. Cels. Lib. v. Page 240. and says, the hope hereof is more worthy of worms than men and styles it an abominable, as well as an impossible thing, which God neither can nor will do.*

‡ *Ambrosius.*

notion, as that they should reckon it among the gods : However, it plainly appears from hence that this doctrine could not be learned by the light of nature ; whatever confused ideas the Heathen might have entertained by tradition, concerning it.

Therefore it follows from hence, that we must look for a satisfactory account hereof from scripture : Thus when the Sadducees put a stupid question to our Saviour concerning the woman that had seven husbands, which successively died ; and they would know whose wife she should be in the resurrection ; by which they designed to express their opposition to this doctrine, rather than a desire of information as to the question proposed : Our Saviour in his reply to them refers them to the scriptures, Matt. xxii 29. as the fountain from whence a clear and satisfactory knowledge of this doctrine is to be derived as well as from the power of God. This divine perfection argues the possibility thereof, the justice and goodness of God, its expediency ; but the scriptures, which contain a revelation of his will, represent it as certain ; and this leads us to consider some arguments that are contained in, or deduced from scripture for the proof thereof ; and here we shall consider,

1. Those proofs which we have for it, taken from the Old Testament. These I chuse first to insist on, because I am sensible there are many who think, that the church knew nothing of it, till it was revealed, by our Saviour, in the New Testament : This very much detracts from the importance of the doctrine, as well as renders the state of those who lived before Christ's incarnation, very uncomfortable, since the saints, according to this opinion, must have had no hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life. This notion is defended by many who extend the darkness of the dispensation farther than what is convenient ; and among others, it is generally maintained by the Socinians, probably with this design, that since according to them, our Saviour had little else in view, in coming into the world, but to lead men into the knowledge of some things which they were ignorant of before ; this might be reckoned one of those doctrines that he came to communicate. Thus Volkelius denies that there were any promises of eternal life made to the church under the Old Testament ; and concludes that there was no one who had the least surmise that any such doctrine was contained in those scriptures which we commonly bring from thence to prove it \*. And to give countenance

\* *Vid. Volkeli. de vera relig. Lib. iii. Cap. xi. Apparet promissionem vite sempiternae in prisco illo foedere factam minime fuisse. And in a following part of this chapter, wherein he professedly treats on this subject, he adds ; Quae apertis luculentissimisq ; verbis ut in nova scriptura fieri videamus, hoc Dei beneficium nobis polliceantur. Et quorum munere, hoc de quo agimus, nequaquam esse hinc patet, quod antequam Christus aliud explicaret, nemo unquam extitit, qui vel suspicari auderet, tale quid illo comprehendi.*

to this opinion, several quotations are often taken from Jewish writers, since our Saviour's time, who either speak doubtfully of this matter, or give occasion to think that they did not understand those scriptures which establish the doctrine of the resurrection in the Old Testament, as having any reference to it.

Therefore it may not be amiss for us to enquire; what were the sentiments of some of the Jews about this matter? Every one knows that there was one *sect* amongst them, namely, the Sadducees, who distinguished themselves from others by denying it: And Josephus gives the largest account of any one, concerning another *sect*, to wit, the Essens, who affected to lead a recluse life, in their respective colleges, and were governed by laws peculiar to themselves: Among other things which he relates concerning their conduct and sentiments, he says, that it was an opinion established among them, that the bodies of men were corruptible, and the matter of which they were compounded, not perpetual; though the soul remained for ever: And then he represents them as speaking, according to the Pythagorean and Platonick way, concerning the body's being the prison of the soul, and its remaining when released from it, and of the soul's dwelling in a pleasant place, and enjoying many things that tend to make it happy, &c. \*. Nevertheless, his account of them is so short, and the expression on which the whole stress of this supposition is founded, a little ambiguous, namely, that the bodies of men are corruptible, and their matter not perpetual, which may be understood as agreeing with the common faith concerning man's mortality, and the body's turning to corruption, and not remaining in the same state in which it was; that it seems to leave the matter doubtful, whether they asserted or denied the resurrection. It is also supposed, that Philo denied this doctrine from several passages observed in his writings, which a late learned writer takes notice of †; but this is only the opinion of a single person, who, according to his general character, seems to be halting between two opinions, to wit, the doctrine of Moses, and the philosophy of Plato; and therefore I take his sentiments, about this, to be nothing else but an affection of thinking or speaking agreeably to the Platonic philosophy, which had probably given such a tincture to his notions, that he might deny the resurrection. And if the Essens, before-mentioned, should be allowed to have denied it, they received it from their attachment to the same, or, at least, the Pythagorean philosophy: But we cannot from hence conclude that the doctrine of the resurrection was denied by the main body of the Jews, or the greatest part

\* Vid. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. Lib. ii. Cap. vii. Καὶ γὰρ ἠρῶσι παρ αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἡ δόξα φθάρη μὲν ἔστι τὰ σωματῆα, καὶ τὴν ὑλὴν ὡ μόνον αὐτοῦ, &c.

† See Dr. Hody on the resurrection, &c. Page 56—59.

of them ; or by any, excepting those who were led out of the way, by the writings of the philosophers : Which gave occasion to the apostle Paul to warn the church to *beware of philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*, Col. ii. 8. as foreseeing that some of them, in after-ages, would, in many respects, corrupt the doctrines of the gospel, by accommodating them to, or explaining them by what they found in the writings of the Heathen philosophers, as Origen, Justin Martyr, and some others did ; and he seems to take the hint from what had been before observed relating to the corruption of the Jewish *faith*, by those who were attached to them. Thus concerning the opinion of those Jews, who are supposed to deny the doctrine of the resurrection.

On the other hand, there are several Rabbinical writers, who sufficiently intimate their belief of this doctrine ; though it is true, some of them infer it from such premises, as discover great weakness in their method of reasoning. Thus the learned bishop Pearson observes, that they produce several places out of Moses's writings, which when the resurrection is believed, may, in some kind, serve to illustrate it, but can, in no degree, be thought to reveal so great a mystery \*. And Dr. Lightfoot produces other proofs, which they bring for this doctrine, as little to the purpose †, of which all the use that can be made is, that we may from hence observe, that they believed the doctrine we are maintaining, to be contained in scripture. Whether they were able to defend it by shewing the force of those arguments on which it is founded therein or no,

\* See Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Artic. 11. who observes, from their writings, that because, in the formation of man, mentioned in Gen. ii. 7. Moses uses the word *וַיַּצְרֵם*, and in the formation of beasts, verse 19. the word *וַיַּצֵּר*, the former having two jods, the latter but one : Therefore the beasts are made but once, but man twice ; to wit, once in his generation, and the second time in his resurrection. And they strangely apprehend a proof of the resurrection to be contained in the malediction, Gen. iii. 19. Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return, *q. d.* thou art now dust while thou livest ; and, after death, thou shalt return unto this dust, that is, thou shalt live again, as thou, dost now : And those words in Exod. xv. 1. then sang Moses and the children of Israel ; they render he shall sing, *viz.* after the resurrection in the life to come, and from thence infer this doctrine, which could afford but very small satisfaction to the Sadducees, while they omitted to insist on other pregnant proofs thereof.

† See Vol. II. Heb. and Talmud. Exercit. on John iv. 25. wherein he says, that they pretend to prove it from Deut. xxxi. 16. where God says to Moses, Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and rise again ; which is an addition to, as well as a perversion of the text ; which says, the people shall rise up and go a whoring, &c. and Page 541, and 787. he represents them as proving it from Josh. viii. 30. where it is said, that Joshua built an altar unto the Lord ; which they translate, he shall build an altar ; supposing this to be after the resurrection : And from Psal. lxxxiv. 4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee, they suppose is meant of their praising God after the resurrection. See many other absurd methods of reasoning to the same purpose, referred to by him in the same place.

is not much to our present purpose, my design in referring to their writings being to prove that this doctrine was embraced by the Jews, in the ages before, as well as since our Saviour's time. It is true, the Talmud, and other writings, which are generally quoted for the proof of it, are of later date, and the most ancient of the Chaldee paraphrases now extant, is supposed to have been written about that time, or, at least, but little before it: And there are no uninspired writings, relating to the Jewish affairs, more ancient, except those which we generally call Apocryphal; which most suppose to have been written about 150 years before the Christian *Æra*. And it is very evident, that about that time the doctrine of the resurrection was believed by the Jewish church; as the author of the book of Maccabees, in the history of the martyrdom of the seven brethren in the reign of Antiochus \*, represents some of them in the agonies of death, as expressing the firm belief they had of a resurrection to eternal life; their mother, in the mean while, encouraging them from the same consideration. These, as it is more than probable, the apostle includes in the number of those noble Old Testament worthies who were *tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection*, Heb. xi. 35. which is an undeniable evidence that the church at that time believed the doctrine of the resurrection.

All that I shall add under this head is, that how weak soever the reasoning of some Jewish writers, concerning this subject, has been, there are others who give substantial proofs from the Old Testament; which not only argues that they believed it, but that their belief proceeded from a just conviction of the truth thereof. And they give the same sense of some of those scriptures which are generally produced for the proof hereof, as we do †.

The first scripture that we shall take notice of, is what contains the *vision* mentioned in Ezek. xxxvii. 1, & seq. concerning the *valley which was full of bones, which were very dry*: Upon which occasion God says, *Son of man, Can these bones*

\* Macab. vii. 9, 11, 14, 23, 29.

† Thus Josephus Jacchiades, referred to by Witsius in *Symb. Exercit. xxvi. § 41.* in explaining that famous text in Daniel xii. 2. says, *Et tunc fiet miraculum resurrectionis mortuorum: Nam multi dormientium in terra pulverulenta exspersicentur, hi ad vitam eternam, qui sunt sancti; illi vero ad opprobria & detestationem eternam; qui sunt impii. Quorum resurrectionis causa est, ut impii fateantur palam, eam fulem esse fulem, & eos qui ipsis fidem habuerint, persecutos fuisse vanitatem atque evanuisse, ipsique agnoscant suos majores falsitatem possedisse. And Menasseh Ben Israel, de Resurr. mort. Lib. ii. Cap. viii. proves it from the same scripture. More to the same purpose may be seen in Dr. Hody on the resurrection, Page 72. & seq. who quotes several of the Talmudical writers, as signifying their belief of this doctrine; and especially Pocock in Maimon. Part. Mos. Cap. vi. who produces a multitude of quotations to the same purpose; in which some assert this doctrine without proof, others establish it by solid arguments, and some mix a great many absurd notions with it, which we shall, at present, pass over.*

live? to which he replies, *O Lord God, thou knowest.* And afterwards we read of God's *laying sinews, and bringing up flesh upon them, covering them with skin, and putting breath into them*; and their being hereupon restored to life. I am sensible that they who are on the other side of the question, pretend that this is no proof of a resurrection; because the design thereof was to illustrate and make way for the prediction mentioned in the following verses, concerning the deliverance of God's people from the Babylonish captivity: But that which seems to have its weight with me is, that God would never have made use of a similitude to lead them into this doctrine, taken from a thing which they had no manner of idea of: But if we suppose that they believed that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, agreeable to the literal sense of the words here made use of to illustrate it, then the argument taken from thence is plain and easy, *q. d.* as certainly as you have ground to believe that the dead shall be raised at the last day (which though it could not be brought about by any natural means, yet it shall be effected by the power of God;) so your deliverance, how unlikely soever it may appear to those who look no farther than second causes, shall come to pass by God's extraordinary power and providence, which will be as life from the dead.

And whereas it is farther objected, that when God asked the prophet, whether *these dry bones could live?* He seems to be in doubt about it; which argues that he had no idea of the resurrection of the dead. To this it may be replied, that his doubt respected an event that should immediately ensue; he knew that God could put life into these bones; but whether he would do it now or no, he could not tell: Therefore it does not contain any disbelief of the doctrine of the resurrection at the last day; and, indeed, this scripture, how little soever it may seem to some to make for the doctrine we are maintaining, is alleged by others, as an undeniable proof of it. Tertullian expressly says, that this would have been a very insignificant vision, if this doctrine were not true\*. And Jerome speaks to the same purpose, supposing that God would never illustrate any truth which they were in doubt of, by a similitude taken from an incredible fiction †. And Menasseh Ben Israel, a learned Jew, supposes this text to be an express and infallible proof of the resurrection; which plainly argues that he thought the Jews, in former ages, were convinced of this doctrine thereby ‡.

\* *Vid. Tertull. de Resurrect. Carn. Cap. xxx. Non posset de ossibus figura componi, si non id ipsum, & ossibus eventurum esset.*

† *Vid. Hieron. in Ezek. xxxvii. Nunquam poneretur similitudo resurrectionis, ad restitutionem Israelitici populi significandam, nisi staret ipsa resurrectio, & futura crederetur; quia nemo de rebus non extantibus incerta confirmat.*

‡ *Vid. Menasseh Ben Isr. Lib. 1. de Resurrect. Cap. ii. § 4. Hic textus expressus est, & infallibilis quo sine omni dubio resurrectio probatur.*

But supposing this scripture be not reckoned sufficient to evince the truth of this doctrine, there is another which has more weight in it, viz. that in Job xix. 25—27. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.* Job, as is generally supposed, lived in Moses' time; therefore, if it can be made appear that he professes his faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, we may conclude that the church was acquainted with it in the early ages thereof; and nothing seems more evident, from the plain sense of the words, than that he here professes his faith in, and encourages himself from the hope of future blessedness, both in soul and body, at Christ's second coming in the last day.

It is with a great deal of difficulty that they who deny this doctrine, are obliged to account for the sense of this text, so as to evade the force of the argument taken from thence to prove it. These suppose that Job intends nothing hereby but a firm persuasion which he had, that he should be recovered from that state of misery in which he then was, which not only affected his mind, but his body, as it was *smitten with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown*, Job ii. 7. *his flesh being clothed with worms*, and *his skin broken and become loathsome*, chap. vii. 5. and accordingly he says, *I shall be redeemed from this affliction, and brought into a happy state before I die; and so they suppose that the words are to be taken in a metaphorical sense; and therefore do not prove the doctrine of the resurrection.* But this will appear to be a very great perversion of the sense of this text, if we consider,

1. In how solemn a manner he brings it in, in the verses immediately foregoing. *Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!* Which seems to import that he had something to communicate, that was of far greater moment than the account of his deliverance from the afflictions he was under in this world. Therefore it seems more agreeable to understand the sense of the words, as denoting that great and important truth, in which all believers are concerned, relating to Christ's second coming, and the happiness that his saints shall then enjoy in soul and body; this deserves to be writ with a pen of iron, that it may be transmitted to all generations. But,

2. It is evident that he is here speaking of something that should be done, not whilst he lived, but in the end of time; for he considers his Redeemer, as *standing in the latter day upon the earth.* The person whom he here speaks of as his Redeem-

er, is, doubtless, our Saviour, who is frequently described, both in the Old and New-Testament, under that character: And, if at any time God the Father is called the Redeemer of his people, it may farther be observed that he is never said in redeeming them to make himself visible to their bodily eyes, or to stand upon the earth, much less to do this in the latter or last day, in which Christ is said to come again in a visible manner, to raise the dead and judge the world: And this Job intends when he says, *In my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*

3. It is evident also that he intends hereby something that should befall him after his death, and not barely a deliverance from his present misery in this world; for he speaks of his *skin* or body as devoured by *worms*, and *his reins consumed within him*; which can intend no other than a state of corruption in death.

4. It does not appear that Job had any intimation concerning the change of his condition in this world, before God turned his captivity, having first made him sensible of his error, in *uttering that which he understood not*, when he testified his reconciliation to his friends, notwithstanding the injuries he had received from them, by *praying for them*, chap. xlii. 3, 10. And, indeed, he was so far from expecting happiness in this life, that he says, *Mine eye shall no more see good*, viz. in this world, chap. vii. 7. and hereupon he takes occasion to meditate on his own mortality in the following words; *The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more; thine eyes are upon me, and I am not*: And after this he prays, *O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave*, chap. xiv. 13. &c. And immediately before he speaks of his Redeemer as living, and the deliverance which he should obtain in the latter day, in the text under our present consideration, he earnestly desires the compassion of his friends: *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me*; which does not well agree with the least expectation of a state of happiness in this world; in which case he would not need their pity; he might only have convinced them of the truth thereof, and it would have given a turn to their behaviour towards him; for we find, that, when God blessed his latter end more than his beginning, every one was as ready to comfort him concerning the evil that the Lord had brought upon him, and shew their very great respect to him, by offering him presents, as any were before to reproach him. Therefore upon the whole, it is very evident that Job is not speaking concerning his deliverance from his present evils in this world, but of a perfect deliverance from all evil in the great day of the resurrection: Accordingly we must conclude, that the doctrine of the resur-



rection is plainly asserted in this scripture ; and indeed, Jerome says, that no one who wrote after Christ has more plainly maintained the doctrine of the resurrection than Job does in this scripture, who lived before him \*.

There is another scripture, by which, if I do not mistake the sense thereof, Job appears to have had a steady faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, and was firmly persuaded concerning his happiness, when raised from the dead, namely, in chap. xiv. 13, 14, 15. in which he says, *O! that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret until thy wrath be past*; that is, till a full end is put to all the afflictive providences which men are liable to in this present world, namely, till the day of Christ's second coming; or, *that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me*; namely, that thou wouldst deliver me from the evils which I now endure. As to the former of these expedients, to wit, his deliverance by death, that he counts a blessing, because he takes it for granted that *if a man die he shall live again*, ver. 14. † and therefore says, *all the days of my appointed time*, that is, not of the appointed time of life, but the time appointed that he should lie in the grave, in which he desired that God would hide him; there, says he, *I shall wait, or remain, till my change come*, that is, till I am changed from a state of mortality to that of life. And he goes on in the following words, *Thou shalt call*, that is, by thy power thou shalt raise me, *and I will answer thee*, or come forth out of my grave; and hereby thou wilt make it known that thou hast a desire to the work of thine hands.

If it be objected to this sense of the words, that Job says, ver. 12. *that man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep*; therefore he is so far from expecting relief from his misery in the resurrection, that he seems plainly to deny it. To this I answer, that he doth not deny the doctrine of the resurrection in those words wherein he says that they *shall not be raised from the dead, till the heavens be no more*; which seems to intimate that he concluded that the dead should rise when the frame of nature was changed, as it will be, at the last day, in which the heavens shall be no more. I confess this sense is not commonly given of these verses, nor any argument drawn from them to prove a resurrection from the dead; therefore I would not be too tenacious of mine own sense thereof; but I cannot but think it more probable than the common sense that is given

\* Vid. Hieron. Epist. 61. ad Pammach. de error. Joh. Hieros. Quid hac prophetia manifestius? Nullus tam aperte post Christum, quam iste ante Christum de resurrectione loquitur.

† The words are put in the form of an interrogation, which sometimes argues a strong negation, but not always, since here it seems to imply a concession that he should live again.

of the words, and if so, it may be considered as a proof of the doctrine that we are maintaining.

There is another scripture which plainly proves the doctrine of the resurrection, namely, Dan. xii. 2. *Many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* This scripture is brought by several Rabbinical writers, as a proof of this doctrine; and the words are so express, that it will be very difficult to evade the force of them; though, it is true, some modern writers, who are ready to conclude that the Old Testament is silent as to the doctrine of the resurrection, take the words in a metaphorical sense, for the deliverance of the church from those grievous persecutions which they were under in the reign of Antiochus; and so *sleeping in the dust* is taken, by them, for lying in the holes and caves of the earth, the Jews being forced to seek protection there from the fury of the tyrant: But this cannot be properly called *sleeping in the dust of the earth*; and their deliverance from this persecution is not consistent with the contempt that should be cast on some that were raised out of the dust; nor could the happiness that others enjoyed in this deliverance, be called *everlasting life*, it being only a temporal salvation, that according to them, is here spoken of; and it must be a straining the metaphor to a great degree, to apply the following words to their wise men and teachers, after this deliverance, that they should *shine as the brightness of the firmament*; therefore this sense has such difficulties attending it, that every person who is not prepossessed with prejudice must give into the literal sense of the text; and confess that it is an argument to prove the doctrine of the resurrection.

The only difficulty that is pretended to be involved in this sense of the text is its being said, *Many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake*; whereas the doctrine that we are defending, is that of an universal resurrection. But since we shall have occasion to speak to that under a following head, we shall rather choose to refer it to its proper place, in which, according to our designed method, we are to consider that all who have lived from the beginning to the end of time, shall be raised.

There are other scriptures in the Old Testament that might be brought to prove this doctrine, such as that in Deut. xxxii. 39. in which God says, *I kill, and I make alive*; and that parallel text, in which the same thing is confessed, and farther explained, by Hannah, in her song, in 1 Sam. ii. 6. *The Lord killeth and maketh alive, he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.* I know that death and life are sometimes taken for good and evil; but why should deliverance from the miseries of this present life be represented by the metaphor of a resurrection, and this attributed to the almighty power of God,

if the doctrine of the resurrection was reckoned by the church at that time, no other than a fiction or chimera, as it must be supposed to be if they had no idea of it, as not having received it by divine revelation ?

We might, as a farther proof of this doctrine, consider those three instances that we have in the Old Testament of persons raised from the dead, namely, the Shunamite's child, by the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 35. and the man who was cast into his sepulchre, that *revived and stood on his feet*, when he touched his *bones*, chap. xiii. 21. and the widow of Zarephath's son, by the prophet Elijah, on which occasion it is said, *He cried to the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee let this child's soul come into him again*; and accordingly the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived, 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22. From hence we must conclude, that this doctrine was not unknown to the prophet; for if it had, he could not have directed his prayer to God in faith. And these instances of a resurrection of particular persons could not but give occasion to the church at that time, to believe the possibility of a resurrection at the last day; so that it might as reasonably be expected that God will exert his power by raising the dead then, as that he would do it at this time, unless there was something in this possible event contrary to his moral perfections; but the resurrection appeared to them as it doth to all who consider him as the governor of the world, and as distributing rewards and punishments to every one according to their works, as not only agreeable to these perfections, but, in some respects, necessary for the illustration thereof. Therefore we must conclude, that as they had particular instances of a resurrection, which argued the general resurrection possible, they might easily believe that it should be future; which is the doctrine that we are maintaining.

To this we may add, that the patriarch Abraham believed the doctrine of the resurrection; therefore he had it some way or other revealed to him, before the word of God was committed to writing. This appears from what the apostle says when speaking concerning his offering Isaac, that *he accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead*, Heb. xi. 19. From hence it is evident that he was verily persuaded when he bound him to the altar, and lifted up his hand to slay him, that God would suffer him to do it, otherwise it had been no trial of his faith, so that his being prevented from laying his hand on him was an unexpected providence. Now how could he solve the difficulty that would necessarily ensue hereupon; had he expected that God would give him another seed instead of Isaac, that would not have been an accomplishment of the promise which was given to him, namely, that in Isaac his seed

should be called ; therefore the only thing that he depended on, was, that when he had offered him, God would raise him from the dead, and by this means fulfil the promise that was made to him concerning the numerous seed that should descend from him ; therefore it cannot be supposed that Abraham was a stranger to the doctrine of the resurrection.

There are other scriptures by which it appears that the doctrine of the resurrection was revealed to the church under the Old Testament dispensation, either from the sense of the words themselves, or the explication thereof in the New, which refers to them : thus it is said in Psal. xvi. 10. *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption ;* which the apostle Peter quotes to prove the resurrection of Christ, in Acts ii. 24—27. If David therefore knew that the Messiah should be raised from the dead (which, as will be considered under a following head, is a glorious proof of the doctrine of the resurrection of the saints) we cannot suppose that he was a stranger to this doctrine himself.

Again, it is said in Isa. xxv. 8. *He will swallow up death in victory ;* and this is mentioned immediately after a prediction of the glorious provision, which God would make for his people under the gospel-dispensation, which is called, by a metaphorical way of speaking, ver. 6. *A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined ;* and of the gospel's being preached to the Gentiles, ver. 7. which is expressed by his *destroying the face of covering, and the veil that was spread over all nations :* therefore it may well be supposed to contain a prediction of something consequent thereupon, namely, the general resurrection : and there is another scripture to the same purpose, viz. Hos. xiii. 14. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave ; I will redeem them from death : O death, I will be thy plague ; O grave, I will be thy destruction ;* and both these scriptures are referred to by the apostle, as what shall be fulfilled in the resurrection of the dead ; when he says, *Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory : O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?* 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. Therefore we cannot but think that the prophets, and the church in their day, understood the words in the same sense.

There is another scripture in the Old Testament, in which the premises are laid down, from whence the conclusion is drawn in the New for the proof of this doctrine, namely, when God revealed himself to Moses, Exod. iii. 6. which our Saviour refers to, and proves the doctrine of the resurrection from, against the Sadducees, *Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of*

*Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, Luke xx. 37, 38.* which argument was so convincing, that certain of the Scribes, said, in the following words, *Master, thou hast well said; and after that, they, that is, the Sadducees, durst not ask him any question at all;* so that it silenced, if it did not convince them.

There are some, indeed, who, though they conclude that it is a very strong proof of the immortality of the soul, which the Sadducees denied, since that which does not exist cannot be the subject of a promise; yet, they cannot see how the resurrection can be proved from it; whereas it is brought, by our Saviour, for that purpose: therefore, that the force of this argument may appear, we must consider what is the import of the promise contained in this covenant, that God would be the *God of Abraham*; which is explained elsewhere, when he told him, *I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward, Gen. xv. 1.* He was therefore given hereby to expect, at the hand of God, all the spiritual and saving blessings of the covenant of grace; but these blessings respect not only the soul, but the body; and as they are extended to both worlds, it is an evident proof of the happiness of the saints in their bodies in a future state, and consequently that they shall be raised from the dead. This leads us,

2. To consider those arguments to prove the doctrine of the resurrection which are contained in the New Testament, in which it is more fully and expressly revealed than in any part of scripture. Here we may first take notice of those particular instances in which our Saviour raised persons from the dead in a miraculous way, as the prophets Elijah and Elisha did under the Old Testament dispensation, as was before observed. Thus he raised Jairus's *daughter*, whom he found dead in the house, Matt. ix. 25. and another, to wit, the *widow's son at Nain*, when they were carrying him to the grave; which was done in the presence of a great multitude, Luke vii. 11, 14, 15. and there was another instance hereof in his raising Lazarus from the dead, John xi. 43, 44. which he did in a very solemn and public manner, after he had been dead four days, his body being then corrupted and laid in the grave, from whence Christ calls him, and he immediately revived and came forth. These instances of the resurrection of particular persons tended to put the doctrine of the general resurrection out of all manner of doubt; and, indeed, it was, at this time, hardly questioned by any, excepting the Sadducees: therefore before Christ raised Lazarus, when he only told his sister Martha that he *should rise again*, she, not then understanding that he designed immediately to raise him from the dead, expresses her faith in the doctrine of the general resurrection; *I know that he shall*

rise again in the resurrection at the last day, John xi. 24. upon which occasion our Saviour replies, *I am the resurrection and the life*, ver. 25. denoting that this work was to be performed by him.

Moreover, this doctrine was asserted and maintained by the apostles, after Christ had given the greatest proof hereof in his own resurrection from the dead: thus it is said, that *they preached through Jesus, the resurrection from the dead*, Acts iv. 2. And the apostle Paul standing before Felix, and confessing his belief of all things which are written in the law and the prophets, immediately adds, that he had *hope towards God, which they themselves also allow*; that is, the main body of the Jewish nation; *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.*

And he not only asserts but proves it with very great strength of reasoning, in 1 Cor. xv. and the argument he therein insists on, is taken from Christ's resurrection, ver. 13. *If there be no resurrection, then is Christ not risen*; which is a doctrine that could not be denied by any that embraced the Christian religion, as being the very foundation thereof; but if any one should entertain the least doubt about it, he adds, ver. 17. *If Christ be not raised from the dead, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins*; that is, your hope of justification hereby is ungrounded, and they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished; but this none of you will affirm; therefore you must conclude that he is risen from the dead: and if it be enquired, how does this argument prove the general resurrection, that he farther insists on from ver. 20. *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept?* Christ's resurrection removes all the difficulties that might afford the least matter of doubt concerning the possibility of the resurrection of the dead; and his being raised as the *first-fruits of them that slept*, or, as the head of all the elect, who are said to have communion with him in his resurrection, or to be *risen with him*, Col. iii. 1. renders the doctrine of the resurrection of all his saints, undeniably certain. As the first-fruits are a part and pledge of the harvest, so Christ's resurrection is a pledge and earnest of the resurrection of his people. Thus the apostle says elsewhere, *If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies*, Rom. viii. 11. And our Saviour, when he was discoursing with his disciples concerning his death, and resurrection that would ensue thereupon, tells them, that though after this he should be separated for a time from them, and *the world should see him no more*, yet that *they should see him again*; and assigns this as a reason, *because I live ye shall live also*, John xiv. 19. q. d. *because I*

shall be raised from the dead, and live for ever in heaven; you, who are my favourites, friends, and followers, shall be also raised and live with me there; so that the resurrection of believers is plainly evinced from Christ's resurrection.

I might produce many other scriptures out of the New Testament, in which this doctrine is maintained; but we shall proceed to consider what proofs may be deduced from scripture-consequences. And it may here be observed, that our Lord Jesus Christ, has by his death and resurrection, as the consequence thereof, purchased an universal dominion over, or a right to dispose of his subjects in such a way as will be most conducive to his own glory and their advantage. Thus the apostle speaks of him as *dying, rising, and reviving, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*; and infers from thence, that *whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*, Rom. xiv. 8, 9. And his being Lord over the dead is expressed in other terms, by his *having the keys of hell and death*; and this is assigned as the consequence of his *being alive* after his death, or of his resurrection from the dead, Rev. i. 18. Therefore he has a power, as Mediator, to raise the dead. And to this we may also add, that this is what he has engaged to do, as much as he did to redeem the souls of his people. When believers are said to be given to him, or purchased by him, it is the whole man that is included therein; and accordingly he purchased the bodies as well as the souls of his people, as may be argued from our obligation hereupon, to *glorify him in our bodies* as well as *in our spirits which are God's*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And they are both under his care; he has undertaken that their bodies shall not be lost in the grave; which is very emphatically expressed, when he is represented as saying, this is *the will of the Father which hath sent me*, John vi. 39, 40. or, contained in the commission that I received from him, when he invested me with the office of Mediator; *that of all which he had given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day*. What should be the reason that he here speaks of things rather than persons, if he had not a peculiar regard to the bodies of believers? which, as they are the subjects of his power when raised from the dead; so they are the objects of his care, and therefore he will raise them up at the last day.

We might farther consider Christ's dominion as extended to the wicked as well as the righteous. He is not, indeed, their federal head; but he is appointed to be their Judge; and therefore has a right to demand them to come forth out of their graves, to appear before his tribunal; though they are neither the objects of his special love, nor redeemed by his blood, nor the dutiful and obedient subjects of his kingdom; inasmuch as it is said, *God has appointed a day in which he will judge the*

world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead, Acts xvii. 31. And elsewhere it is said, that he was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead, chap. x. 42. Therefore we read, that he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, Matt. xxv. 31, 32. and of his determining the final estate, both of the righteous and the wicked, as it is expressed in the following verses; and this is described more particularly as being immediately after the universal resurrection; as it is said, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened,' Rev. xx. 12, 13. which, as will be observed under our next answer, respects his judging the world; and in order hereto it is farther said, that 'the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works.' And since Christ is represented as a judge, it is necessary that he should execute his vindictive justice against his enemies, and punish them as their sins deserve; but this respects not only the soul but the body; and therefore Christ that he may secure the glory of his justice, shall raise the bodies of sinners, that he may punish them according to their works; and therefore he is said to be the object of fear, in that he is able to destroy both soul and body in hell, Matt. x. 28.

Thus we have endeavoured to prove the doctrine of the resurrection by arguments taken from the Old and New Testament, and those scripture-consequences from which it may be plainly deduced: so that how much soever it may be thought a strange and incredible doctrine, by those who have no other light to guide them but that of nature; it will be generally believed by all whose faith is founded upon divine revelation, and who adore the infinite power and impartial justice of God, the Governor of the world: and, indeed, it is not attended with such difficulties arising from the nature of the thing, as many pretend, since we have several emblems in nature which seem to illustrate it; which are very elegantly represented by some of the Fathers, and especially by Tertullian; \* whom the learned and excellent bishop Pearson refers to and imitates in his style and mode of expression; † his words are these; "As the

\* *Vid. Minut. Fel. in Octav. § 33. Vide adeo quam in solatium nostri resurrectionem futuram omnia natura meditatatur Sol demergit, & nascitur; astra labuntur, & redeunt; flores occidunt, & reviviscunt; post senium arbuta frondescent semina non nisi corrupta reviviscunt; ita corpus in sepulchro ut arboris in hyberno occulant virorem ariditate mentita. Expectandum nobis etiam corporis ver est, &c.*

† *See his Exposition on the Creed, Artic. xi. and Tertull. de resur. Carn. cap. xii. Aspice nunc ad ipsa quoque; exemplum divine potestatis: dies moritur in noctem, & tenebris usquequaque; sepelitur. Funestatur mundi honor, omnis substantia deni-*



“ day dies into night, so doth the summer into winter : the sap  
 “ is said to descend into the root, and there it lies buried in  
 “ the ground. The earth is covered with snow, or crusted with  
 “ frost, and becomes a general sepulchre. When the spring ap-  
 “ peareth all begin to rise ; the plants and flowers peep out of  
 “ their graves, revive, and grow, and flourish ; this is the an-  
 “ nual resurrection. The corn by which we live, and for want  
 “ of which we perish with famine, is notwithstanding cast upon  
 “ the earth, and buried in the ground, with a design that it may  
 “ corrupt, and being corrupted, may revive and multiply ; our  
 “ bodies are fed with this constant experiment, and we conti-  
 “ nue this present life by succession of resurrections. Thus all  
 “ things are repaired by corrupting, are preserved by perish-  
 “ ing, and revive by dying ; and can we think that man, the  
 “ lord of all those things, which thus die and revive for him,  
 “ should be detained in death, as never to live again ? Is it  
 “ imaginable that God should thus restore all things to man,  
 “ and not restore man to himself ? If there were no other con-  
 “ sideration but of the principles of human nature, of the liber-  
 “ ty, and remunerability of human actions, and of the natural  
 “ revolutions and resurrections of other creatures, it were

*gratur. Sordent, silent, stupent cuncta ; ubiq ; justitium est, quies rerum. Ita lux amissa lugetur ; Et tamen rursus cum suo cultu, cum dote, cum sole, eadem Et integra Et tota universo orbi reviviscit, interficiens mortem suam noctem, rescindens sepulchram suam tenebras, heres sibiinet existens, donec Et nox reviviscat, cum suo Et illa suggestu. Redaccenduntur enim Et stellarum radii, quos matutina successio extinzerat. Reducuntur Et siderum absentia, quas temporalis distinctio exemerat. Redormantur Et specula lune que menstruus numerus adtriderat. Revolvuntur hyemes Et aestates, Et verna, Et autumnus, cum suis viribus, meribus, fructibus. Colippe etiam terra de celo disciplina est, arbores vestire post spolia, flores demps colorare, herbas rursus imponere, exhibere eadem que absumptu sunt semina ; nec prius exhibere quam absumpta : mira ratio : de fraudatrice servatrix : ut reddat, intercipit : ut custodiat, perdit : ut integret, vitiat : ut etiam amphit, prius decoquit. Siquidem uberiora Et cultiora restituit quam exterminavit. Revers foeners interit, Et injuria usura, Et lucro damno : semel dixerim universa conlitis recidiva est. Quodcumq ; conveneris, fuit : quodcumq ; amiseris, nihil non iterum est. Omnia in statum redeunt, quom adcesserint. Omnia incipiunt, quom desiderint. Ideo finiuntur, ut fiant. Nihil deperit, nisi in salutum. Totus igitur hic ordo revolvibilis rerum, testatio est resurrectionis mortuorum. Operibus eam prescripsit Deus ante, quom literis : viribus predicavit ante, quom vocibus. Premisit tibi naturam magistrat, submissurus Et quom facilius credas prophetiam, discipulus natura : quo statim admittis, quom audieris, quod ubiq ; jam videris : nec dubites Deum carnis etiam resuscitato-rem, quem omnium noris restituorem. Et utiq ; si omnia hominis resurgunt, cui procurata sunt porro non homini, nisi Et carni, quale est ut ipsa deperat ut totum, propter quam Et cui nihil deperit ? Et Vid. ejud. apologet cap. xlviij. in which he proves the resurrection of the body from the possibility of that being restored to a former being, with the same ease that it was made out of nothing ; and shews how God has impressed upon this world many testimonies of the resurrection ; and then he adds, Lux quotidie intersecta respundet, Et tenebre, pari vice decedendo succedunt, sidera defuncta coeescunt, tempora, ubi finiuntur, incipiunt, fructus consummantur, et redeunt. Certe semina non nisi corrupta et dissoluta foecundius surgunt, omnia pereundo servantur, omnia de interitu reformantur. Tu homo tantum nomen, si intelligas te, vel de titulo Publice discens, dominus omnium m. ventur et resurgentium, ut hoc morden ut percas ?*

“ abundantly sufficient to render the resurrection of our bodies “ highly probable.” We shall now consider,

V. Some objections that are generally brought against the doctrine of the resurrection. Some things, indeed, are objected against it, that are so vain and trifling, that they do not deserve an answer: as when the followers of Aristotle assert that it is impossible for a thing which is totally destroyed, to be restored to that condition in which it was before\*: And some have been so foolish as to think that those nations, who burnt their dead bodies, put an eternal bar in the way of their resurrection; since the particles being so changed and separated by fire as they are, can never return again to their former bodies; or they who have been swallowed up by the ocean, and the particles of which they consisted, dissolved by water; and every one of them separated from the other, can never be again restored to their former situation. Such-like objections as these, I say, do not deserve an answer; because they consider the resurrection as though it were to be brought about in such a way, as effects are produced by second causes, according to the common course of nature; without any regard to the almighty power of God, that can easily surmount all the difficulties which, they pretend, lie in the way of the resurrection.

And there are other objections, taken from a perverse sense, which they give of some texts of scripture, without considering the drift and design thereof, or what is added in some following words, which sufficiently overthrows the objection. Thus some produce that scripture in Eccles. iii. 19, 20, 21. where it is said, *That which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts. So that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, all go unto one place, and all are of the dust, and all turn to the dust again;* which we before mentioned as brought against the immortality of the soul; and it is also alleged against the resurrection of the body, by those who conclude that it shall be no more raised from the dead than the bodies of brute creatures. But this is rather a cavil or a sophism, than a just way of reasoning: inasmuch as the following words plainly intimate, that men and beasts are compared together only as to their mortality, not as to what respects their condition after death; and therefore it is no sufficient argument to overthrow the doctrine of the resurrection. These and such-like objections are so trifling, that we shall not insist on them: However, there are three or four that we shall lay down, and consider what answers may be given to them.

*Obj.* 1. It is objected against the doctrine of the resurrection, that though the power of God can do all things possible

\* *This is what they generally intend by that aphorism, a privatione ad habendum non datur regressus.*

to be done ; yet the raising the dead, at least, in some particular instances thereof, is impossible from the nature of the thing ; and therefore we may say, without any reflection cast on the divine Omnipotency, that God cannot raise them, at least, not so as that every one shall have his own body restored to him ; since there are some instances of Cannibals, or men-eaters, who devour one another, by which means the flesh of one man is turned into the flesh of the other. And in those instances which are more common, the bodies of men being turned into dust, produce food, like other parts of the earth, for brute creatures ; and accordingly some of those particles of which they consisted, are changed into the flesh of these creatures ; and these again are eaten by men ; so that the particles of one human body, after having undergone several changes, become a part of another ; therefore there cannot be a distinct resurrection of every one of those bodies that have lived in all the ages of the world.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, that it cannot be proved, that in those instances mentioned in the objection, that when one man preys upon another, or when brute creatures live upon that grass which was produced by the ground, which was made fertile by the bodies of men turned to corruption, and it may be, may have some of the particles thereof contained in them : It cannot, I say, be proved, that these particles of the bodies of men are turned into nourishment, and so become a part of human flesh ; since providence did not design this to be for food. If so, then it is not true in fact, that the particles of one human body become a part of another. But, suppose it were otherwise (to give the objection as much weight as possible) we may farther observe, that it is but a very small part of what is eaten, that is turned into flesh ; and therefore those particles of one human body, that by this means are supposed to pass into another, make up but a very inconsiderable part thereof. Therefore, if some few particles of one human body in the resurrection are restored again to that body to which they at first belonged, this will not overthrow the doctrine of the resurrection of the same body. If the body of man loses a few ounces of its weight, no one will suppose that it is not the same body. So when the bodies of men are raised from the dead, if the far greater part of the particles thereof are re-collected and united together, they may truly be said to constitute the same body ; this therefore does not overthrow the resurrection of the same body from the nature of the thing.

*Object. 2.* It is farther objected, especially against the possibility of the resurrection of the same body that was once alive in this world ; that the bodies of men, while they live, are subject to such alterations, that it can hardly be said that we are

the same when we are men as when we are children. The ex-  
 pence of those particles which were insensibly lost by perspi-  
 ration, and others being daily gained by nutrition, make such  
 an alteration in the contexture of the body, that, as some sup-  
 pose, in the space of about seven years, almost all the particles  
 of the body are changed, some lost and others regained. Now  
 if it be supposed that the same body we once had shall be rais-  
 ed, it is hard to determine ; whether those particles of which  
 it consisted when we were young, shall be gathered together  
 in the resurrection, or the particles of the emaciated or en-  
 feebled body, which was laid down in the grave.

*Ans.* We are obliged to take notice of such-like objections  
 as these, because they are often alleged in a cavilling way, a-  
 gainst the doctrine of the resurrection. The answer therefore  
 that I would give to this, is, that the more solid and substan-  
 tial parts of the body, such as the skin, bones, cartilages, veins,  
 arteries, nerves, fibres, that compose the muscles, with the li-  
 gaments and tendons, are not subject to this change that is  
 mentioned in the objection, by evaporation or perspiration ;  
 which more especially respects the fluids, and not the solids of  
 the body. These remain the same in men as they were in  
 children, excepting what respects their strength and size : And  
 if the body, as consisting of these and some other of the parti-  
 cles that it has lost, which the wisdom of God thinks fit to re-  
 collect, be gathered together in the resurrection ; we may truly  
 say, that the same body that once lived, notwithstanding the  
 change made in the fluids thereof, is raised from the dead.

*Obj.* 3. There is another objection which is sometimes  
 brought against the doctrine of the resurrection of the just, es-  
 pecially against their being raised with the same body they once  
 had, taken from the inconsistency hereof, with their living in  
 the other world, called heaven ; which is generally distinguish-  
 ed from the earth, as being a more pure subtil and ethereal re-  
 gion, therefore not fit to be an habitation for bodies compound-  
 ed of such gross matter as ours are, which are adapted to the  
 state and world in which they now live : Whereas, to suppose  
 them placed in heaven, is inconsistent with the nature of gravi-  
 ty ; so that we may as well conclude a body, which naturally  
 tends to the earth its centre, to be capable of living in the air,  
 at a distance from the surface of the earth, as we can, that it is  
 possible for such a body to live in heaven : Therefore they ar-  
 gue, that the bodies of men, at the resurrection must be chang-  
 ed, so as to become ethereal, which does, in effect, overthrow  
 the doctrine of the resurrection, as respecting, at least, the re-  
 storing the bodies of men to the same form which once they  
 had.

Moreover, this objection is farther improved by another sup-

position ; which gave the Socinians occasion to assert, that the same body shall not be raised ; namely, that if the bodies of men should be the same as they are now, they would be rendered incapable of that state of immortality which is in heaven. For by the same method of reasoning, by which, as has been before observed, they argue that man would have been liable to mortality, though he had not sinned, viz. that death was then 'the consequence of nature, inasmuch as the body was to be supported by food, breathe in proper air, and be fenced against those things that might tend to destroy the temperament thereof, or a dissolution would ensue, they conclude that we must not have such bodies as we now have, but ethereal. And to give countenance to this, they refer to the apostle's words in 1 Cor. xv. 50. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God* : And ver. 40. where he speaks of *celestial bodies* as distinguished from *terrestrial*, and of the body's being raised a *spiritual body*, ver. 44. And there is another scripture generally referred to, wherein our Saviour speaks of believers, in the resurrection, being *as the angels of God*, Matt. xxii. 30. which is to be understood, at least, as signifying that their motion will be no more hindered by the weight of the body, than the motion of an angel is ; therefore their bodies must be of another kind than what we suppose they shall be in the resurrection.

*Answ.* 1. As to what respects the inconsistency of bodies like ours, living in the upper world, as being contrary to the nature of gravitation : It may be answered, that according to the generally received opinion of modern philosophers, gravity arises from an external pressure made upon bodies which are said to be heavy or light, according to the force thereof ; and therefore those bodies that are in the upper regions, above the atmosphere, are equally adapted to ascend or descend ; which sufficiently answers that part of the objection. This a learned writer takes notice of\* : And if this be not acquiesced in, he advances another hypothesis ; which, because it has something of wit and spirit in it, I shall take leave to mention, though I must suspend my judgment concerning it, whether it be true or false. He says, perhaps, our heaven will be nothing else but an heaven upon earth ; and that it seems more natural to suppose that, since we have solid and material bodies, we shall be placed as we are in this life, in some solid and material orb ; and this he supposes agreeable to the apostle Peter's words, when he speaks of a *new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*, 2 Pet. iii. 13. From whence he concludes, that either this world shall be fitted to be the seat of the blessed, or some other that has a solid basis like unto it. And to give counte-

\* See *History on the resurrection*, &c. Pag. 205—208.

nance to this opinion, he refers to some ancient writers; and particularly tells us, that Maximus speaks of it as the opinion of many in his time; and Epiphanius brings in Methodius in the third century, as asserting the same thing.

2. As to what concerns that part of the objection, that bodies, like those we have now, are unmeet for the heavenly state, inasmuch as they cannot be supported without food and other conveniences of nature, which tend to the preservation of life in this world. To this it may be answered, that it is not necessary to suppose that the body shall be raised with such qualities as that it will stand in need of food, rest, or other conveniences of nature; which, at present, tend to the support of life: The apostle seems to assert the contrary, when he says, *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them*, 1 Cor. vi. 13. There is certainly a medium between asserting, with some, that we shall be raised with an ethereal body, in all respects unlike to that which we have at present; and maintaining, that we shall have such as are liable to the imperfections of this present state, and supported in the same way in which they now are.

As to what the apostle says concerning *flesh and blood not inheriting the kingdom of heaven*, he does not mean thereby that our bodies shall be so changed, that they shall in no respect consist of flesh and blood: And when he speaks of *celestial and spiritual* bodies, it is not necessary for us to suppose, that hereby he intends ærial or ethereal bodies. But this will be more particularly considered under a following head, when we speak of the circumstances in which the bodies of believers shall be raised from the dead. As for that other scripture, in which they are said to be *as the angels of God in heaven*, that respects their being immortal and incorruptible; or as the context seems to intimate, that they need not marriage, to perpetuate their generations, in that world: Therefore we have no occasion to strain the sense of the words, so as to suppose that our Saviour intends in his saying *they shall be as the angels*, that they shall cease to be like what they were when men on earth.

*Objec. 4.* The last objection which we shall mention, is taken from its not being agreeable to the goodness of God, extended to those who are made partakers of the resurrection to eternal life; inasmuch as it is a bringing them into a worse condition than the soul was in, when separate from the body. This objection is generally brought by those who give into that mode of speaking often used by Plato\* and his followers, that the

\* *Vid. Plat. in Cratyl, who brings in Socrates as gravely punning on the word σῆμα, q. d. σῆμα, sepulchrum; and supposing that this name, was given to denote that the soul suffers punishment for its faults, by being detained or shut up in prison.*

body in this world, is the prison of the soul, which at death, is set at liberty : therefore they suppose, that its being united to the body again, is no other than its being condemned to a second imprisonment, which is so far from being a favour conferred, that it rather seems to be a punishment inflicted. Others, with Celsus, reckon it a dishonour for the soul to be reunited to a body that is corrupted.\* And others speak of the body as being a great hindrance to the soul in its actings ; and frequently inclining it to the exercise of some of those passions that tend to make men uneasy, and thereby unhappy ; and that this may, some way or other, take place in a future state.

*Answ.* It is no great difficulty to answer this objection, in which there is not a due difference put between the present and future state of believers. The only thing which might give occasion to men to conclude that their souls are imprisoned in this world is, because they are abridged of that happiness which they shall be possessed of in another ; which the apostle calls *The glorious liberty of the children of God*, Rom. viii. 21. And as for the reproaches which some of the greatest enemies to Christianity have cast on this doctrine, these are not sufficient to beget the least dislike of it in the minds of serious and unprejudiced Christians. What though the body be turned to corruption ? It shall be raised incorruptible, and in glory ; and therefore shall be a palace fit to entertain its noble inhabitant : what though it has, in this world, offered many temptations to the soul to sin, by which it has been sometimes overcome and exposed to those passions that have defiled, and made it very uneasy ; is this to be objected against its being raised from the dead in such a state of perfection, that it shall never more contract any guilt, or render the soul unhappy, by any inconvenience arising from it ? But this will farther appear, when we speak of the condition in which the body shall be raised under a following head. We shall therefore proceed,

VI. To consider the resurrection of the dead as universal, including in it all who have lived, or shall live, from the beginning of time, till Christ's second coming, excepting those who shall be found alive ; on whom a change shall pass which is equivalent to a resurrection.

1. That all the dead shall be raised : this is expressly mentioned in that vision, *I saw the dead both small and great, standing before God ; and the books were opened ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were*

*And Seneca speaks to the same purpose : corpus hoc, animi pondus, & poena est, permanente illo urgetur, in vinculis est. Vid. Sen. Epist. 65.*

\* *Vid. Orig. in Loc. supra citat.*

in them; and they were judged every man according to their works, Rev. xx. 12, & seq. where the Judge is represented as demanding the bodies of men of all ranks, conditions, and ages, out of those places where they have been lodged, with a design to reward or punish them according to their works: therefore, if the justice of God is to be displayed in this solemn and awful transaction, and the bodies as well as the souls of men, are the subjects on which this judgment must pass; then it follows, that it will be universal: thus our Saviour says, *All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation*, John v. 28, 29. This is so evident a truth, founded on the divine perfections, as well as express words of scripture, that it is strange to find that any, who allow that the dead shall be raised, should deny the universality thereof.

However, we meet with several expressions in Rabbinical writers, which seem to speak of it as a peculiar privilege belonging to some, but not to all; and therefore they have a proverbial expression, that though the rain descends on the just and on the unjust, yet the resurrection of the dead belongs only to the just: \* and this they infer from the words of the prophet Daniel, in chap. xii. 2. *Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*; which words contain a difficulty which most have found it an hard matter to account for, agreeably to the sense of the prophet, who speaks, in the words immediately following, of the consequence hereof, as, *some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt*; whereby he divides the world into two parts, and considers one as happy, the other as miserable; therefore he must, doubtless, speak of an universal resurrection. But the great difficulty lies in these words; *Many of them that sleep in the dust shall arise*; from whence, some conclude that this expression contains an exception of others who shall not arise: thus some Jewish writers seem to have understood it; but I rather think, that the word *many*, there, imports nothing else but the *multitude*, q. d. the whole number of those that sleep shall awake. †

\* *Beneficium pluvie ad omnes spectare, resurrectionem mortuorum ad justos tantum.*

† The words are, רבים מֵאֲשֵׁר, *multi ex dormientibus*. Now it is certain that רבים, is often translated a multitude, or multitudes, and signifies the same with רוב, or the Greek word πλῆθος, as in Gen. xvii. 5. Psal. cix. 30. and in several other places. But the principal difficulty lies in the sense of the particle Mem, which is prefixed to the following word; and is generally supposed to be taken distributively; and accordingly the sense must be, *Many, that is, a great number, or part, taken out of them that sleep, shall awake*; though, I am apt to think, that the prefix Mem here, is not taken distributively; but denotes the following word to be in the Genitive case, as Lamed and Beth often do; and if so, the words may be rendered, *The multitude of them that sleep, shall awake*; thus is, the whole number of them that sleep shall



It is somewhat hard to determine what the Rabbinical writers intend when they seem to confine the resurrection to the Israelites; and some of them to exclude, not only the wicked from it, but those that had not addicted themselves to the study of the law, whom they call the *Gnam Haaretz*: thus they are represented in scripture as giving them but a very indifferent character, *The people that knoweth not the law are accursed*, John vii. 49. by this means they bring the number of those that shall be raised from the dead into a very narrow compass: nevertheless they speak of future rewards and punishments in another world; therefore some have thought, when they exclude all but the Israelites, and, of them, all but those who were in the greatest reputation amongst them, that they understand nothing else by the resurrection, but that which they fancied would happen in the days of the Messiah; in which, they suppose, that some of the Jews shall be raised from the dead before the general resurrection at the last day; and in this sense we may easily understand their exclusive account, when they speak of many that shall not be partakers of this privilege; and if it be extended to the resurrection at the last day, then I am apt to think, that they intend hereby a resurrection to eternal life, and so some understand that common proverb but now mentioned, concerning the rain's descending upon all; but the resurrection's belonging only to the just, in this sense; that though the rain descends upon the wilderness, and barren ground; yet it is only some places which are made fruitful thereby: accordingly, though the resurrection be universal, both of the righteous and wicked; yet the resurrection to eternal life belongs only to the just.\*

All that I shall observe at present is, that this is not altogether disagreeable to the scripture-mode of speaking; which, though in some places it asserts the resurrection of the whole world, in others, by the resurrection, we are to understand nothing else, but a resurrection to eternal life: thus the apostle Paul, when he speaks of his *attaining unto the resurrection of the dead*, Phil. iii. 11. intends hereby his obtaining a glorious resurrection. And our Saviour, when speaking concerning the

*awake; and so it is the same with what is mentioned by our Saviour in the text but now referred to; all that are in their graves shall come forth, and be disposed of in a different way, as he particularly expresses it; which contains the sense of the prophet's prediction in this place. There is a scripture, in which the word many plainly signifies πῶποδοι, the multitude, or all mankind: thus the apostle speaks, Rom. v. 15. of many, as being dead by the offence of one, and by one man's disobedience, many being made sinners; which none, who allow all the world to have fallen in Adam, will suppose to be taken in any other sense. See other instances of the like nature in Glas. Phil. Sacr. Lib. v. Tract. 1. Cap. xv.*

\* *Vid. Poc. Not. Misc. in Maimon. Part. Mos. Cap. vi. who treats largely on this subject, and gives an account of the opinions of several Rabbinical writers concerning this matter; which renders it needless for me to refer to particular places.*

happiness of the saints in another world, expresses it on this wise; that they shall be *counted worthy, or meet, to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead*, Luke xx. 35. so that whatever is said by Jewish writers, tending to limit the resurrection of the dead to eternal life, to some particular persons, it does not appear but that even they held, in other respects, a general resurrection, both of the just and unjust; which is as demonstrable as is the resurrection in general.

2. They who are found alive at Christ's second coming, shall undergo a change; which, though it cannot be called a resurrection, will be equivalent to it. The apostle Paul gives an account of this, as what was before unknown to the church; *Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump*, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. And elsewhere he speaks of them when thus changed, as *caught up in the clouds together with other saints, that are raised from the dead, to meet the Lord in the air*, 1 Thess. iv. 17. This is no less an effect of almighty power than a resurrection; for hereby their bodies, though never separated from their souls, are brought into the same state as the bodies of others shall be, when re-united to them, and thereby be rendered incorruptible and immortal, as the bodies of all other saints shall be, and made partakers of the same glory with which they are said to be raised. We have an emblem of this in Christ's transfiguration, when there was such a change made, for the present, on his body, that his face shined as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And there was not only a resemblance, but a kind of specimen hereof, in the translation of Enoch and Elijah, whose bodies were before this, liable to corruption, and all other infirmities that attend this present life, but were made, in a moment, celestial and glorious. And the body of our Saviour, though it was raised from the dead incorruptible and immortal, yet, during the space of forty days, while he continued on earth, it was not made so glorious as it was immediately after the cloud received him into heaven, when it underwent such a change as was agreeable to the place and state into which he then entered; even so the bodies of the saints, at last, shall, by this change, be made meet for heaven, and received, with other saints into it.

VII. We shall now consider the condition in which the body shall be raised. And,

1. Those circumstances of honour and glory which respect more especially the resurrection of the just: this the apostle mentions, and describes them as *raised in glory*, 1 Cor. xv. 43. It is the same body indeed, that is raised, which he illustrates by a *grain of wheat* springing up, and changed into a full-grown ear; which, though it be greatly improved, and very

much altered from what it was, when cast into the ground, yet *every seed*, as he observes, has *its own body*, ver. 38. From whence we may infer, that the same body shall be raised from the dead, though with very different qualities. There are several things mentioned by the apostle, in the account he gives of the bodies of the saints after the resurrection; which some have attempted to explain in such a way, as is hardly consistent with a resurrection of the same body. The Socinians generally maintain that the body shall be altogether new, as to its substance, as well as its qualities: and others speak of it as an aerial body; as supposing that the gross and heavy matter, of which it formerly consisted, is not adapted to an heavenly state, and would render it not altogether free from a liableness to corruption. This opinion a late writer mentions, as what was espoused by some of the Fathers, which he speaks very favourably of; and inasmuch as the apostle calls it *a spiritual body*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. and seems to distinguish it from *flesh and blood*, which *cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, ver. 50. he thinks that though the same flesh and blood may rise from the grave, it will then or afterwards, receive such a change, as will render it spiritual and incorruptible; and so, perhaps, when it comes to heaven, will not be flesh and blood; or, that it will clothed with such an heavenly body as will keep it from a possibility of corruption; and accordingly he supposes that the apostle is to be understood in this sense, that flesh and blood unchanged and unclothed with its heavenly body, cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and that this body with which it shall be invested, will be thin, aerial, spiritual, bright, and shining; and, in that respect, may be called celestial.\* The reason he assigns why *flesh and blood*, namely, such as is subject to corruption here, *cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, is, because the flesh may be cut and divided, and the blood let out, which would subject it to corruption; therefore it must be changed, and *put on incorruption*.

This account of the bodies of the just after the resurrection, seems, indeed, to be a medium between the two extremes, either of those who suppose that the body shall differ but little from what it was whilst here on earth, or of others, who conclude it to be nothing else but an aerial body; yet it contains several things taken for granted, without sufficient proof, which I cannot readily give into: nevertheless what he farther adds on this

\* Vid. Whitby in 1 Cor. xv. 44, 50. *If by the bright and shining body, which this author speaks of, he intends that it shall be invested with some rays of glory in the heavenly state, as many others suppose: this, I think, none will deny since it agrees well with what the apostle says concerning the body's being made like to Christ's glorious body, and also what the prophet Daniel says, chap. xii. 2. concerning their shining as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars; or, as our Saviour says, Matt. xiii. 43. They shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*

subject is undeniably true, *viz.* that the body, which before was subject to filth and deformity, is raised in glory and splendor, *shining like the sun*, Matt. xxiii. 43. That which was once *vile*, is *fashioned like Christ's glorious body*, Phil. iii. 21. and is freed from all defect or deformity in its members, and from any dishonourable parts. Not subject to weakness by labour, decays of age, to impotency and wasting by diseases; but nimble, strong, active, and that without reluctancy or molestation, grief, pain, or lassitude; it is raised a spiritual body, possessed and acted by the Holy Spirit; and advanced so far to the perfection of spirits, as to be free from grossness, ponderosity, from needing rest, sleep, or sustenance, and is fitted for a spiritual and celestial state in which our bodies shall wholly serve our spirits, and depend upon them, and therefore may be styled spiritual. If we stop here, without giving too much scope to our wit and fancy, in advancing things too high for us, and confess that we know not, or, at least, but a little of the affairs of an unseen world; or, as the apostle says, *what we shall be*, Phil. iii. 21. we say enough to give us an occasion to conclude that it is a glorious and desirable state, and the change wrought therein, such as fully answers our most raised expectations, and is agreeable to a state of perfect blessedness. Thus concerning the condition and circumstances in which the saints shall be raised.

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2. We shall now consider the circumstances in which the wicked shall be raised, namely, in dishonour; or, as the prophet Daniel expresses it, *to shame and everlasting contempt*. Some marks of dishonour shall, doubtless, be impressed on their bodies, in that they shall be raised with all those natural blemishes and deformities, which rendered them the object of contempt. That part which the body bore in tempting the soul

to sin, shall tend to its everlasting reproach; and when reunited to it, those habits of sin which were contracted, shall incurably remain, as well as the tormenting sense of guilt consequent hereupon, which exposes them to the wrath of God for ever; so that their resurrection, which renders them immortal, brings upon them endless misery. And it is said to be brought about by Christ, as an offended Judge, as the consequence whereof, they are summoned to his tribunal, who will render to every one according to his works. Which leads us to consider Christ as coming to judge the world; which is that solemn transaction that will immediately follow after the resurrection.

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**ANSW.** Immediately after the resurrection shall follow the general and final judgment of angels and men; the day and hour whereof no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord.

**O**UR Lord Jesus Christ having finished the work which he undertook to perform, in gathering in his elect, and bringing that grace which he wrought in them to perfection; the only thing then remaining to be done, will be his receiving them into his immediate presence, to behold his glory; and banishing others, for ever, from him, with marks of infamy and detestation. And, in order hereunto, he will raise the dead, and give a summons to the whole world of angels and men, to appear before his tribunal in that day in which he is appointed, by the Father, to judge the world in righteousness; which is the subject insisted on in this answer. In speaking to which, we shall

I. Prove that there shall be a day of judgment.

II. Consider the person, the character, and the solemnity of the appearing of the great Judge, to whom this work is committed.

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V. Some circumstances concerning the place where, and the time when this great and awful work shall be performed.

I. We are to prove that there shall be a day of judgment. This is as evident a truth as that there is a providence, or that God is the Governor of the world. Every intelligent creature, who is the subject of moral government, affords an argument for the proof of this doctrine. And accordingly we must con-

sider them as under a law which he has given, as that by which they are to be governed. From hence arises our obligation to duty, and being rendered accountable to the great Lawgiver, as to what concerns our obedience to, or violation of his law. And God is obliged, in honour, to make a scrutiny into, or take an account of our behaviour, that it may be known whether we have obeyed or rebelled against him. This is evident from the concern which the glory of his own perfections has herein; and the promises and threatnings annexed to his law, which he is obliged to fulfil or execute. From whence it follows, that God will display his glory as the Judge of the world.

This is plainly revealed in scripture; it was foretold in the early ages of the world, as contained in the epistle of Jude, in ver. 14, 15. *Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him:* which words, though they might have a peculiar relation to the judgment which God would execute in the destruction of the old world; yet it is plain by the application hereof made by the apostle, that it looks as far as the final judgment, which shall be in the end of time. And this likewise appears from what is said in Eccles. xii. 14. *that God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* There are, indeed, many displays of God's judicial hand in the present dispensations of his providence, as he is said to be *known by the judgment which he executeth*, Psal. ix. 16. The visible token of his regard to his saints in this world, as well as the public and dreadful display of his vengeance poured forth upon his enemies, proclaim his glory, as God, the Judge of all. But inasmuch as sin deserves greater punishments than what are inflicted here; and the promises which God has made for the encouragement of his people, give them occasion to look beyond the present scene of affairs; and especially since the divine dealings with men, as to what respects outward things, cannot so clearly be accounted for, while we behold the righteous oppressed, and many of the wicked having, as it were, more than heart could wish; this plainly argues, that there is a time coming when matters will be adjusted; and, as the Psalmist says, 'A man shall say,' or every one shall have occasion to say, 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth,' Psal. lviii. 11.

Moreover, this doctrine is not only revealed in scripture, but it is impressed on the consciences of men; which, though they never took so much pains to extinguish their apprehension or

dread thereof, it is impossible for them to do it. That secret remorse or terror which sinners feel within their own breasts, which makes them restless and uneasy, especially when they perceive themselves to stand on the confines of another world, is an undeniable argument that there is a future judgment. What was it that made Belshazzar's *countenance to change*? Why did his *thoughts trouble him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another*, when he saw the *hand-writing on the wall*, in the midst of all his mirth and jollity? Dan. v. 6. Was he afraid of the united forces of the Persians and Medes, who at that time invested the capital city in which he was? Did he know that he should be slain before the morning? That was most remote from his thoughts, as apprehending himself safe from any danger that might arise from that quarter. Was he afraid of punishment from men? His condition in the world set him above the dread of any such event. It was only the sense he had of a future judgment from God, that produced these effects in him. It was this that made the Heathen governor *tremble*, when the apostle *reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*, Acts xxiv. 25. And when he was disputing with the Athenians, though they mocked and treated what he said about the resurrection with ridicule; yet none of them had any thing to object against this doctrine that *God would judge the world in righteousness*, chap. xvii. 31.

It may be observed that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, as the result of a sentence passed on men after death, is so often mentioned by heathen-writers, that it is evident they either received by tradition, or understood it by the light of nature; though, when they enter into particular explanations thereof, we meet with little but what is fabulous and trifling. Some of them suppose the rewards and punishments to be in other bodies, agreeably to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, as before-mentioned. Others speak of fictitious lakes and rivers in the other world, where men are doomed to abide, at least, for some time; though they know nothing of the day of judgment, or the appearance of the whole world before Christ's tribunal; which is a matter of pure revelation \*.

*We often read in Heathen-writers, of Æacus, Minus and Rhadamanthus, appointed to pass a judgment on every one at death, fix them in their respective places of residence, and determine their rewards and punishments. These are generally supposed to have lived about Moses's time, and are commended for the exercise of justice, and making laws, some of which they are supposed to have received from heaven; and as the reward hereof, have the honour, of being judges of men at death, conferred upon them. Some have been ready to conclude that the account which the Heathen give of these three famous law-givers and judges, is nothing else but a corruption of a tradition which they had received concerning Moses, the great law-giver to the Israelites, set forth by different names, with several things fabulous added therunto. They who have a mind to see a very learned and critical disquisition on*

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II. We are now to consider the person, character, and solemnity of the appearing of the great Judge, to whom this work is more especially committed. This is a doctrine that can be known no other way than by divine revelation. The light of nature, indeed, discovers to us that God shall judge the world; but there is something more than this may be learned from scripture, as well as those circumstances of glory with which this work shall be performed. Accordingly we read,

1. That the person who is to perform this great work, is the Lord Jesus Christ; of whom it is said, he shall *judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom*, 2 Tim. iv. 1. And elsewhere, *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*; 2 Cor. v. 10. If we consider his glory as a divine person, he is fit to engage in it. For as he knoweth all things, he can judge the secrets of men, which no mere creature can do; and as he has all the other perfections of the divine nature, he can display and glorify them, in such a way as is necessary, in determining the final estate of men, and rewarding every one according to his work.

We may also observe, that this is a branch of his Mediatorial dignity, and contains in it a part of the execution of his Kingly office; it was contained in that commission which he received of the Father. Thus it is said, that *the Father judgeth no man*, John v. 22. that is, not in a visible manner, or by any delegated power, which he is invested with, 'but hath committed all judgment to the Son,' and, it is said, he has 'given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man,' ver. 27. And to this we may add, that it is a part of the work which was incumbent on him in the application of redemption, which cannot be said to be brought to the utmost perfection, till the day of judgment: Thus when he speaks concerning his 'coming in a cloud with power and great glory; then he bids his people 'lift up their heads, inasmuch as their redemption draweth nigh,' Luke xxi. 27, 28. We might also add to this, that it was very expedient that he should judge the world, since he was unjustly judged and condemned by the world; therefore the cause must have a second hearing, that his enemies, at whose bar he once stood, may be fully convinced, to their eternal confusion, that he was not the person they took him to be, that he did not deserve the treatment, and rude insults which he met with from them, when he stood

*this subject, may consult Huet Demonst. Evang. Prop. iv. § 9—13. And as for the variety of punishments which these judges inflicted, the lakes and rivers of fire to which they are condemned, see Plato's account thereof, translated by Eusebius, in Prep. Evang. Lib. xi. Cap. xxxvii. who thinks that some things mentioned by him, bear a resemblance to the punishment of sin, which we read of in scripture, which he supposes he received by tradition, from some that were acquainted with divine revelation, as he did many other things which he speaks of in his writings.*

at their tribunal. They asked him this question, 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed?' to which he replied, 'I am: And ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven,' Mark xiv. 61—64. wherein he applied to himself what the prophet Daniel said concerning him, Dan. vii. 13. and thereby intimated, that this would be the most visible and incontestible proof of his Mediatorial glory, with which he was invested, as the Son of man; upon which the high-priest rent his clothes, apprehending that he spake blasphemy; after which they all condemned him to be guilty of death. Therefore it is expedient that this visible proof of his Sonship and Mediatorial glory should be given, and that he should perform this great work, which was incumbent on him, as he gave them to expect. It is his 'coming with clouds, that every eye shall see;' that shall oblige 'them which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth,' who set themselves against him, 'to wail because of him,' Rev. i. 7.

It was also necessary that he should judge the world, that he might publicly vindicate his people, who have been judged and condemned by the world for his sake; and that his cause and interest, which has been trampled on by them, might be defended in the most public and glorious manner, which will afford an everlasting conviction, that he whom men despised, whose glory was set light by, whose gospel was rejected and persecuted, is a person worthy of universal honour and esteem. Thus concerning the person who is appointed to judge the world, and the character in which he shall do it: which leads us,

2. To consider the solemnity of his appearing, when engaging in it. The work being the most glorious that ever was performed since the world was created, and the honour redounding to Christ as the result thereof, being the last and highest degree of his state of exaltation; it cannot but be supposed that he will appear with those ensigns of majesty and regal dignity that become his character as the Judge of quick and dead: accordingly we have an account of his 'appearing in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels,' Luke ix. 26. *His own glory* respects the rays of his divinity shining forth; whereby it will appear, that he has a natural right to summon the whole world before him. This cannot but strike a terror into his enemies, and enhance the joy and triumph of his friends, and excite the adoration that is due to so glorious a person. His appearing in *his Father's glory*, denotes that this is the highest display of his Mediatorial dignity; the reward of his having perfectly fulfilled the commission given him by the Father, and fully answered the end for which he

became incarnate. And his appearing in the *glory of his holy angels*, implies the reverence and homage which they will pay to him, into whose hands they are given, as ministering spirits, to fulfil his pleasure, and who always rejoice in the advancement of his kingdom.

The angels shall not indeed be employed in raising the dead, for that is a work too great for finite power; but we read of their ministry as subservient to the glory of the solemnity, as consisting in their appearing with Christ as his retinue; so it is said, that he shall 'come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him,' Matt. xxv. 31. These, indeed make up his train; but do not convey to him the least branch of that glory or character he is invested with: but it is their honour to attend him, whose servants they are; their work is to praise and adore him, and to shew their readiness to fulfil his pleasure, without desiring to usurp the least branch of his glory.

The first thing they are represented as doing, is, their attending his coming with a shout, or the word of command first given forth by Christ, and transmitted by them to the whole world, whereby they shall be summoned to appear before him. This shall doubtless be attended with universal joy and triumph expressed by them. And whereas Christ is said to *come with the sound of a trumpet*, 1 Thess. iv. 16, this is either to be considered in allusion to the custom of calling the hosts together, which was by the sound of a trumpet, Num. x. 2. &c.\* or else we may understand it in a literal sense, for some sound like that of a trumpet, which shall be heard throughout the world, which shall have a tendency to excite the joy and triumph of the saints, and to strike terror into the wicked. And as this trumpet gives an alarm to all to appear before Christ's tribunal; the angels are represented as assisting in bringing them thither. It is by them that the saints *which remain alive, shall be caught up with others in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*, 1 Thess. iv. 17. and they are said to *gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to the other.*† And elsewhere, our Saviour, speaking of the *end of the world*, which he calls the *harvest*, represents the angels as *reapers*, Matt. xiii. 39. which he explains as denoting that *at the end of the world the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just*, ver. 49. which plainly intimates

\* See Vol. II. Quest. LVI.

† Matt. xxiv. 31. This is the most common sense of those words; and how far nearer they are supposed, by some, to be taken in a figurative sense, for the preaching of the gospel throughout the whole world, after the destruction of the Jewish state; which some have supposed, is principally intended by what is mentioned in the foregoing verses; yet most conclude that several things in this account of Christ's glorious appearance, are not without some allusion, at least to what shall be more eminently accomplished, when he shall come to judgment.

that they are to gather the elect together. And inasmuch as there must be a separation between them and the wicked, so that one shall be set at Christ's right hand, the other at his left; this, as it is more than probable, shall be done by the ministry of angels, chap. xxv. 32. And then the Judge is represented as *sitting on his throne*, ver. 31. this is called elsewhere a judgment-seat, agreeable to his character as a judge; and it is here styled his throne, as expressive of the majesty and royal dignity with which he shall perform this great work. Which leads us,

III. To consider the persons who are to be judged, things being thus prepared for it; and these are said to be angels and men, *i. e.* all who are summoned to appear before Christ's tribunal. Whether the holy angels are included in the number of those whom Christ will judge, it is not safe for us to pretend to determine, since scripture is silent as to this matter. That they are the subjects of moral government is evident, because they are intelligent creatures; and it follows from hence, that they are accountable to God for their behaviour as such. It is also certain, that they are employed by our Saviour, in *fulfilling his pleasure*; and pursuant thereto, they are *sent forth by him to minister to the heirs of salvation*, Heb. i. 14. and upon this account it may not be reckoned foreign to the work of the day, for Christ to give a public testimony to their faithfulness in the discharge of every work which has been committed to them; especially since the saints, who, in some respects, may be said to have been their charge and care, have received no small advantage from the good offices which they have performed for them by Christ's appointment: but more than this, I think, cannot be determined, with respect to their being judged by Christ. Therefore, many conclude, that, properly speaking, they are not included in the number of those that shall be judged by him; and that either because they are represented as attending him, when he comes to judgment; and are never spoken of as standing before his tribunal, as persons whose cause is to be tried by him; or because they are considered, as long before this confirmed in holiness and happiness, and as beholding the face of God in heaven; and consequently not to be dealt with as those who are to undergo a farther scrutiny, in order to their having, a new sentence passed upon them.

As to what respects the fallen angels, they are to be brought as criminals before Christ's tribunal, in order to his passing a righteous sentence upon them. Whether the charge of their apostacy from God, shall be again renewed, and hereby sin traced to the very first spring and fountain of it, we know not: but all the guilt that they have contracted since they were, by a former sentence, cast out of heaven, shall be laid to their

charge: all that they have done against the interest of God in the world, begun in the seduction of our first parents, and continued ever since, with all those methods of revenge and subtilty whereby they have opposed the kingdom of Christ in the world, and endeavoured to ruin his people, will be alleged against them, as well as the bold attempt they made on him in his own Person, whilst he was in a state of humiliation. Thus the fallen angels, though represented as cast down to hell, are yet said to be delivered into chains of darkness, and reserved unto judgment, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude, ver. 6. This they are, at present, apprehensive of, and are accordingly said to tremble, Jam. ii. 19. at the fore-thoughts of it: it may also be inferred from what they said to our Saviour, *Art thou come to torment us before the time*, Matt. viii. 29. and, as the result hereof, it is said, *that the devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone*, Rev. xx. 10. *i. e.* adjudged to endure a greater degree of torment in proportion to the increase of his guilt.

But that which is more particularly insisted on in scripture, in which we are immediately concerned, is what relates to men, as those who are to be judged by Christ. This is set forth in universal terms; the apostle says, *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 10. men of all ranks and conditions, *small and great*, Rev. xx. 12. *quick and dead* 2 Tim. iv. 1. *i. e.* those who died before, or shall be found alive at his coming, *the righteous and the wicked*, Eccl. iii. 17. and among these, not only them that have lived under the gospel-dispensation; but others, who have had no other light but that of nature; *As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law*, Rom. ii. 12. We have no account, indeed, in scripture, of their being adjudged to eternal life, for their doing, by nature, some things that are contained in the law; to suppose this, is to be wise above what is written; and, indeed, it seems contradictory to those scriptures which assert the necessity of faith in Christ to salvation; but these are generally described as suffering punishment proportioned to their works. Thus we read of the *men of Nineveh*, Matt. xii. 41. *the queen of the South*, ver. 42. *the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon*, chap. xi. 22. and those of Sodom and Gomorrah, ver. 24. as *appearing in judgment*, and exposed to a less degree of punishment than those that sinned against greater light; but there is not the least intimation given of their being discharged from condemnation. Our Saviour, indeed, speaks of the 'servant which knew his master's will, and prepared not himself to do according to it, who should be beaten with many stripes,' *i. e.* exposed to a greater condemnation: nevertheless, he, at the same time, intimates that *the*

*servant who did not know*, i. e. who sinned under greater disadvantages for want of gospel-revelation, even he *should be beaten with few stripes*; or adjudged to suffer a less degree of punishment.

The Pelagians, indeed, have endeavoured not only to exempt the Heathen from the consequences of this judgment; but some have insinuated as though they were not concerned in it at all: thus one \* supposes, that the persons who are represented as appearing at Christ's tribunal, Matt. xxv. and sentenced, by him, according to their works, are only those who made a profession of the Christian religion. And the principal argument that he brings to support this opinion is, because they, on whom a sentence of condemnation is passed, are accused of not ministering to Christ's members, which is interpreted as not giving him meat, when he was hungry, or drink when he was thirsty, &c. which charge could not have been brought against those that never heard of Christ; or if it had, they might have excused themselves by alleging that it was impossible for them to shew this respect to him whom they never knew. But to this it may be replied, that though our Saviour's design here, is to aggravate the condemnation of those who sinned under the gospel, and to charge some with crimes of the highest nature; yet there is nothing mentioned, exclusive of others, so as to give occasion to suppose that the judgment of the great day will respect only those who have set under the sound of the gospel. Therefore we have ground to conclude, that as the resurrection of the dead will be universal; so all that have lived, or shall live, from the beginning to the end of time, shall be the subjects of the judicial proceedings in that solemn and awful day; which leads us to consider,

IV. The manner in which Christ shall proceed in judging the world. It is evident, that the design of this glorious transaction is to determine the final state of all men, which will be done in a public and visible manner, that it may appear that the Judge of all does right: this differs very much from that particular judgment that is passed on every one at death; in which, though their state be unalterably determined, yet it is not done in an open and visible manner; but with a design that the cause should be tried again in that day which is appointed for it. The account we have in scripture, of the manner in which this shall be done, bears some resemblance to the proceedings in human courts of judicature; accordingly the day is set in which causes are to be tried; the Judge appears with the ensigns of his authority; and being seated on the tribunal, the persons to be tried appear before him; the cause is heard; and since all are to be judged according to law, the law is sup-

\* *Curcellanus in Dissert. de necessit. cognit. Christ. § vi.*

posed to be known, or the particular statute, which is the rule of judgment, must be produced; and whatever charge is to be brought against any one, it is drawn up in the form of an indictment, and supported by sufficient evidence, and the persons hereupon acquitted or condemned. In allusion hereunto we read of Christ's appearing in a visible manner, seated on a throne of judgment; or, as it is expressed, of *the Son of man, as appearing with all the holy angels with him; and his sitting upon the throne of his glory, and all nations being gathered before him*, Matt. xxv. 31, 32. *the judgment seat, and the books opened*, Dan. vii. 26. Rev. xx. 12.

The righteous, who are a part of those that shall stand before Christ's tribunal, shall be separated from the wicked; the former placed at his right hand, the latter at his left. With respect to the wicked, an indictment shall be brought in, in which they shall be charged with the violation of the holy law of God, with all the aggravating circumstances thereof, the subject-matter of which is contained in the books that are said to be opened. And this charge shall be supported by evidence; in which case men shall be witnesses against one another, so far as they have been apprised of each other's behaviour, or immediately concerned therein: and it is not improbable, that since the holy angels are conversant in this lower world, as they are sometimes represented as being present in worshipping assemblies, 1 Cor. xi. 10. and observing the actions of men, 1 Tim. v. 21. that they shall appear as evidences against the wicked. And it may be farther observed, that the Judge himself will be a witness against the criminals, which is not usual in human courts of judicature; though it does not savour of the least injustice: thus it is said, 'I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts,' Mal. iii. 5. The divine Omniscience will put the charge out of all manner of doubt; from whence there can be no appeal; since it is impossible for God, either to be deceived himself, or to deceive others.

But besides this, there shall also be the testimony of conscience, whereby persons shall stand self-convicted; their 'own hearts shall condemn them,' as well as 'God, who is greater than their hearts,' 1 John iii. 20. Thus it is said, that 'the consciences of men bear witness, and their thoughts, in the mean while, accuse or else excuse one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ;' and accordingly 'every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world' of



the ungodly 'become guilty,' Rom. ii. 15, 16. or appear, by their own confession, to be so, *before God*, chap. iii. 19. And in order hereunto, there shall be a particular dispensation of providence, whereby those sins which have been long since forgotten, shall be brought to remembrance: this seems intimated in our Saviour's words in the parable; 'Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things,' &c. Luke xvi. 25. and also in God's *setting the iniquities of sinners in order before their eyes*, Psal. l. 21. and this will have a greater tendency to support the charge, than ten thousand witnesses.

As to the things that shall be brought into judgment, or be charged, and proved upon them; these are mentioned in a very particular manner, as it is said, 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,' Eccl. xii. 14. And elsewhere, he is represented as 'executing judgment upon all, and convincing all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him,' Jude, ver. 15. And our Saviour particularly intimates, Matt. xxv. 42, 43. that their behaviour, under the means of grace, shall be enquired into, and what they have done against him, and his interest in the world, alleged against them.

But now we are speaking concerning those matters which shall be produced in judgment against the wicked, it may be enquired; whether the smallest sins committed by them, shall be brought into judgment against them? This seems to be intimated by our Saviour, when he says, that 'every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment,' chap. xii. 36. on which some take occasion to complain of the severity of the divine dispensations, as though it was intended hereby, that persons shall be condemned to suffer eternal punishments for a vain thought: but to this it may be replied, that no one will bring this as an objection against the methods of the divine proceedings in the great day, who duly considers the infinite evil of sin; or, that the least sin deserves a sentence of banishment from God, as it is an affront to his sovereignty, and opposite to his holiness. However let it be considered that no person in the world shall have reason to complain that he is separated from God, or rendered eternally miserable, only for a vain thought, or a sin of infirmity, as though he had been guilty of nothing else: therefore, when our Saviour says, that 'every idle word shall come into judgment,' the meaning is, that this shall tend to fill up the measure of their iniquity; so that the punishments which they shall be exposed to, shall be for this, in conjunction with all other sins. Every sin brings guilt with it; and all sins taken

together, smaller, as well as greater, enhance the guilt: therefore, our Saviour's meaning is this, that every sin exposes men to a degree of condemnation, in proportion to the aggravation thereof; though they which are of a more heinous nature, bring with them a greater degree of condemnation. Thus concerning the charge brought against the wicked.

The next thing to be considered is, the trial of the righteous, who are said to stand before Christ's judgment-seat. Here it may be observed, that no indictment shall be brought against them, at least, with the judge's approbation; for they have been before this acquitted and discharged, when brought into a justified state; and therefore, as the consequence hereof, *none*, as the apostle says, *shall lay any thing to their charge*, since it is God that justifieth, Rom. viii. 33. If any thing be alleged against them by the enemies of God, who loaded them with reproach, and laid many things to their charge in this world, of which some have been just, and others unjust and malicious: I say, if these things should be suffered to be alleged against them, the great and merciful Judge will appear as an advocate for, and vindicate them from those charges which are ungrounded; and will farther allege, as a foundation of their discharge from the guilt of all others, that he has made a full atonement for them; upon which account, when they are sought for, they shall not be found in judgment, or charged upon them to their shame, confusion, or condemnation; but they shall be pronounced righteous, as interested in Christ's righteousness; and this shall be evinced by his producing those graces which are inseparably connected with, though not the foundation of their justification, that so the method of the divine proceedings, in this respect, may be vindicated, and it may appear, that as it is said, without holiness no one shall see the Lord; so these are holy, and therefore they have this internal quality, which denotes them such whom God designed to save: this I take to be the meaning of that expression of our Saviour to the righteous, when he pronounces them blessed, and invites them to *come and inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, &c.* Matt. xxv. 34, 35. where the word *for* is taken demonstratively, and, not casually; and denotes that they were such who might expect to be admitted to this honour and blessedness, as having those marks and characters of his children upon them, to which the promise of salvation was annexed; not as though any thing done by them was the cause of it. From hence it appears, that the graces of God's people shall be published before angels and men, to the praise of the glory of him who was the author of them,

But there is a difficult question which is proposed by some, namely, whether the sins of God's people shall be published in the great day; though it is certain they shall not be alleged against them to their condemnation? This is one of the secret things which belong to God, which he has not so fully or clearly revealed to us in his word; and therefore we can say little more than what is matter of conjecture about it. Some have thought that the sins of the godly, though forgiven, shall be made manifest, that so the glory of that grace which has pardoned them, may appear more illustrious, and their obligation to God for this, farther enhanced. They also think that the justice of the proceedings of that day, requires it; since it is presumed and known by the whole world, that they were prone to sin, as well as others; and, before conversion, as great sinners as any; and after it their sins had a peculiar aggravation: therefore, why should not they be made public, as a glory due to the justice and holiness of God, and being infinitely opposite to all sin? And this they farther suppose to be necessary, that so the impartiality of divine justice may appear. Moreover, since God by recording the sins of his saints in scripture, has perpetuated the knowledge thereof; and if it is to their honour that the sins there mentioned were repented of, as well as forgiven, why may it not be supposed that the sins of believers shall be made known in the great day? And besides, this seems agreeable to those expressions of every word, and every action, as being to be brought into judgment; whether it be good, or whether it be bad, as in the scripture before-mentioned.

But it is supposed by others, that though the making known of sin that is subdued and forgiven, tends to the advancement of divine grace; yet it is sufficient to answer this end, as far as God designs it shall be answered, that the sins which have been subdued and forgiven, should be known to themselves, and this forgiveness afford matter of praise to God. Again, the expressions of scripture, whereby forgiveness of sin is set forth, are such as seem to argue, that those sins which were forgiven, shall not be made manifest; thus they are said to be *blotted out*, Isa. xliii. 25. *covered*, Psal. xxxii. 1. *subdued*, and *cast into the depths of the sea*, Micah vii. 19. and *remembered no more*, &c. Jer. xxxi. 34. Besides, Christ's being a Judge, doth not divest him of the character of an advocate, whose part is rather to conceal the crimes of those whose cause he pleads, than to divulge them. And to this we may add, that the law which requires duty, and forbids the contrary sins, is not the rule by which they who are in Christ, are to be proceeded against; for then they could not stand in judgment; but they are dealt with according to the tenor of the gospel, which forgives and covers all sin. And furthermore it is argued, that the public

declaring of all their sins before the whole world, notwithstanding their interest in forgiving grace, would fill them with such shame, as is hardly consistent with a state of perfect blessedness. And lastly, the principal argument insisted on, is, that our Saviour in Matt. xxv. in which he gives a particular account of the proceedings of that day, makes no mention of the sins, but only commends the graces of his saints. Such-like arguments as these are alleged to prove that it is probable the sins of the saints shall not be exposed to public view, in the great day. But after all that has been said, it is safest for us not to be too peremptory in determining this matter, lest, by pretending to be wise beyond what is clearly revealed in scripture, we betray our own folly, and too bold presumption, or assert that which is not right of this glorious Judge. Thus concerning the method in which Christ shall proceed in judging the world. We are now led to consider,

V. Some circumstances relating to the place where, and the time when, this great and awful work shall be performed, at least, so far as it is convenient for us to enquire into this matter, without giving too much scope to a vain curiosity, or desire to be wise above what is written. And,

1. As to the place; it does not seem probable that it shall be upon the surface of the earth; because we read, that *they which are found alive at Christ's coming, shall be caught up together with them*, that is, the others who are raised from the dead, *in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air*; which immediately follows after the account which the apostle gives of the Lord's descending from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God, 1 Thes. iv. 16, 17. which is the signal to be given of the immediate appearance of the Judge: therefore, their being caught up in the clouds, denotes that Christ shall judge the world, in some place above this earth; otherwise they must be supposed to be caught up thither, and afterwards obliged to descend from thence, to the place from whence they were taken, to be judged; which does not seem probable. This is all that we dare assert, concerning the place where this great and solemn transaction shall be performed.

And I the rather observe this, because some are of opinion, that the valley of Jehoshaphat is designed to be the place, from the application of that prediction mentioned in the prophet Joel, in chap. iii. 2. *I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people*: \* but that seems to be a prophesy of some

\* Of this opinion were some among the Papists, and particularly Cornelius a Lapide, Vid. ejusd. comment in Loc. who describes it as a place situate at the foot of the mount of Olives, in or near the place where our Saviour was in his agony betrayed

signal victory which the church should gain over its enemies; which shall have its accomplishment before Christ come to judgment, and be no less remarkable than that which God gave Jehoshaphat over the Moabites, Ammonites, and the inhabitants of mount Seir, mentioned in, 2 Chron. xx. upon which occasion the place where it was obtained, was called *the valley of Berachah*, which signifies blessing: and the prophet does not seem by *the valley of Jehoshaphat*, to point out any particular place known by that name; but rather to allude to the signification of the word, as importing the judgment of the Lord: so that nothing else is intended by it but that God shall, in the latter day, probably when those scriptures shall have had their accomplishment, which relate to the conversion of the Jews, execute some remarkable judgment against the heathen, amongst whom they were scattered. Therefore it cannot, with the least shadow of justice, be argued from hence, that this is the place where all nations of the earth shall be gathered to judgment. Besides, some have observed, that how great soever this valley may be, it is not large enough to hold the vast multitudes that shall be convened on this occasion.

As to what concerns the time when Christ shall judge the world; this is called, in scripture, *a day*; Acts xvii. 31. not to signify that the whole work shall be performed in that space of time, which we generally call *a day*; for that can hardly be sufficient for the performing the many things that are to be done in it. Some have thought that the whole process shall take up no less than a thousand years; and suppose, that the apostle Peter intimates as much, when speaking concerning the day of judgment, he says, *One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*, 2 Pet. iii. 8. Thus the excellent Mr. Mede understands that scripture: † but since

*and delivered by Judas, into the hands of his enemies. Therefore this will be, according to him, the fittest place for him to execute judgment upon them, and to appear in his triumphant and glorious manner, in order therunto. And this is mentioned by many Jewish writers, who maintained it. Thus the author of the Chaldee Paraphrase on Canticles viii. 5. speaks to this purpose, that the dead shall be raised, and the mountain of Olives shall be cleft, and all the dead of Israel shall come out from thence; and that the just, who died in the captivity, and consequently were not buried in or near that place, shall come through the everts of the earth, that they may here arise to judgment. And several Rabbinical writers give into this chancery, which is also mentioned in both the Talmuds. And many of the modern Jews, as is observed by some late travellers into the holy land, are so fond of burying their dead in or near this place, that they might not have far to come under the earth, when they rise from the dead, and must appear here at the day of judgment, that they pay a certain sum of money for the privilege of burying their dead therein. See Hody on the resurrection, Page 70, 71.*

† See his works, Lib. iii. Comment. apocul. page 662. and his remains, chap. xi. page 748. in which he is followed by some others, and the learned Gule, in his court of the Gentiles, Part I. Book iii. chap. vii. Page 78. speaks of some Jewish writers as maintaining, that the world shall continue 6000 years; and from thence to the 7000th shall be the day of judgment. And he also mentions this as an opinion which

this is not more clearly explained by other scriptures, speaking to the same purpose, I dare not be too peremptory in giving into this opinion; but would rather conclude, that the time of the continuance thereof, is called *a day*, as denoting a season appointed for the dispatch of a work, whether it be longer or shorter. Thus Christ calls that season, in which the gospel was preached to the Jews, *their day*, Luke xix. 42. And therefore it is the safest way for us to acknowledge this to be a secret which belongs not to us to enquire into.

As to the time when Christ shall come to judgment, or when this glorious day shall begin, that is also considered, not only as a matter kept secret from us, but from all creatures: thus our Saviour, speaking concerning it, says, 'Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,' Matt. xxiv. 36. This is particularly intimated in the answer we are explaining; and the reason assigned why it is kept secret from us, *viz.* that all may watch and pray, and be ready for the coming of the Lord; which is certainly a matter of the highest importance; and it is evident, that if God had either revealed the time of Christ's coming to judgment, or let men know how long they should continue in this world, before that judgment, which is past on all at death, it might have given occasion to the corruption of our nature, to have put off all thoughts about it, till it was at hand: therefore our Saviour, in wisdom, as well as kindness to his people, has represented his coming under the similitude of *a thief in the night*, 2 Thes. v. 2. and accordingly says, *Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh*, Matt. xxiv. 44. Thus concerning the day of judgment. As to what respects the consequence hereof, and the sentence which shall be pronounced on the righteous and the wicked, that is the subject-matter of the two following answers.

All that I shall add at present is, some practical inferences from this doctrine of Christ's coming to judgment.

(1.) What has been observed concerning Christ's coming to judge the world in his own glory, and that of his Father, and of his holy angels, should fill us with high and honourable thoughts of him; and since the angels reckon it an honour to attend him as ministering spirits in that great day, this should excite in us an holy ambition to approve ourselves his servants in all things, and to account it our honour that he will esteem us such.

(2.) Since Christ at his coming to judgment, will bring all things to light, and impartially state and try the cause of every one, who shall be rewarded according to their works; this

*Pluto* had received by conversing with some of them; and concludes, that this is the great *Utonuck* year, which is mentioned by him and his followers.

should silence, and fence against, all unbelieving thoughts, which may arise in the minds of men, concerning the seemingly unequal distributions of providence, in God's dealing with the righteous and the wicked, as to what respects the outward affairs of life, and make us easy, though we know not his design in the various afflictive providences wherewith we are exercised; since we are not to expect those blessings here, which he has reserved for his people, at Christ's appearing to judgment; which, if he is pleased to bestow upon us hereafter, we shall then have the highest reason to admire his wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness, in the whole method of his providential dealings with us.

(3.) This doctrine tends to reprove the atheism and profaneness of those, who make a jest of, or scoff, at the day of judgment; like those the apostle Peter mentions, whom he calls *scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,* 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. It also reproveth those who abuse the day of God's patience; and because his coming to judgment is delayed, take occasion to commit the vilest crimes. Thus our Saviour speaks of some as doing, and intimates that he will come in a day when they look not for him, and shall cut them usunder, and appoint them their portion with hypocrites, Matt. xxiv. 48—51.

(4.) This doctrine should stir us up to universal holiness, and the greatest circumspection and diligence in the service of God; as the apostle says, when speaking concerning Christ's coming to judgment, with those displays of terrible majesty that shall attend it, *what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,* 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12.

(5.) Since we expect that Christ will judge the world at the last day, it behoves us to be often judging and trying ourselves, examining how matters stand between God and us; and whether we behave ourselves in such a way as that we may be meet for Christ's coming, and have boldness in the day of judgment; as the apostle says, *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,* 1 Cor. xi. 31. that is, with the judgment of condemnation.

(6.) It is an inexpressible advantage when we can conclude, upon good grounds, that this great Judge is our Friend, our Saviour, our Advocate, and that, living and dying, we shall be found in him; for then, though he come in such a way as will strike the utmost terror and confusion into his enemies, we shall be found of him in peace; and the consequence of this

day's solemnity shall be our admission into his immediate presence, and being for ever blessed therein.

**QUEST. LXXXIX.** *What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment?*

**ANSW.** At the day of judgment the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand; and upon clear evidence, and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful, but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them; and thereupon shall be cast out from the favourable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels for ever.

**H**AVING, under the last answer, taken a view of Christ, as coming to judgment; and the whole world as seated at his tribunal, the wicked on his left hand, and the righteous on his right; the books opened, the cause tried, and the evidence produced; we are now to consider the sentence that will be past on each of them, together with the consequences thereof: and particularly we have an account in this answer, of a sentence of condemnation, pronounced against the wicked, and the punishment inflicted on them, pursuant thereunto; which our Saviour expresses in words full of dread and horror; *Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, Matt. xxv. 41, 45.* This includes in it an eternal banishment and separation from him, in whose favour there is life. As sin is the object of his detestation, it being contrary to the holiness of his nature, they who are found in open rebellion against him, shall not stand in his sight, Psal. v. 5. As they did not desire his special and gracious presence, which his saints always reckoned their chief joy, in this world; they shall be deprived of it in the next. And when they are commanded to depart from him, they are described as *cursed*, that is, bound over to suffer all those punishments which the vindictive justice of God will inflict, that are contained in those threatenings which are denounced by his law that they have violated, and sent down into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both in body and soul, with the devil and his angels, for ever. Accordingly there are three things to be considered, relating to the punishment of sinners in another world, namely, the kind thereof, its degree, and eternal duration.



I. As to the kind of punishment; that is generally considered in two respects, namely, the punishment of loss and sense.

1. Concerning the punishment of loss. This contains in it a separation from God, the fountain of blessedness; a being destitute of every thing that might administer comfort to them; and, as the consequence hereof, they are deprived not only of fellowship with Christ, but with his saints. Not that they were ever the objects of their love or delight, but, on the other hand, their conversation was distasteful and burdensome; especially when it was in itself most savoury and spiritual: nevertheless, it is reckoned to be one ingredient in their misery, as our Saviour expresses it, when he speaks of the *workers of iniquity*, as first commanded to *depart from him*, Luke xiii. 27, 28. and then tells them, *Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out*: where the happiness of others is considered as what will raise their envy, and prove a torment to them.

2. There is the punishment of sense: this is set forth by those unspeakable torments to be endured both in soul and body; and because no pain is so exquisite as that which is occasioned by fire, it is therefore called *unquenchable and everlasting fire*, Matt. iii. 12. chap. xxv. 41. As for that enquiry which some make, whether the fire be elementary or material, like that which is in this world, it savours more of curiosity than what tends to real advantage: and since it is called a fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, some have a little hesitated about this matter, as concluding it impossible for material fire to affect spirits; but I am not desirous to enter too far into this disquisition. It is, indeed, a hard matter for us to determine whether, or how far a spirit is capable of the punishment of sense, any otherwise than, as, by reason of its union with the body, it has an afflictive sensation of the evils which that immediately endures; and therefore, some have thought, that when we read of the fire of hell, it is to be taken in a metaphorical sense, to denote those punishments which are most exquisite, and have a tendency to torment both soul and body in different respects. The soul is to be tormented as the wrath of God has an immediate access to it, to make it miserable: and though this cannot be styled the punishment of sense in the same respect as that is of which the body is the more immediate subject; yet if we take the word *sense*, as importing an intellectual perception of those miseries that it undergoes, whereby it is made uneasy, and in a moral sense, subject to pain, as we sometimes speak of the pain of the mind, as well as that of the body, then it may be said to endure the punishment of sense, though it be in a spiritual substance.

There are various ways by which the wrath of God may have access to the soul, to make it miserable; and this punishment is sometimes compared to fire, as it is beyond expression dreadful; and accordingly God, when inflicting it, is styled, *A consuming fire*, Heb. xii. 29. and *his jealousy* is said elsewhere to *burn like fire*, Psal. lxxix. 5. Therefore, some have described the punishment of sin in hell, as including in it the insupportable weight of the wrath of God lying on the consciences of men, and sinking them into perdition; whereby it appears to be *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. x. 31. A judicious divine considers this as the effect of God's immediate presence, as a sin-revenging Judge; and therefore understands that text, in which it is said, *They shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord*, 2 Thes. i. 9. not as denoting an exclusion from his comforting presence, which is an undoubted truth, and the more generally received sense thereof; but he speaks of the presence of God, as well as his power, as the immediate cause of their destruction; in like manner as when the Psalmist joins both these ideas together, when he says, *Who knoweth the power of thine anger*, Psal. xc. 11. and it seems most agreeable to the grammatical construction of the words.\* This is that punishment which is more immediately adapted to the soul.

As for the punishment of sense, which the body shall endure, whether it be compared unto fire, as containing in it some effects, not unlike to those produced by fire; or, whether it only signifies that the punishment shall be most exquisite, as no pain is so terrible as that which is the effect of fire, I will not pretend to determine. There are, indeed, other expressions by which it is set forth in scripture, as well as fire, *viz. cutting asunder*, Matt. xxiv. 51. *tearing in pieces*, Psal. l. 22. *drowning men in destruction and perdition*, 1 Tim. vi. 9. *a being bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness*, Matt. xxii. 13. or, *into a furnace of fire*, chap. xiii. 42. or, *a lake of fire burning with brimstone*, Rev. xix. 20. some of which are, doubtless, metaphorical expressions, by which the punishment of sin is set forth; but whether they are all so we must not be too positive in determining: however, some suppose they are, because the glory of heaven is described by the metaphors of *streets of gold, gates of pearl*, Rev. xxi. 21. *rivers of pleasure*, &c. Psal.

\* See this largely insisted on by Dr. Goodwin, in his works, Vol. III. Book xiii His critical remarks in chap. ii. seem very just, *viz. that aro is causal here, as well as in many other scriptures which he refers to: and his strongest argument to prove that it is to be taken so in this verse, is, because, as he observes, aro must be applied to the glory of his power, as well as to his presence; so that if it denotes a separation from the one, it must also denote a separation from the other; whereas no one supposes that this punishment consists in a separation from the power of God, but that it is to be considered as the effect thereof.*

xxxvi. 8. and the wrath of God is metaphorically described, when he is called *a consuming fire*, Heb. xii. 29. Therefore, as the glory of heaven is represented by metaphors, denoting that it is inconceivably great; so, if we suppose that the punishment of sin in hell, is set forth by metaphorical ways of speaking, we cannot from hence, in all respects, take an estimate of the quality thereof; nevertheless we must conclude in general from such-like expressions, by which it is represented, that it is inexpressibly terrible, such as respects both soul and body, which is called, as has been observed in different respects, the punishment of sense. Which leads us,

II. To consider this punishment, as to the degree thereof, which is generally described as being various, in proportion to the aggravations of sin committed; accordingly they who have sinned under the gospel-dispensation, are considered as exposed to a greater degree of punishment than others who have not had those advantages. Thus the apostle says, *Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God*, chap. x. 29. And our Saviour speaking concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, who were notorious hypocrites, whose religion was no more than a pretence, and made subservient to the vilest practices, tells them, that *they should receive the greater damnation*, Matt. xxiii. 14. that is, a greater degree of punishment, as they had contracted greater guilt than others: and the apostle speaks of some who had had great advantages through the *riches of God's goodness and forbearance* towards them, but yet were *impenitent*, and hardened in sin; these, says he, *treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath*, Rom. ii. 5. that is, add greater degrees to the punishment which they shall endure in another world.

III. We are to consider the punishment, which sinners are liable to in the world to come, as to its duration, in which respect, it shall be without intermission, and eternal. That there shall be no relaxation of punishment, may be proved from what our Saviour says in the parable; in which the *rich man*, who was tormented in flames, could not obtain *one drop of water to cool his tongue*, Luke xvi. 26. Thus we read of those who are said to *drink of the wine of the wrath of God*, which is *poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation*; and that *the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever*; and that *they have no rest day nor night*, Rev. xiv. 10, 11. And our Saviour speaks of the two main ingredients in the punishment of sin; namely, the tormenting sense which conscience shall have of the wrath of God due to it; and the punishment of sense, which is compared to that that proceeds from fire, and both are described as eternal; where *their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*, Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.

That the punishment of sin in another world will be eternal, may be argued from the impossibility of their obtaining a discharge from the sentence of condemnation, under which they are, unless satisfaction be given to the justice of God for sins committed; but this cannot be given by the person that suffers; inasmuch as his sufferings are due to him, pursuant to the sentence of the judge, and agreeable to the demerit of sin; which being, as it is usually expressed objectively infinite, because committed against an infinite God, and containing a contempt of his sovereignty and other perfections which are infinite; therefore it deserves a punishment proportionable thereto. And since the sufferings of finite creatures are no other than finite, and consequently bear no proportion to the demands of infinite justice, they must be infinite in duration, that is, eternal. It may also be observed, that at the same time that persons are suffering for past sins, they are committing others. This is not like God's furnace, which is in Zion; whereby he designs not to consume, but to refine and purge away the dross and the tin; for it cannot, in any instance be said, that this is overruled for good. Therefore the habits of sin are increased rather than weakened thereby; and consequently sinners are set at a farther distance from God, from holiness and happiness; which, because it is still increasing, their punishment must be eternal.

And to this we may add, that there is no Mediator appointed between God and them; none who has undertaken to pay this debt for them, and procure their discharge, as the apostle says concerning those who have *sinned wilfully after they had received the knowledge of the truth; there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin*, Heb. x. 26. no advocate to plead their cause; no ordinances in which the glad tidings of salvation are published, nor any golden sceptre of mercy held forth to invite them to come in, or give them hope of finding acceptance in the sight of God; no covenant of grace that contains any promise that will afford relief; and no inclination, in their own souls, to return to God with an humble sense of sin, and desire to forsake it, and from hence arises everlasting despair, beyond expression tormenting, which the apostle calls *blackness of darkness for ever*, Jude ver. 13.

This is a very awful and awakening subject; and many are as little desirous to hear of these things, as the people were to hear of the account which the prophet Isaiah gave them of approaching judgments; and therefore they say, *Cause the holy One of Israel to cease from before us*, Isa. xxx. 11. But since there is such a passion in men as fear; and this is oftentimes made subservient to their spiritual advantage, it pleases God, in wisdom and mercy, sometimes to reveal those things in his word, which have a tendency to awaken our fears, and to set

before us death as well as life, the threatenings as well as the promises, that hereby we may see it to be our duty and interest to flee from the wrath to come; and to use those precautions prescribed in the gospel, which may have a tendency, through divine grace, to prevent our sinking into everlasting perdition. They who cast off fear, and think themselves safe, because the rod of God is not upon them, generally cast off a sense of duty, and say unto God, *Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, Job xxi. 9, 14. Therefore these subjects are to be insisted on as warnings to induce men to avoid the rock on which multitudes have split and perished; not to lead them to despair. However, there is great need of prudence in applying every truth in such a way as that it may be of advantage; which renders the work of those that are employed in preaching the gospel, exceeding difficult: every one must have those doctrines inculcated and applied to him, that are adapted to his respective condition, as well as founded on the word of God; and therefore we may observe,

1. That such subjects as these, though they are not to be concealed, as being a part of the counsel of God, and a means ordained by him, to answer some valuable end; yet they are not only, or principally to be insisted on, as though there were no passion to be wrought upon but fear. It is the stupid person that is to be awakened out of his lethargy, by violent methods: the man that says, I shall have peace, though I walk according to the corrupt inclinations of my own heart; the danger is over; or that no ill consequences will attend that wilful impenitency and unbelief, which is like to prove destructive to him; or, if a person is willing to deceive himself, and endeavours to extenuate his sin, apprehending the consequences thereof not to be so pernicious as they really are; or, that the mercy of God will save him, though remaining in open rebellion against him, as though there were no arrows in his quiver, or vials of wrath to be poured forth on his enemies. Such ought to be dealt with, by representing God as a consuming fire, with whom is terrible majesty; and they must be told of the punishment of sin in this and another world, that they may see their danger before it be too late to escape. If it be said, that the terrors of God have a tendency to drive persons to despair. To this it may be replied, that the persons we are speaking of, are so far from despairing of the mercy of God, that they are inclined to abuse it; and that which is like to be their ruin, is the contrary extreme, viz. presumption; which leads them to turn the grace of God into wantonness.

2. As for others, who are humbled under a sense of sin, whose flesh trembles for fear of God's judgments, there is not so much occasion to insist on these awakening subjects, when

we have to do with them; for this would be like adding fuel to the fire. If the heart be broken and contrite, and is apt to meditate little else but terror; then such subjects are to be insisted on as are encouraging. Thus when the prophet Jeremiah had been reprovng the people for their abominations, and threatening many sore judgments which God would execute upon them, he applies healing medicines; *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?* Jer. viii. 22. And elsewhere when he had been reprehending them for their idolatry, and putting them in mind of those judgments they had exposed themselves to; he encourages them to *cry unto God, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth: Will he reserve his anger for ever? Will he keep it to the end?* Jer. iii. 4, 5. It is God's usual method in dealing with sinners, first to excite their fear by charging sin on the conscience, and putting them in mind of the dreadful consequences thereof; in which respect, as the apostle expresses, *The law enters that the offence might abound;* and then he shews him, that the soul may take encouragement, when humbled under a sense of its own guilt; that *where sin has abounded, grace did much more abound,* Rom. v. 20. The gospel is designed to administer comfort to those, who are distressed under a dread of the wrath of God. Therefore, there are promises as well as threatenings; and each of these are to be applied as the occasion requires it; so that the happiness of heaven is to be set in opposition to the punishment of sin in hell; and accordingly as the answer we have been explaining, contains a very awful and awakening subject; so, in the next, we are led to consider a doctrine which is full of comfort to those who have an interest in Jesus Christ.

**QUEST. XC.** *What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?*

**ANSW.** At the day of judgment, the righteous being caught up to Christ in the clouds, shall be set on his right hand, and there openly acknowledged, and acquitted; shall join with him in the judging of reprobate angels and men, and shall be received into heaven; where they shall be fully and for ever freed from all sin and misery, filled with unconceivable joys, made perfectly holy and happy, both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints, and holy angels, but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity: and this is the perfect and full communion which

the members of the invisible church shall enjoy with Christ in glory at the resurrection and day of judgment.

**W**E have, in this answer, an account of the great honours and privileges that the saints shall be advanced to, and partake of, as the consequence of that sentence that Christ will pass on them, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*, Matt. xxv. 34. which are words that contain a gracious invitation given them to take possession of that glory which will tend to make them completely and for ever happy. We have already considered the righteous as caught up to Christ in the clouds, which is either done by the ministry of angels, or else their bodies will be so changed, that they shall be able to mount upward, with as much ease as they are, now to walk upon the surface of the earth. We have also considered them as set at Christ's right-hand. Whether this has any regard to the place of their situation, we cannot determine; but, according to the scripture mode of speaking, it certainly denotes the highest honours conferred upon them; which will be not only spiritual but external and visible; whereby it shall appear to all, that they are Christ's peculiar friends and favourites; and this will tend to raise in them the highest astonishment, that they should thus be dealt with by so glorious a person, who were in themselves unworthy of his notice; and it shall afford matter of eternal praise. What is farther observed concerning them in this answer, is contained in the following heads.

I. They shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted.

II. They shall join with Christ in the judging of reprobate angels and men.

III. They shall be received into heaven, in which their happiness is farther described; as therein they shall be freed from sin and misery, filled with unspeakable joy, made perfectly holy and happy, both in body and soul, and admitted into the company of saints and holy angels, and have the immediate vision and fruition of God to all eternity.

I. They shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted. Our Lord Jesus was not ashamed to own his people, when he condescended to take their nature upon him, and dwell among them; or, as the apostle expresses it, *He is not ashamed to call them brethren*, Heb. ii. 11. And he gives them many tokens of his approbation, by those spiritual privileges which he bestows on them here: but at last he shall own them publicly, in the presence of the whole world, as a people whom he has chosen, redeemed, sanctified, and brought the work of grace in them to perfection. He overlooks all their former failures and defects, and looks upon them as adorned with perfect beauty,

appearing without spot before him, and having now nothing that may be offensive to his holy eye, or denote them unmeet for the relation which they stand in to him, and the blessings which they shall enjoy with him.

Moreover, it is said that he shall openly acquit them, *i. e.* declare publicly, that he has given satisfaction for all their offences; and therefore they are for ever pronounced clear from the guilt thereof. And, as it was before observed, it is not improbable, that their former sins shall not be so much as mentioned, being all covered; and if sought for, shall not be found: but it is certain, that if they shall be mentioned, it shall not be to their confusion or condemnation; for it shall be declared, that the justice of God has nothing to lay to their charge; and, as the consequence thereof, they shall be delivered from that fear, shame, and distress, which they had before been subject to, through the afflicting sense of the guilt and prevalency of sin: however, when they are represented as thus acquitted, this does not suppose that their sins were not fully pardoned before, or that justification in this life, is imperfect, as to what concerns their right to forgiveness, or eternal life. The debt was fully cancelled, and a discharge given into Christ's hands, in the behalf of all his elect, on his making satisfaction to the justice of God; but this was not their visible discharge; and not being a declared act, it could not be claimed by, nor was it applied to them till they believed; and then they might say, Who shall lay any thing to our charge? it is God that justifieth\*: nevertheless, their justification, as it is declared to, and apprehended by faith, could not be said to be in all respects, so apparent, nor attended with those comfortable fruits and effects, which are the consequence hereof, as it is when they are pronounced justified by Christ at death; and even then the discharge is not so open and visible to the whole world, as it shall be in the day of judgment.

II. It is farther said, that they shall join with Christ in judging of reprobate angels and men: this is very often asserted by those who treat on this subject; and it seems to be taken from the sense which is commonly given of the apostle's words in 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. *Know ye not that saints shall judge the world; and, know ye not that the saints shall judge angels?* However, we must take heed, if we apply that scripture to the case before us, that we do not advance any thing that tends, in the least, to derogate from the glory of Christ, who only is fit for, and appointed to perform this great work: therefore, if we suppose that the apostle is here speaking concerning the judgment of the great day, the saints are said to judge the world in a less proper sense; but whatever be the sense in which we explain it, we must not think that they shall be assessors with Christ in

\* Or, shall God, who justifieth?



his throne of judgment: it is one thing for them to be near his throne in the capacity and station of favourites; and another thing for them to be in it: if they are in any sense said to judge the world, it must not be understood, as though the trying of the cause, or passing the sentence, were committed to them; but rather of their approving what Christ shall do: this they are represented as doing, when Christ is set forth as *judging the great whore*, Rev. xix. 2. namely, the anti-christian powers; they so far join with him herein, as that they ascribe glory and honour to him, and say, *Righteous are his judgments*.

And there is another sense in which some understand this scripture, concerning *the saints judging the world*, as denoting that the public mention which shall be made of the graces of the saints, their faith, repentance, love to God, and universal holiness, will have a tendency to condemn those whose conversation in this world has been the reverse thereof. Their having forsaken all, and followed Christ, and accounted all things but loss, that they might win him. The choice which they have made of suffering rather than sinning, which appears to be an instance of the highest wisdom, shall condemn the wickedness and folly of those, who have exposed themselves to inevitable ruin and misery, by being otherwise-minded. Thus Noah is said to have *condemned the world by his faith*, Heb. xi. 7. when, in obedience to the divine command, he *prepared an ark to the saving of his house*, which the world then thought to be the most preposterous action that ever was performed, though they were afterwards, to their cost, convinced of the contrary. And *the men of Nineveh, and the queen of the South*, are said to *rise up in the judgment with that generation, and condemn it*, Matt. xii. 41, 42. (to wit, objectively, rather than formally,) as their respective behaviour tended to expose the impenitency and unbelief of the Jews, whom Christ there re- proves. If the saints judging the world, be taken in either of these senses, it is an undoubted truth: but more than this we dare not assert.

Nevertheless, we may take occasion to enquire, whether that text, on which this doctrine is founded, may not be explained in another sense, as denoting some privilege which the saints were to enjoy in this world, when the empire should become Christian; and accordingly, magistrates and judges should be chosen out of the church, in which respect they should *judge the world*. This seems, to me, the most probable sense of the apostle's words, as an excellent and learned writer understands them\*; and it is very agreeable to the context, in which they are dissuaded, in ver. 1. from *going to law before the unjust, and not before the saints*, as signifying the inexpediency of ex-

\* Vid. *Hits. in Symb. Exercit.* 2<sup>o</sup>. § 18-20.

posing those controversies, that ought to be compromised in the church, before Heathen-magistrates, as though they thought themselves unfit to judge the smallest matters, of which he here speaks, not of capital offences, which were to be tried only by the civil magistrate; and to enforce this advice, he says, *Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world.*

*Obj.* 1. It is objected to this sense of the text; that, at the same time when *the saints* are said to *judge the world*, he speaks of them as *judging angels*; which comes not within the province of civil magistrates; though we suppose them to be Christians.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, that when the apostle speaks of the *saints judging angels*; this is brought in occasionally, the former sense of *judging* being more agreeable to the context. But since he is insisting on an honour that should be conferred on the church, he farther enlarges on that subject, and so speaks of their *judging angels*, as denoting that the consequence and success of the gospel would be an evident conviction to the world, that the Devil's empire was weakened, that he had no right to reign over the children of disobedience, as he before had done. Thus our Saviour speaks of Satan's kingdom being destroyed by the preaching and success of the gospel, when he says, 'Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out,' John xii. 31. And elsewhere it is said, 'Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down,' Rev. xii. 10. Moreover, the apostle may have a particular reference to their power of casting out devils, not only in that, but in some following ages, as our Saviour, promised they should have, before he left the world, Mark xvi. 17. which is known to have continued in the church till the third century\*.

*Obj.* 2. There is another scripture which seems to favour this opinion, namely, that the saints shall judge the world in the last day, viz. our Saviour's words, in Matt. xix. 28. 'Ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;' and that which makes this sense more probable, is what he speaks of in the following verse, as a reward which they, who had 'forsaken all for his name's sake,' should enjoy, namely, 'ye shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.'

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, that our Saviour, in one of these verses, may, without any strain on the sense of the words, be understood as giving them to expect some honours

\* See Vol. I. Page 286.

that should be conferred on them here, and in the other, those which they should receive in another world: As to the honours which were to be conferred on them here, namely, their *sitting on thrones*, &c. This is said to be 'in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory,' that is, not when the Son of man shall come to judgment; but when he shall enter into his state of exaltation, and sit at God's right-hand. And inasmuch as this was to be done for them *in the regeneration*, it seems most applicable to the gospel-state; in which, as the apostle says, 'Old things are past away; behold, all things are become new,' 2 Cor. v. 17. agreeable to what is foretold by the prophet, 'Behold I create new heavens and a new earth,' Isa. lxv. 17. which may well be called *the regeneration*. And, as for the apostles *sitting on thrones*, that may signify the spiritual honours that should be conferred upon them; so that however they might be despised by the world, they should be reckoned, by all that entertain just notions of things, the chief and most honourable men of the earth. And, as to what respects their *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*, that may be understood of their convicting the Jews, and condemning them for their unbelief in crucifying Christ, and rejecting and persecuting the gospel. This they might be said to do, partly in the exercise of their ministry, and partly in the success thereof, and, indeed, the gospel may be said to judge men when it convicts and reproveth them. If this be the sense of the text, then it does not respect any honours which the apostles should be advanced to in the day of judgment; and consequently it does not appear from hence, that they, any more than other saints, shall bear a part in judging the world, either of angels or men.

III. The saints shall be received into heaven. This includes in it their being brought into a glorious place, and state. Thus the apostle calls it, *An house not made with hands*, 2 Cor. v. 1. which, doubtless, far exceeds all the other parts of the creation: For, as the earthly paradise far exceeded all other places in this world, being planted immediately by God, and furnished with every thing which might be delightful and entertaining for man, for whom it was designed: so this must be supposed to be the most glorious part of the frame of nature, as being designed to be the place of the eternal abode of the best of creatures; and indeed, whatever is called heaven in scripture, comes short of it, this being styled, *the heaven of heavens*, Psal. cxlviii. 4. it is also particularly described as *God's throne*, Isa. lxvi. 1. the place of his immediate residence, where he displays his glory in an extraordinary manner. As for that particular part of the universe, in which it is situate, it is neither possible, nor of any advantage for us to determine, any

otherwise than as it is described, as being above this lower world. But the principal thing to be considered, is, the glory of the state, into which the saints shall there be brought ; which is set forth in this answer, by variety of expressions.

1. Herein they shall be fully, and for ever, freed from all sin and misery ; which being inseparably connected, they are delivered from both at once. As to what respects the guilt of sin, this includes in it not only their being for ever discharged from the guilt of past sins, which is contained in their being openly acquitted, as was before observed, but their not contracting guilt for the future ; accordingly they are put into such a state as that they shall be disposed, and enabled to yield sinless obedience ; and, as they are presented without spot and blemish before God, they shall never contract the least defilement, or do any thing which shall render them unmeet for that glory, to which they are advanced, afford matter of reproach to them, or provoke God to cast them out of that place which cannot entertain any but sinless creatures. Therefore it differs not only from that sinless state in which man was created at first, but that in which the angels were created, who were not all confirmed in their state of holiness, so as to render it impossible for any of them to fall ; but this is the happiness of glorified saints.

And we may also infer from hence, that there shall be no temptations to sin ; none arising from themselves, since there are no lusts, or remainders of corruption, to draw them aside from God ; and no temptations from others, since they are all made perfectly holy. The soul meets with no temptations from the body, as it often did, while it was subject to the infirmities of nature, in this imperfect state. It shall never be liable to any weakness, weariness, stupidity, nor any of those diseases with which it is now oppressed ; so that the soul shall never meet with any temptations arising from thence, inasmuch as the happiness of the body consists in its subserviency to it, in all those things that may tend to promote its compleat blessedness. Moreover, they are also considered as delivered from all misery, whether personal, or relative. The afflictions of believers are confined to this present state ; therefore in heaven ' God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away,' Rev. xxi. 4. and nothing remains that may tend to abate their happiness, or render the state in which they are, imperfect.

2. They shall be filled with inconceivable joys. Thus our Saviour says to the man in the parable, who had improved the talents he had been entrusted with ; *Enter thou into the joy of*

*thy Lord*, Matt. xxv. 21, 23. and they are said not only to be *presented faultless before the presence of the glory of Christ*; but with *exceeding joy*, Jude, ver. 24. This is the necessary result of a state of perfect blessedness; which cannot but administer the highest satisfaction and comfort to those who are possessed thereof; inasmuch as it not only answers, but even exceeds their most raised expectations. These joys are not indeed carnal, but spiritual; for as the greatest delight which the saints have here, consists in the favour and love of God, and in the bright rays of his glory shining into the soul, so they shall be perfectly blessed with this hereafter, in which respect their joy shall be full.

3. They shall be made perfectly holy and happy, both in body and soul. The soul shall be unspeakably more enlarged than it was before, as to all the powers and faculties thereof. The understanding rendered more capable of contemplating the divine perfections, and it shall be entertained with those discoveries of the glory thereof, which, at present, we have but a very imperfect knowledge of: It shall be fitted to behold the wisdom of God in the works of creation and redemption, and be led into the deep mysteries of his providence, and the reason of the various dispensations thereof, which, though they know not now, they shall know hereafter. The will shall be perfectly free, having no corrupt nature to bias, or turn it aside, from that which is its chief good and happiness; neither shall it choose any thing, but what is conducive thereunto: There are no remains of rebellion and obstinacy to be found therein, but a perfect and entire conformity to the will of God. The affections shall be perfectly regulated, and unalterably run in a right channel, fixed upon the best objects, and not in the least inclined to deviate from them. And, as for the body, that shall be fitted for a state of perfection, as well as the soul; for it shall be raised a spiritual, celestial, and glorious body, and therefore perfectly adapted to be a partaker with the soul, of that glory which the whole man shall be possessed of; and sanctified to be a temple of the Holy Ghost for ever.

4. They shall be joined with the innumerable company of the saints and holy angels. The apostle speaks of an *innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and church of the first-born*, Heb. xii. 22, 23. to which we are said, in this world, to *come by faith*; but hereafter these two assemblies shall be joined together, and make one body, that so they may, as they are represented doing, with one consent, *adore and proclaim the worthiness, riches, wisdom, and strength of the lamb that was slain, who lives for ever and ever*, Rev. v. 11, & seq. Now since the saints and angels are described as making up the same body, and engaged in the same worship, some have

taken occasion to enquire concerning the means by which they shall converse together in another world; or, in what manner this united body shall be made visible to each other; but these things we must be content to be ignorant of in this present state. However, as to the saints, they shall converse with one another by the organ of sense and speech; for this is one of the ends for which the body shall be raised and re-united to the soul; and it may also be proved, from what we read of Moses and Elias conversing with Christ at his transfiguration in such a manner, Matt. xvii. 3.

As for that question which some propose, relating to this matter, viz. whether there shall be a diversity of languages in heaven, as there is on earth? This we cannot pretend to determine. Some think that there shall; and that as persons of all nations and tongues, shall make up that blessed society, so they shall praise God in the same language which they before used when on earth; and that this worship may be performed with the greatest harmony, and to mutual edification, all the saints shall, by the immediate power and providence of God, be able to understand and make use of every one of those different languages, as well as their own. This they found on the apostle's words, in which he says, *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*; which, they suppose, has a respect to the heavenly state, because it is said to be done both by *those that are in heaven, and those that are on earth*, Phil. ii. 10, 11. But though the apostle speaks, by a metonymy, of different tongues, that is, persons who speak different languages, being subject to Christ, he probably means thereby persons of different nations, whether they shall praise him in their own language in heaven, or no.

Therefore some conjecture, that the diversity of languages shall then cease; inasmuch as it took its first rise from God's judicial hand, when he confounded the speech of those who presumptuously attempted to build the city and tower of Babel; and this has been, ever since, attended with many inconveniencies. And, indeed, the apostle seems expressly to intimate as much, when he says, speaking concerning the heavenly state, that *tongues shall cease*, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. that is, the present variety of languages. Moreover, since the gift of tongues was bestowed on the apostles, for the gathering and building up the church in the first age thereof, which end, when it was answered, this extraordinary dispensation ceased; in like manner, it is probable that hereafter the diversity of languages shall cease\*.

I am sensible there are some who object to this, that the saints, understanding all languages, will be an addition to their

\* *That speech can be without atmosphere, and without flesh?*

honour, glory, and happiness: but to this it may be answered, that though it is, indeed, an accomplishment in this world, for a person to understand several languages; that arises from the subserviency thereof, to those valuable ends that are answered thereby; but this would be entirely removed, if the diversity of languages be taken away in heaven, as some suppose it will.

There are some, who, it may be, give too much scope to a vain curiosity, when they pretend to enquire what this language shall be, or determine, as the Jews do, and with them, some of the Fathers, that it shall be the Hebrew; since their arguments for it are not sufficiently conclusive; which are principally these, viz. That this was the language with which God inspired man at first in paradise, and that which the saints and patriarchs spake, and the church generally made use of in all ages, till our Saviour's time; and that it was this language which he himself spake, while here on earth: and since his ascension into heaven, he spake unto Paul *in the Hebrew tongue*, Acts xxvi. 14. And when the inhabitants of heaven are described in the Revelations as praising God, there is one word used, by which their praise is expressed, namely, Hallelujah, which is Hebrew; the meaning whereof is, *praise ye the Lord*: but all these arguments are not sufficiently convincing; and therefore we must reckon it no more than a conjecture.

As for the opinion of those who suppose that it will not be any particular language that is, or has been spoken in this world, but one that is more perfect and significative, and that this is what the apostle means when he speaks of *the tongues of angels*, in 1 Cor. xiii. 1. To this it may be replied, that it is more than probable, that there shall be some language which shall be more perfect and significative than any that is now known in the world; which glorified saints shall receive by immediate inspiration; yet this does not fully appear to be the apostle's meaning in that scripture; since it is not certain that angels express their ideas by the sound of words; inasmuch as they have no bodies, nor organs of speech; neither can we certainly determine that they frame voices some other way. Therefore, *the tongue of angels*, which the apostle speaks of, is an hyperbolic expression, signifying the most excellent language, or such an one as angels would speak, did they use a voice; as *the face of angels*, chap. vi. 15. is expressed to signify the most bright, glorious, and majestic countenance; and as *manna* is called *angels food*, Psal. lxxviii. 25. that is, the most pleasant and delightful: therefore *the tongue of angels* signifies the most excellent language. But these things, though often enquired into by those who treat on this subject, are very uncertain; neither is it of any advantage for us to be able to determine them.

But there is another thing arising from the consideration of

the saints being joined in one society, which is much more useful, and, so far as we have light to determine it, will afford a very comfortable and delightful thought to us, namely, what concerns their knowing one another in heaven. The scripture, indeed, does not so fully determine this matter as it does some others, relating to the heavenly state; yet many of God's children have died with a firm persuasion that they shall see and know their friends, in another world; and have been ready to conclude this to be a part of that happiness which they shall enjoy therein; and we cannot think this altogether an ungrounded opinion; though it is not to be contended for as it were a necessary and important article of faith.

The arguments which are generally brought in defence of it, are taken from those instances recorded in scripture, in which persons who have never seen one another before, have immediately known each other in this world, by a special immediate divine revelation, given to them; in like manner as Adam knew that Eve was taken out of him, and therefore says, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man*, Gen. ii. 23. He was cast into a deep sleep, when God took one of his ribs, and so formed the woman, as we read of in the foregoing words; yet the knowledge hereof was communicated to him by God. Moreover we read, that Peter, James, and John, knew Moses and Elias, Matt. xvii. as appears from Peter's making a particular mention of them; *Let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias*, ver. 4. though he had never seen them before. Again, our Saviour, in the parable, represents the rich man as seeing Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, Luke xvi. 23. and speaks of him as addressing his discourse to him. From such-like arguments some conclude, that it may be inferred, that the saints shall know one another in heaven, when joined together in the same assembly.

Moreover, some think that this may be proved from the apostle's words, in 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. *What is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy*; which seems to argue that he apprehended their happiness in heaven should contribute, or be an addition to his, as he was made an instrument to bring them thither; even so, by a parity of reason, every one who has been instrumental in the conversion, and building up others in their holy faith, as the apostle Paul was with respect to them; these shall tend to enhance their praise, and give them occasion to glorify God on their behalf: therefore it follows, that they shall know one another; and consequently they who have walked together in the



ways of God, and have been useful to one another, as relations and intimate friends, in what respects more especially their spiritual concerns, these shall bless God for the mutual advantages which they have received, and consequently shall know one another. Again, some prove this from that expression of our Saviour in Luke xvi. 9. *Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations*; especially if by these everlasting habitations be meant heaven, as many suppose it is; and then the meaning is, that they whom you have relieved and shewn kindness to in this world, shall express a particular joy upon your being admitted into heaven; and consequently they shall know you and bless God for your having been so useful and beneficial to them.

*Objec.* To this it is objected, that if the saints shall know one another in heaven, they shall know that several of those who were their intimate friends here on earth, whom they loved with a very great affection, are not there; and this will have a tendency to give them some uneasiness, and be a diminution of their joy and happiness.

*Answer.* To this it may be replied, that if it be allowed that the saints shall know that some whom they loved on earth, are not in heaven, this will give them no uneasiness, since that affection, which took its rise principally from the relation which we stood in to persons on earth, or the intimacy that we have contracted with them, will cease in another world, or rather run in another channel, and be excited by superior motives, namely, their relation to Christ, and that perfect holiness which they are adorned with, and their being joined in the same blessed society, and engaged in the same employment, together with their former usefulness one to another, in promoting their spiritual welfare, as made subservient to the happiness they enjoy there. And as for others who are excluded from their society, they will think themselves obliged, out of a due regard to the justice and holiness of God, to acquiesce in his righteous judgments: thus the inhabitants of heaven are represented as adoring the divine perfections, when the vials of God's wrath were poured out upon his enemies; and saying, *Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus: true and righteous are thy judgments*, Rev. xvi. 5, 7.

5. Another ingredient in the glory of heaven, which is, indeed, the greatest of all, is the saints enjoying the immediate vision and fruition of God: this vision includes in it something more than their beholding the human nature of Christ, as Job speaks when he says, *In my flesh shall I see God*, Job xix. 23. This, indeed, will be a delightful object, not only by reason of the glory thereof, but from the love that they bear to his per-

son, who, in that nature, procured for them the happiness which they are advanced to. But the principal thing contained in this vision of God, is, that it is contemplative and intellectual; for, in other respects, he is invisible: nevertheless there are two ways by which persons are said to see him; the one is by faith, adapted to our present state; thus Moses is said to have seen him who is invisible, Heb. xi. 27. that is, to contemplate, adore, and improve the glory of the divine perfections so far as he is pleased to manifest it to us in this world; but the other way of beholding him is more perfect, as his glory is displayed with the greatest clearness, and in the highest degree in heaven: this the apostle opposes to that vision which we have of God by faith, when he says, that in heaven we shall see face to face, and know even as we are also known, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. that is, we shall have more bright and immediate discoveries of the glory of God; which, when represented by the metaphor of seeing face to face, has some allusion to our knowing persons, when we are in their immediate presence, which far exceeds that knowledge which we had of them by report, when at a distance from them: this the apostle expresses by such a mode of speaking, as cannot well be understood in this imperfect state, when he says, (a) *We shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii.

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(a) God is an infinite being. This also is a principle established by both natural and revealed religion. The soul of man is finite, and, to whatever perfection it may be advanced, it will always continue to be so. This is another indisputable principle. It would imply a contradiction to affirm, that an infinite Spirit can be seen, or fully known, in a strict literal sense, as it is, by a finite spirit. The human soul, therefore, being a finite spirit, can never perfectly see, that is, fully comprehend, as he is, God, who is an infinite spirit. The proposition in our text, then, necessarily requires some restriction. This inference arises immediate from the two principles now laid down, and this second consequence furnishes another ground of our reflections.

But, although it would be absurd to suppose, that God, an infinite spirit, can be fully known by a finite human spirit, yet there is no absurdity in affirming, God can communicate himself to a man in a very close and intimate manner proper to transform him. This may be done four ways. There are, we conceive, four sorts of communications; a communication of ideas; a communication of love; a communication of virtue, and a communication of felicity. In these four ways, we shall see God, and by thus seeing him as he is, we shall be like him in these four respects. We will endeavour by discussing each of these articles to explain them clearly; and here all your attention will be necessary, for without this our whole discourse will be nothing to you but a sound, destitute of reason and sense.

The first communication will be a communication of ideas. We shall see God as he is, because we shall participate his ideas; and by seeing God as he is, we shall become like him, because the knowledge of his ideas will rectify ours, and will render them like his. To know the ideas of an imperfect being is not to participate his imperfections. An accurate mind may know the ideas of an inaccurate mind without admitting them. But to know the ideas of a perfect spirit is to participate his perfections; because to know his ideas is to know them as they are, and to know them as they are is to perceive the evidence of them. When, therefore, God shall communicate his ideas to us, we shall be like him, by the conformity of our ideas to his.

2. which differs from those views which the saints have sometimes had of the glory of God, when manifested in an emblem

What are the ideas of God? They are clear in their nature; they are clear in their images; they are perfect in their degree; they are complex in their relations; and they are complete in their number. In all these respects the ideas of God are infinitely superior to the ideas of men.

1. Men are full of *false* notions. Their ideas are often the very reverse of the objects, of which they should be clear representations. We have false ideas in physic, false ideas in policy, false ideas in religion. We have false ideas of honour and of disgrace, of felicity and of misery. Hence we often mistake fancy for reason, and shadow for substance. But God hath only *true* ideas. His idea of order is an exact representation of order. His idea of irregularity exactly answers to irregularity; and so of all other objects. He will make us know his ideas, and by making us know them he will rectify ours.

2. Men have often *obscure* ideas. They only see glimmerings. They perceive appearances rather than demonstrations. They are placed in a world of probabilities, and, in consideration of this state, in which it has pleased the Creator to place them, they have more need of a course of reasoning on a new plan, to teach them how a rational creature ought to conduct himself, when he is surrounded by probabilities, than of a course of reasoning and determining, which supposes him surrounded with demonstration. But God hath only *clear* ideas. No veil covers objects; no darkness obscures his ideas of them. When he shall *appear*, he will communicate his ideas to us, and they will rectify ours, he will cause the scales, that hide objects from us, to fall from our eyes; and he will dissipate the clouds, which prevent our clear conception of them.

3. Men have very few ideas perfect in *degree*. They see only the surface of objects. Who, in all the world, hath a perfect idea of matter? Who ever had perfect ideas of spirit? Who could ever exactly define either? Who was ever able to inform us how the idea of motion results from that of body; how the idea of sensation results from that of spirit? Who ever knew to which class space belongs? It would be very easy, my brethren, to increase this list, would time permit; and were I not prevented by knowing, that they, who are incapable of understanding these articles, have already in their own minds pronounced them destitute of all sense and reason. But God hath *perfect* ideas. His ideas comprehend the whole of all objects. He will communicate to us this disposition of mind, and will give us such a penetration as shall enable us to attain the knowledge of the essence of beings, and to contemplate them in their whole.

4. Men have very few ideas *complex* in their relations. I mean, their minds are so limited, that, although they may be capable of combining a certain number of ideas, yet they are confounded by combining a greater number. We have distinct ideas of units, and we are capable of combining a few: but as soon as we add hundred to hundred, million to million, the little capacity of our souls is overwhelmed with the multitude of these objects, and our weakness obliges us to sink under the weight. We have a few ideas of motion. We know what space of body, to which a certain degree of velocity is communicated, must pass through in a given time: but as soon as we suppose a greater degree of motion, as soon as we imagine an augmentation of velocity to this greater degree; as soon as we try to apply our knowledge of moving powers to those enormous bodies, which the mighty hand of God guides in the immensity of space, we are involved in perplexity and confusion. But God conceives *infinite combinations*. He will make us participate, as far as our minds can, his ideas; so that we shall be able to give a large expanse to our meditation without any fear of confusing ourselves.

5. In fine, the ideas of mankind are incomplete in their *number*. Most wretches think, there are only two sorts of beings, body and spirit; and they have also determined, that there can be only two. A rash decision in itself: but more rash still in a creature so confined in his genius as man. But the ideas of God are *complete*. He knows all possible beings. He will make us participate this disposition of mind, and from it may arise ideas of myriads of beings, on which

metrical way, in this world; they also behold it as shining forth in its greatest effulgency.

now we cannot reason, because now we have no ideas of them. A communication of ideas is the first way, in which God will make himself known to us. This will be the first trait of our resemblance of him. *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

The second communication of God to a beatified soul is a communication of love. We cannot possibly partake of the ideas of God without participating his love. To participate the ideas of God is to possess just notions. To possess just notions is to place each object in the rank, that is due to it; consequently, we shall regard the chief being as the only object of supreme love.

What is necessary to answer the idea, that an upright soul forms of the lovely? The lovely object must answer three ideas: the idea of the great and marvellous; the idea of the just; and the idea of the good; and, if I may venture to speak so, of the beatifying. Now, it is impossible to know God without entertaining these three ideas of him alone; consequently it is impossible to know God without loving him. And this is the reason of our profound admiration of the morality of the gospel. The morality of the gospel is the very quintessence of order. It informs us, no creature deserves supreme love. It makes this principle the substance of its laws. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, Matt. xxii. 37.*

How worthy of supreme love will this God appear, how fully will he answer the idea of the great and the marvellous, when we shall see him as he is! He will answer it by his independence. Creatures exist: but they have only a borrowed being. God derives his existence from none. He is a self-existent being. He will answer our idea of the magnificent by the immutability of his nature. Creatures exist: but they have no fixed and permanent being. They arise from nothing to existence. Their existence is rather variation and inconstancy than real being. But God, but *I the Lord*, says he of himself, *I change not, Mal. iii. 6. the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8.* He is, as it were, the fixed point, on which all creatures revolve, while he is neither moved by their motion, shaken by their action, nor in the least imaginable degree altered by all their countless vicissitudes. He will answer the idea of the great and marvellous by the efficiency of his will. Creatures have some efficient acts of violation: but none of themselves.—But go back to that period, in which there was nothing. Figure to yourselves those immense voids, which preceded the formation of the universe, and represent to yourself God alone. He forms the plan of the world. He regulates the whole design. He assigns an epoch of duration to it in a point of eternity. This act of his will produces this whole universe. Hence a sun, a moon, and stars. Hence earth and sea, rivers and fields, Hence kings, princes, and philosophers. *He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. The heavens were made by the word of the Lord, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth, Psal. xxxiii. 9.* God, then, perfectly answers our idea of the grand and the marvellous. He answers also the idea of the just.

It was he, who gave us an idea of justice or order. It was he, who made the greatest sacrifices to it. It was he, who moved heaven and earth to re-establish it, and who testified how dear it was to him by sacrificing the most worthy victim, that could possibly suffer, I mean his only Son.

Finally, God will perfectly answer our idea of the good and the beatifying. Who can come up to it except a God, who opens to his creatures an access of his treasures? A God, who reveals himself to them in order to take them away from their broken cisterns, and to conduct them to a fountain of living waters, *Jer. ii. 13. A God, whose eternal wisdom cries to mankind, Ho, every-one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that, which is not bread? and your labour for that, which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that, which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live, Isa. lv. 1-3.*

Moreover, since the apostle speaks of this as a privilege which should be enjoyed by the saints at Christ's appearing, who seems to be the object more especially here intended, it may denote their beholding his mediatorial glory in its highest advancement; and this view which they have of it, is said to be assimilating, as well as delightful; and therefore he farther

We cannot, then, know God without loving him. And thus a communication of ideas leads to a communication of love. But this communication of love will render us *like* the God, whom we admire. For the property of love, in a soul inflamed with it, is to transform it in some sort into the object of its admiration. This is particularly proper to divine love. We love God, because we know his attributes; when we know his attributes, we know, we can no better contribute to the perfection of our being than by imitating them, and the desire we have to perfect our being will necessitate us to apply wholly to imitate them, and to become *like him*.

Let us pass to our third consideration. The third communication of God to a beatified soul is a communication of his *virtues*. To love and to obey, in Scripture-style, is the same thing. *If ye love me, keep my commandments*, is a well-known expression of Jesus Christ, John xiv. 15. *He, who saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him*, is an expression of our apostle, 1 John ii. 4. This is not peculiar to the love of God. To love and to obey, even in civil society, are usually two things, which have a very close connexion. But, as no creature hath ever excited all the love, of which a soul is capable, so there is no creature, to whom we have rendered a perfect obedience. It is only in regard to God, that there is an inseparable connexion between obedience and love. For when we love God, because we know him, we are soon convinced, that he cannot ordain any thing to his creature but what is useful to him; when we are convinced, he can ordain nothing to be performed by his creature but what is useful to him, it becomes as impossible not to obey him as it is not to love ourselves. To love and to obey is one thing, then, when the object in question is a being supremely lovely. These are demonstrations; but to obey God, and to keep his commandments, is to be *like God*.

The commandments of God are formed on the idea of the divine perfections. God hath an idea of order; he loves it; he follows it; and this is all he ever hath required, and all he ever will require of his intelligent creatures. He requires us to know order, to love it, to follow it. An intelligent creature, therefore, who shall be brought to obey the commandments of God, will be *like God*. *Be ye perfect, as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect*, Matt. v. 48. *Be ye holy, for I am holy*, 1 Pet. i. 16. *Every man, that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure*, 1 John iii. 3. These precepts are given us here on earth, and we obey them imperfectly now: but we shall yield a perfect obedience to them in heaven, when we shall see him as he is. Here, our apostle affirms, *Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him*, ver. 6. that is to say, he who suffers sin to reign over him, doth not know God; for if he knew God, he would have just ideas of God, he would love him; and, if he loved him, he would imitate him. But in heaven we shall see, and know him, we shall not sin, we shall imitate him, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*.

Lastly, the fourth communication of the Deity with beatified souls is a communication of *felicity*. In an economy of order, to be holy and to be happy are two things very closely connected. Now we are in an economy of disorder. Accordingly, virtue and felicity do not always keep company together, and it sometimes happens, that for *having hope in Christ we are*, for a while, *of all men most miserable*, 1 Cor. xv. 19. But this economy of disorder must be abolished. Order must be established. St. Peter, speaking of Jesus Christ, says, *The heavens must receive him until the times of the restitution of all things*, Acts iii. 21. When all things shall be restored, virtue and happiness will be closely united, and, consequently, by participating the holiness of God we shall participate his happiness.

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adds, *We shall be like him.* And this shall also be satisfying : thus the Psalmist says, *I will, or shall, behold thy face in righteousness ; when I awake I shall be satisfied with thy likeness,* Psal. xvii. 15. How vastly does this differ from the brightest views which the saints have of the glory of God here ! It is true they know something of him as he manifests himself in the works of creation and grace ; but this is very imperfect ; the object is not presented in its brightest lustre ; nor is the soul, which is the recipient thereof, enlarged, as it shall then be to take in the rays of divine glory : however, though this vision of God be unspeakable, and much more shall be known of his perfections than we can attain to in this life ; yet the saints shall not have a comprehensive view thereof ; for that is not consistent with the idea of them as finite creatures. Thus concerning the immediate vision of God.

It is farther observed, that this vision is attended with fruition ; and therefore it is not barely speculative or contemplative, but such as is felicitating ; and accordingly the saints know their interest in God, and see themselves to be the happy objects of the former and present displays of the glory of his perfections, and how they have all been exerted in bringing them to, and fixing them in this blessed state ; and from hence arises that joy which accompanies this vision of God. And besides this, there are some impressions of his glory on their souls, which not only occasion, but excite this joy.

And it is farther observed, that this fruition is of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Father is beheld and enjoyed, as his glory shines forth in the face of Christ, as bestowing on his saints all the blessings which he has promised in that everlasting covenant, which was established with, and in, Christ, as their Head and Saviour ; his purposes of grace, and all his promises, having had their full accomplishment in him. And the glory of Christ is beheld as the person to whom the whole work of redemption, together with the application thereof, was committed, and is now brought to perfection. And the Holy Ghost is beheld as the person who has, by his power, rendered every thing which was designed by the Father, and purchased by the Son, effectual to answer the end which is now attained, by shedding abroad the love of the Father and Son in their hearts, dwelling in them as his temple, and in beginning, carrying on, and perfecting that work, which is so glorious in the effects and consequences thereof. In these respects they have perfect and distinct communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; which far exceeds all they can have here, and is infinitely preferable to all the delight which arises from that enjoyment which they have of the blessed society of perfect creatures to whom they are joined.

6. The last ingredient in the happiness that believers shall enjoy in heaven, is, that it shall be to all eternity. As the soul is immortal, and the body, to which it shall be united, shall be raised incorruptible; so the inheritance, which is reserved in heaven for the saints is such as *fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. i. 4. chap. v. 4. This will tend to make their happiness complete, which nothing could do, were there not a full assurance of the everlasting duration thereof. It would be a continual allay, to it, and a very uncomfortable thought to conclude, that though their enjoyments are very great, yet they shall have an end. The glory of heaven is not like the glories of this present world, which are but for a moment, and, as it were, perish in the using; nor like the state of holiness and happiness in which God created man at first; which, through the mutability of his nature, it was possible for him to lose: but it is established by the decree of God, founded on the virtue of the blood of Christ, who purchased for his people eternal redemption, and in the covenant of grace settled this inheritance upon them, as an everlasting possession. This is a doctrine so universally acknowledged, that it is needless to insist on the proof of it; and it is so frequently mentioned in scripture, that we scarce ever read of the glory of heaven, but it is described as *eternal*, See Jude ver. 6, and 21. Matt. xxv. 46. Tit. i. 2. Rom. vi. 22. Gal. vi. 8. 1 Tim. i. 16. Psal. xvi. 11.

There is one thing more, which, though it be not particularly mentioned in this answer, I would not entirely pass over, that is, what may be said to a question proposed by some, *viz.* Whether there are degrees of glory in heaven? The Papists not only maintain that there are, but pretend that greater degrees thereof shall be conferred on persons, in proportion to the merit of their good works here on earth; and therefore have assigned to them the highest places there, who have performed works of supererogation, by doing more than was strictly enjoined them by the law of God. But all Protestant divines, who allow that there are degrees of glory in heaven, strenuously maintain that these are rewards of grace as every ingredient in the heavenly blessedness is supposed to be. And when this doctrine is made the subject of controversy among them; neither side ought to contend for their particular opinion, as though it was one of the most important articles of faith, or charge them who defend the other side of the question, as though they were maintaining something that was directly contrary to scripture; or of a pernicious consequence.

They, on the other hand, who suppose that there are no degrees of glory in heaven, are afraid, that if they should assert the contrary, it would, in some measure, eclipse the glory of the grace of God, and give too much umbrage to the Popish

doctrine of the merit of good works. But this all Protestant divines, as was but now observed, sufficiently fence against. And, inasmuch as it is farther argued against degrees of glory, that those external and relative privileges, which they enjoy, such as election, justification, and adoption, belong equally and alike to all saints; and the same price of redemption was paid for all, therefore their glory shall be equal: this method of reasoning will not appear very conclusive, if we consider that sanctification is as much the result of their being elected, justified, redeemed, and adopted, as their being glorified; but that appears not to be equal in all, therefore it does not follow from hence, that their glory, in a future state, shall be so. And though their objective blessedness, which consists in that infinite fulness of grace that there is in God, is inconsistent with any idea of degrees; yet it does not follow, that the communications resulting from hence, which are finite, shall be in a like degree; nor can it be inferred from hence, that if there are degrees of glory, the state of those who have the least degree, shall be imperfect in its kind, or have any thing in it which shall afford the least abatement of their happiness, or be the occasion of envy or uneasiness, as the superior excellencies of some, in this imperfect state, often appear to be, since that is inconsistent with perfect holiness: nor is it to be supposed that there are any degrees, with respect to the deliverance of the saints from the sins, guilt, and miseries of this present life, which is equal in all; nor do they, who think that there are degrees of glory in heaven, in the least insinuate that every one shall not be perfectly filled and satisfied, in proportion to his receptive disposition; as a small vessel, put into the ocean, is equally full, in proportion to its capacity, with the largest; and therefore none of the saints will desire, nor, indeed, can contain more than God designs to communicate to them.

As for that scripture which is sometimes brought in defence of this opinion, viz. the parable of the persons that were hired to work in the vineyard, in Matt. xx. 9. in which it is said, that *they that were hired about the eleventh hour, received every man a penny*, which is as much as others received who were hired early in the morning, and had *born the heat and burden of the day*; that does not sufficiently prove it, since some of these labourers are represented as *murmuring*, and insinuating that they had wrong done them, to whom Christ replies, *Is thine eye evil, because I am good?* and they are described as *called*, but *not chosen*, ver. 15, 16. Therefore it is not designed to set forth the glory of heaven, but the temper and disposition of the Jewish church, who were partakers of the external blessings of the covenant of grace, and the gospel-church, as having equal privileges; so that the arguments generally insisted on



to prove that there are no degrees of glory in heaven, can hardly be reckoned sufficient to overthrow the contrary doctrine; especially if those other scriptures, that are often brought to prove that there are, be understood in the most obvious sense thereof; and they are such as these, *viz.* Daniel xii. 3. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever;* where the prophet speaks of those who excel in grace and usefulness in this world; and then considers them not only as *wise*, but as *turning many to righteousness*; whose glory, after the resurrection, of which he speaks in the foregoing verse, has something illustrious and distinguishing in it, which is compared to the *brightness of the firmament and stars*.

To this it is objected, that our Saviour, in Matt. xiii. 43. illustrates the happiness of all the glorified saints, whom he calls *the righteous*, by their *shining as the sun*; therefore the prophet Daniel means no other glory but what is common to all saints; and consequently there are no degrees of glory. But to this it may be replied, that our Saviour does not compare the glory of one of the saints in heaven, with that of another; but intimates, that the happiness of every one of them shall be inconceivably great, and very fitly illustrates it by the *brightness of the sun*; whereas the prophet is speaking of some that were honoured above others in their usefulness here; and then considers them as having peculiar degrees of glory conferred upon them hereafter, which is something more than what he had said in the foregoing verse, which is common to all the saints, when he speaks of them as *awaking out of the dust to everlasting life*.

Another scripture which is also brought to prove this doctrine, is in 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead;* where the apostle is speaking concerning the happiness of the saints after the resurrection, whom he compares not with what they were when they left the world; for then had no glory, being *sown in corruption and dishonour*; but he seems to compare the glory of one saint, after the resurrection, with that of another; and accordingly he illustrates it by the brightness of the heavenly luminaries; every one of which has a glory superior to terrestrial bodies: nevertheless he seems to intimate, that if we compare them together, the glory of the one exceeds that of the other. Thus the glory of the least saint in heaven, is inconceivably greater than that of the greatest here on earth: it is, indeed, full and complete in its kind; yet when compared with the glory of others, it may in some circumstances fall short of it.

There is another argument brought by some, to prove this doctrine, taken from the parable of the *talents*, in Matt. xxv. 14, & *seq.* in which the reward is proportioned to the respective improvement thereof; which seems to respect some blessings which they were to receive in another world; inasmuch as our Saviour compares himself to one that is *travelling into a far country*, and after a long time, returning and reckoning with his servants: by the former of which is meant, his ascension into heaven; and by the latter, his return to judgment; and consequently those regards which differ in degree, must respect some peculiar glory, which he will confer on his people in another world; and, indeed, the whole chapter seems to refer to the same thing. The former parable of the *wise and foolish virgins* denotes the behaviour of persons here, and the consequence thereof hereafter: and the latter part of the chapter expressly speaks of Christ's coming to judgment, and dealing with every one according to his works. If therefore the improvement of these talents respects some advantages that one is to expect above the other, it seems to intimate that there are degrees of glory.

Moreover, this is farther argued from those various degrees of grace that some have in this world above others, which is a peculiar honour bestowed on them, and is sometimes considered as the fruit and consequence of their right improvement of those graces which they had before received. And this may be considered as laying a foundation for greater praise; which argues that the soul shall be enlarged in proportion thereunto; so that it may give unto God the glory due to his name, as the result thereof. Therefore if we take an estimate of God's future, from his present dispensations, it not only removes some objections that are sometimes brought against this doctrine; but adds farther strength to those arguments taken from the scriptures before-mentioned, to prove it. But notwithstanding all that has been said, on this subject, it is the safest way for us to confess, that we know but little of the affairs of another world, and much less of the circumstances of glorified saints, considered as compared with one another. Nor are we to conclude, if there are degrees of glory, that the highest degree thereof is founded on the merit of what any have done or suffered for Christ; or, on the other hand, that the lowest is inconsistent with complete blessedness; which shall be proportioned to their most enlarged desires, and as much as they are capable of containing. Thus concerning the question proposed by some, *viz.* Whether there are degrees of glory?

There is another which has some affinity with it, that I would not wholly pass over; namely, whether the saints in heaven shall not have some additional improvements, or make progres-

sive advances in some things, which may be reckoned a farther ingredient in their future happiness? This is to be insisted on with the utmost caution, lest any thing should be advanced which is inconsistent with the complete blessedness, which they are immediately possessed of: however, I do not think that it will detract from it, if we should venture to assert, that the understanding of glorified saints shall receive very considerable improvements, from those objects which shall be presented to them, and the perpetual discoveries that will be made of the glorious mysteries of divine grace, whereby the whole scene of providence, and its subserviency to their eternal happiness, shall be opened, to raise their wonder, and enhance their praise. Since it is not inconsistent with the perfect blessedness of the angels, to desire to know more of this mystery, which they are said to *look into*, 1 Pet. i. 12. and inasmuch as their joy is increased by those new occasions, which daily present themselves; why may not the same be said with respect to the saints in heaven; especially if we consider that this will redound so much to the glory of God, as well as give us more raised ideas of that happiness which they shall be possessed of.

We shall conclude with some practical inferences from what has been said in this answer, concerning the happiness of the saints in heaven.

(1.) We may learn from hence the great difference which there is between the militant and triumphant state of the church. Here they meet with perpetual conflicts, but hereafter they shall be crowned with complete victory: now they walk by faith, but then faith shall be swallowed up in vision, and hope in enjoyment. The saints of God are, at present, in their minority, having a right to, but not the possession of their inheritance. Their desires are enlarged, and their expectations raised; but nothing can give them full satisfaction till they arrive to that state of perfection, which God will, at last, bring them to.

(2.) The account which we have of the happiness of heaven, as being of a spiritual nature, and accompanied with perfect blessedness, and the enjoyments thereof being agreeable thereto; this may tend to reprove the carnal conceptions which many entertain concerning it, as though it were no other than what Mahomet promised his followers; who fancy that they shall have therein, those delights, which are agreeable to the sensual appetites of such as have no other ideas of happiness, but those which consist in the pleasures of sin: neither is it enough for us to conceive of it, as barely a freedom from the miseries of this life (though this be an ingredient therein) as if it had no reference to the bringing those graces which are begun here, to perfection; or it did not consist in that blessed work of admiring and adoring the divine perfections, and improving the

displays thereof in a Mediator, which the saints shall for ever be engaged in.

(3.) Let us not content ourselves barely with the description which we have in the word of God, concerning the glory of heaven, but enquire, whether we have a well-grounded hope, that we have a right to it, and are found in the exercise of those graces which will be an evidence thereof? It is a very low and insignificant thing for us to be convinced that the glory of heaven contains in it all those things which shall render them who are possessed of it, completely happy, if we have no ground to claim an interest in it; and if we have this ground of hope, it will have a tendency to excite practical godliness, which it is inseparably connected with, and affords an evidence of our right to eternal life: whereas, without this, our hope will be delusive, and we chargeable with an unwarrantable presumption, in expecting salvation without sanctification.

(4.) If we have any hope concerning this future blessedness; this ought to be improved by us, to support and comfort us under the present miseries of life; as the apostle exhorts the church to which he writes, to *comfort one another with these words*, 1 Thess. iv. 18. or from these considerations; which should also be an inducement to us to bear *affliction with patience*, since they *work for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. And,

(5.) Let the hope we have of the privileges to be enjoyed hereafter, put us upon the greatest diligence in the performance of those duties, which are incumbent on us, as expectants of this inheritance; and let us endeavour to have our conversation in heaven, and be frequently meditating on the blessed employment thereof; and be earnest with God, that we may be made more meet for, and in the end received to it.

(6.) If we are enabled, by faith, to conclude that we have a right to the heavenly inheritance, let us be frequently engaged in the work and employment thereof, so far as is consistent with this present imperfect state; let us be much in praising and blessing God, who has prepared these glorious mansions for his people; and let us set a due value on the blood of Christ, by which they were purchased; and give glory to the Holy Ghost, who has given us the earnest thereof; and having begun the work of grace, will, we trust, carry it on to perfection.

## OF MAN'S OBLIGATION TO YIELD OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

**QUEST. XCI.** *What is the duty that God requireth of man?*

**ANSW.** The duty which God requireth of man, is, obedience to his revealed will.

**QUEST. XCII.** *What did God at first reveal unto man as the rule of his obedience?*

**ANSW.** The rule of obedience revealed to Adam in the estate of innocency, and to all mankind in him, beside a special command, not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was, the moral law.

**H**AVING, in the former part of the Catechism, been led to consider what we are to believe concerning God, and those works of nature and grace, wherein he has displayed his glory to man, whether considered as created after his image, or having lost it by sin, and afterwards redeemed, and made partaker of those blessings that are consequent thereupon; we are now to consider him as under an indispensable obligation to yield obedience to God. They who have received most grace from him, are laid under the strongest ties and engagements hereunto; accordingly we may observe,

I. That, obedience is due from man to God. This results from the relation we stand in to him as creatures; (a) who

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(a) "It may be asked, Is there no *reason* or *nature* of things? Yes; as certainly as there are things. But the nature and reason of things, considered *independently* of the divine Will, or *without* it, have no more *obligation* in them, than a *divine worship* considered independently of, and without any regard to the *existence* of God. For the *Will* of God is as absolutely necessary to found all *moral obligation* upon, as the existence of God is necessary to be the foundation of religious worship. And the fitness of *moral obligations*, without the *Will* of God, is only like the fitness of a *religious worship* without the *existence* of God.

And it is as just to say, that he destroys the *reason* of religion and piety, who founds it upon the nature and existence of God, as to say, he saps the foundation of moral obligations, who founds them upon the Will of God. And as religion cannot be justly or solidly defended, but by shewing its connexion with, and dependence upon, God's existence; so neither can moral obligations be asserted with strength and reason, but by shewing them to be the Will of God.

It may again be asked, Can God make that fit in *its self*, which is in *its self* absolutely unfit to be done?

This question consists of improper terms. For God's Will no more makes actions to be fit *in themselves*, than it makes things to exist *in, or of themselves*. No things, nor any actions, have any *absolute* fitness, and in *themselves*.

A *gift*, a *blow*, the making a *wound*, or *shedding* of *blood*, considered in them-

ought to say with the Psalmist, *O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker*, Psal. xcvi. 6. and particularly when considered as intelligent creatures, having excellencies superior to all others in this lower world, whereby we are rendered capable, not only of subserving the ends of his providence, but performing obedience, as subjects of moral government: But if we are redeemed, justified, and sanctified, and made partakers of all the blessings that accompany salvation; this obligation to duty, is greater than that of all others, as the apostle says, *Ye are bought with a price; there-*

selves, have no *absolute* fitness, but are fit or unfit according to any variety of incidental circumstances.

When therefore God, by his Will, makes any thing fit to be done, he does not make the thing fit in *its self*, which is just in the *same state* considered in *its self*, as it was before; but, it becomes fit for the person to do it, because he can be happy, or do that which is fit for him to do, by doing the Will of God.

For instance, the *bare eating* a fruit, considered in *its self*, is neither fit nor unfit. If a fruit be appointed by God for our food and nourishment, then it is as fit to eat it, as to preserve our lives. If a fruit be poisonous, then it is as unfit to eat it, as to commit self-murder. If eating of a fruit be prohibited by an express order of God, then it is as unfit to eat it, as to eat our own damnation.

But in none of these instances is the eating or not eating, considered in *its self*, fit or unfit; but has all its fitness, or unfitness, from such circumstances, as are entirely owing to the Will of God.

Supposing, therefore, God to require a person to do something, which, according to his present circumstances, *without* that command, he ought not to do, God does not make that which is *absolutely* unfit in *itself*, fit to be done; but only adds *new circumstances* to an action, that is neither fit nor unfit, moral nor immoral in *itself*, but *because* of its circumstances.

To instance, in the case of *Abraham* required to sacrifice his son. The killing of a man is neither good nor bad, considered *absolutely* in *its self*. It was unlawful for *Abraham* to kill his son, because of the *circumstances* he was in with regard to his son. But when the divine Command was given, *Abraham* was in a *new state*; the action had *new circumstances*; and then it was as lawful for *Abraham* to kill his son, as it was lawful for God to require any man's life, either by *sickness*, or any other means he should please to appoint.

And it had been as unlawful for *Abraham* to have disobeyed God in this extraordinary command, as to have cursed God at any *ordinary calamity* of providence.—

Again, it is objected, *If there be nothing right or wrong, good or bad, antecedently and independently of the Will of God, there can be no reason, why God should will, or command one thing, rather than another.*

It is answered, *first*, That all goodness, and all possible perfection, is as *eternal* as God, and as *essential* to him as his existence. And to say, that they are either *antecedent* or *consequent*, *dependent* or *independent* of his Will, would be equally absurd. To ask, therefore, whether there be not something right and wrong, antecedent to the Will of God, to render his Will *capable* of being right, is as absurd, as to ask for some antecedent cause of his existence, that he may be proved to exist necessarily. And to ask, how God can be good, if there be not something good independently of him, is asking how he can be infinite, if there be not something infinite independently of him. And, to seek for any other *source* or *reason* of the divine Goodness, besides the divine Nature, is like seeking for some external cause, and help of the divine omnipotence.

The goodness and wisdom, therefore, by which God is wise and good, and to which all his works of wisdom and goodness are owing, are neither *antecedent*, nor *consequent* to his Will.—”

HUMAN REASON.

fore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. vi. 2. And this may be considered, not only as our duty, but our highest wisdom; as it is said, *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, is understanding*, Job xxviii. 28. hereby, in some measure, we answer the end for which we came into the world. And it is our interest, inasmuch as it is conducive to, and inseparably connected with our present and future blessedness: Nevertheless we are to be very sensible that this is out of our own power, as our Saviour says, *Without me ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5. Therefore we should exercise a constant dependence on him, who works in his people both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. We might here consider the nature and properties of that duty and obedience which we owe to God.

1. If it be such as we hope God will accept or approve of, it must proceed from a renewed nature, and as a consequence thereof, from a principle of love to God, as a reconciled Father; not from a slavish fear and dread of his wrath, as a sin-revenging Judge. Thus the Psalmist says, *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*, Psal. cxxx. 4.

2. It ought to be without the least reserve, as containing a ready compliance with whatever he commands; and hereby we ought to approve ourselves to him, as our sovereign Lord and Law-giver, and consider that we are under his all-seeing eye; and accordingly his glory is to be assigned as the highest end of all we do.

3. It ought to be performed with constancy; and therefore it doth not consist barely in a sudden fit of devotion, arising from the dictates of an awakened conscience, or the dread we have of his wrath, when under some distressing providence; but it ought to be the constant work and business of life. And,

4. When we have done or suffered most for God, we are not only to consider ourselves as *unprofitable servants*, Luke xvii. 10. as our Saviour expresses it; but we must lament our imperfections, and be deeply humbled for the iniquities that attend our holy things; inasmuch as *there is not a just man upon earth that doth good, and sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 20.

II. In order to our yielding obedience, it is necessary that God should signify to us, in what instances he will be obeyed, and the manner how it is to be performed; otherwise it would rather be a fulfilling our own will than his. None but those who are authorized hereto, and receive what they impart to us by divine inspiration, can, without the boldest presumption, assume this prerogative to themselves, so as to prescribe to us a rule of duty to God; and therefore it follows, that this obedience must be to his revealed will. The secret purposes of God are the rule and measure of his own actings; but his revealed

will is the rule of our obedience. *Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children, Deut. xxix. 29.*

III. The will of God, as thus made known to us, is called a Law: Which, that we may farther understand, let us consider, that a law is the decree or revealed will of a sovereign, designed to direct and govern the actions of his subjects, and thereby to secure his own honour and their welfare. And if this be applied to the law of God, we must consider him as our Lord and Sovereign, whose will is the rule of our actions; and he being infinitely wise and good, is able and inclined to direct us in those things that are conducive to his own honour and our safety and happiness; and this he has been pleased to do, and accordingly has given us a law as the rule of life.

The laws of God are either such as take their rise from his holy nature, and accordingly our obligation to yield obedience thereto, proceeds not only or principally from the command of God, but from their being agreeable to his divine perfections, which must be assigned as the reason of his prescribing them as matter of duty. These are all reducible to what we call, in general, the law of nature; which, because it is agreeable to the dictates of reason, it is called, by way of eminency, *The moral law*. Thus when we consider ourselves as creatures, we are led to confess that we are subject to God, and therefore bound to obey him; and when we think of him as a God of infinite perfection, this obedience must be agreeable thereunto; and because he is a Spirit, it must be performed in a spiritual manner; and as he is a holy God, he is to be worshipped with reverence and holy fear. Thus far we are induced to yield obedience by the law of nature.

But, on the other hand, there are many laws relating to the circumstances or manner in which God will be worshipped, which are founded in his sovereign will; and these we call positive laws. Of this kind was that law given to our first parents, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and, doubtless, there were many other laws given to them relating to their conduct of life, and mode of worship, though they are not particularly mentioned in that short history we have of the state of man before the fall. As for the moral law, it is said, in one of the answers we are explaining, to have been revealed to Adam in his state of innocence, and to all mankind in him. Its being revealed to man, must be supposed to be a less proper way of speaking; inasmuch as that method of discovery is more especially applicable to positive laws; and therefore I would rather chuse to express it as it is in a foregoing answer\*, by God's writing his laws in the hearts of our

\* See Quest. xvii



first parents, or impressing the commands of the moral law on their nature; so that by the power of reasoning, with which they were endowed, they might attain to the knowledge thereof. So that man, by the light of nature, knew all things contained in the moral law.

As to what is farther said in this answer, that the moral law was given to man in innocency; that has been considered elsewhere. And as all mankind were represented by him, so we are to understand those words, that it was given to all mankind in him. But these things have been insisted on in another place, as also what relates to his being prohibited from eating the tree of knowledge of good and evil, I shall pass it over, and proceed to speak more particularly concerning the moral law, together with the use thereof to all sorts of men.

**QUEST. XCIII.** *What is the moral law?*

**ANSW.** The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every one to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man; promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.

**QUEST. XCIV.** *Is there any use of the moral law to man, since the fall?*

**ANSW.** Although no man, since the fall, can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law; yet there is great use thereof, as well common to all men, as peculiar, either to the unregenerate, or the regenerate.

**QUEST. XCV.** *Of what use is the moral law to all men?*

**ANSW.** The moral law is of use to all men, to inform them of the holy nature and will of God, and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly; to convince them of their disability to keep it, and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives; to humble them in a sense of their sin and misery, and thereby help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and of the perfection of his obedience.

**QUEST. XCVI.** *What particular use is there of the moral law to unregenerate men?*

**ANSW.** The moral law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences to fly from wrath to come, and to drive them to Christ; or, upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable, and under the curse thereof.

**QUEST. XCVII.** *What special use is there of the moral law to the regenerate?*

**ANSW.** Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified, nor condemned; yet beside the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use to shew them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care, to conform themselves thereunto, as the rule of their obedience.

**I**N these answers we have,

I. A description of the moral law, in which we may observe,

1. That it is a declaration of the will of God to mankind, that so we may not be destitute of a rule to guide and regulate our behaviour, both towards God and man. This is the first idea contained in a law; and there is another, which respects the obligation which we are laid under hereby, arising from our being creatures, and consequently subject to God, who, as the supreme governor, has an undoubted right to demand obedience from us to every thing that he prescribes and reveals to us, as a rule for our direction therein. Moreover, that which God requires of us in this law, is, personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto.

(1.) It must be personal, as denoting that it is not to be performed by proxy; so that whatever services we may expect from men, we must not conclude that they can perform obedience for us to God, and thereby fulfil the obligation we are personally laid under. Yea, we may proceed farther, and assert, that what Christ has performed for us, does not exempt us from an obligation to yield perfect obedience; though it is not to be performed by us with the same view with which he performed it, as will be farther considered under a following

head, where we shall shew, that though it is not to be obeyed by us as a covenant of works; nevertheless we are obliged to obey it as a rule of life.

(2.) Our obedience to the law of God must be perfect. The same obligation that man was under at first, to yield perfect obedience, remains still in force, though we are not able to perform it. The insolvency of man by the fall, did not cancel or disannul this debt\*. And how much soever God may own and approve of the sincerity of his people, which is all the perfection which fallen man can arrive to in this world; yet we must not suppose, that hereby we fulfil the obligation which God, as a law-giver, has laid us under. This I the rather take notice of, that there may not be the least ground to suppose that we make void the law, but rather establish it, and thereby assert the right which God has to that perfection of obedience, which is due from us, though unable to perform it.

(3.) It must be perpetual, without backsliding from God, or the least remissness in our duty to him; and therefore there is no abatement or dispensation allowed of, that may give countenance to the least defect of this obedience. Thus the Psalmist says, *I will never forget thy precepts*, Psal. cxix. 93. and, *Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever*, Psal. cxlv. 2. Moreover, we may observe, that this obedience is to be performed with the whole man, and in particular, by the soul, with the utmost intenseness, in all the powers and faculties thereof. Accordingly our understandings are to be rightly instructed, as to what respects the matter and manner of performing it; our wills to be entirely subjected to the will of God, and our affections engaged therein, as being sanctified and excited by the Spirit, to the end, that duty may be performed with delight, arising from the love which we bear to him, whose servants we are.

It is also to be performed with our bodies. The former, includes in it that obedience more especially which is internal; this, that which is external. This is what is styled a lower sort of obedience; and if we rest here, it is so far from being acceptable, as the apostle says, that *Bodily exercise profiteth little*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Nevertheless, as the body is an instrument of the soul in acting, that service which is performed therein, is absolutely necessary; and therefore all religious worship is to be engaged in with a becoming reverence that is external, as well as that which is internal; without which the soul cannot be said to engage in any religious duties, in a becoming manner.

It is farther observed, that this obedience includes in it holiness and righteousness. The former of these respects more

\* *It is a known maxim in the civil law, Cessante capacitate subditi non cessat obligatio.*

especially our duty to God, which, being a branch of religious worship, ought to be performed with a reverential fear of his divine Majesty, and that due regard to his infinite purity, and entire dedication and consecration of ourselves to him, as becomes those who are sanctified by his Spirit, and enabled to exercise all those graces whereby we may approve ourselves his faithful servants and subjects. The latter more especially respects those duties which we owe to men, in the various relations we stand in to them, which is incumbent on us as what is enjoined by God.

2. The moral law is farther considered as having a promise of life annexed to it, and a threatening of death upon the breach thereof. This is what is generally called the sanction annexed to the law. A law without a sanction would not be much regarded, especially by those who have not a due sense of their obligation to obedience. Persons are very much disposed to enquire, when a command is given, what the consequences of their obeying or disregarding it will be? and this being made known before hand, is a strong motive to obedience. If God is pleased, out of his abundant grace, to encourage his people, by giving them to expect some blessings that he will bestow on those that obey him, it is, in some respect, necessary that this should be known. But especially since punishment, in proportion to the nature of the crime, will be the consequence of disobedience, it is becoming the divine perfections to let it be known, that the wages of sin is death. And this was not only annexed to the moral law, but equally impressed on the nature of man, who could not but know, that rebellion against God would be punished with a separation from him, and that all those miseries would attend it, in proportion to the respective aggravation thereof, that it deserves.

II. We have an account of the use of the moral law since the fall; and that either with respect to mankind in general, or the unregenerate and regenerate. And here it is observed, that no man since the fall, can attain righteousness and life by it; therefore it is not to be used with that view. From whence we may infer, that this might have been attained by man before the fall, according to the tenor of the covenant which he was under, the sum and substance whereof was that *the man that doth these things shall live by them*, Rom. x. 5. as the apostle says. Eternal life was promised to man in innocency; and he was then able to yield sinless obedience, which was the condition thereof. But it is impossible for fallen man thus to obey; for how perfect soever his obedience may be for the future, it is supposed, from the nature of the thing, that it cannot be sinless, after sin has been committed; and it would be a reflection on the justice and holiness of God, for us to con-

clude that he will accept of imperfect obedience, instead of perfect. Therefore it follows, that a right to life is not to be expected from our imperfect obedience to the law, as the apostle says, *By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified*, chap. iii. 20. in God's sight; in this respect our own righteousness is represented not only as faulty and defective, but as altogether insufficient to procure an interest in the divine favour, or to exempt us from the punishment which is due to us for sin. It is one thing to say, that eternal life is connected with obedience, so that no one can have the least ground to expect it without it; and another thing to say, that it is founded upon it, or, that it gives us a right and title to it. Nevertheless, we are not to conclude that the law is of no use; for,

1. It is of use to all men, in several respects :

(1.) It informs us of the holy nature and will of God, and of our duty to him. This is the first idea we have of a law\*, which signifies more especially a doctrine; and, as the subject-matter thereof, respects our being taught what we are obliged to, as commanded by a law-giver, it signifies a law. The divine perfections are eminently instamped on it in very legible characters; his sovereignty, as having a right to demand obedience; his holiness in the matter thereof, and in the obligation we are herein laid under to be *holy in all conversation; because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy*, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. and therefore this perfection is set forth in those threatenings that are annexed to it, whereby *the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, Rom. i. 18. As it is designed to discover our secret faults, that we may be humbled for them, and hereby a multitude of sins may be prevented, so it not only sets forth the holiness, but the goodness of God; and indeed there is nothing enjoined therein as our duty, but what includes in it some advantage. Thus the Psalmist describes it as *more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey comb*; and adds, that *in keeping thereof, there is great reward*, Psal. xix. 10, 11.

(2.) The moral law is of use to all men, as it binds them to perform that which is therein enjoined as matter of duty, which is another idea contained in a law, viz. as it is that which binds the consciences of men, that so we may not vainly and presumptuously conclude, to our own destruction, that we may live as we list, or say, who is Lord over us? It is a great instance of the care and goodness of God, that he has taken this method to prevent that ruin which would arise from our withdrawing the allegiance which we owe to him, and lay us un-

\* Thus the word *דבר*, is derived from *דבר*, didicit, or *viam monstravit*.

der the strictest engagement to seek after that blessedness which is connected with obedience to him.

(3.) We are hereby convinced of our inability to keep the law, and of the sinful pollution of our nature, hearts, and lives, as an expedient to humble us under the sense of sin and misery. The law being spiritual, we are thereby convinced that *we are carnal, and sold under sin*, as the apostle expresses it, Rom. vii. 14. And he also says, *I had not known sin, but by the law*, ver. 7. When we consider ourselves as being obliged to yield perfect obedience, and compare our hearts and lives therewith, we shall see nothing but holiness and purity on the one hand, and a wretched mass of corruption and impurity on the other. God demands perfect obedience; and we are unable, of ourselves, to perform any obedience. And our best duties being attended with many imperfections, we are hereby led to be humbled under a sense of sin, whatever thoughts we, before this, had of ourselves. When *the law enters, sin will abound*, chap. v. 20. and if we were apprehensive that *we were alive*, as the apostle expresseth it, *without the law; when the commandment comes, sin will revive and we die*, chap. vii. 9. and see ourselves exposed to the miseries threatened to those that violate it.

(4.) From hence arises a clear sight of the need that persons have of Christ, and of the perfection of his obedience. When we find ourselves condemned by the law, and that righteousness is not to be attained by our own obedience to it, then we are led to see our need of seeking it elsewhere; and when the gospel gives us a discovery of Christ, as ordained by God, to procure for us righteousness, or a right to eternal life by his obedience, this will shew us the need we have of faith in him, whereby we derive from him that which could not be attained by our own conformity to the law.

2. The moral law is of use in particular to the unregenerate. We have considered, under the former head, that it is of use to all men (among whom the unregenerate are included) as it gives them a discovery of the pollution and guilt of sin; and now we are led to enquire into the consequence hereof. Sin may be charged on the conscience, and the guilt thereof make it very uneasy, so that a person may apprehend himself under the condemning sentence of the law, and yet receive no saving advantage hereby; he may have a sight of sin, and not be truly humbled for it or turned from it. In some, corruption is hereby excited, and the soul grows worse than it was before; thus the apostle says, *sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*, ver. 8. Others, when filled with a dread of the wrath of God, are inclined to stretch out their hand against him, and strengthen

themselves against the Almighty; resolving, some way or other, to disentangle themselves, though they render their condition much worse thereby. These are compared to a *wild bull in a net, full of the fury of the Lord*, Isa. li. 20. or, as our Saviour says concerning Paul, before his conversion, *they kick against the pricks*, Acts ix. 5. Every step they take to free themselves from the horrible pit and miry clay, into which they are cast, sinks them deeper into it. Others are convinced of sin by the law, and, at the same time, despair of obtaining mercy; they complain with Cain, *My punishment is greater than I can bear*, Gen. iv. 13. or, as it is in the margin, *Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven*. These see themselves lost, or condemned by the law, but have no sight of Christ as coming into the world to save sinners, or, at least, the chief of them. The wound is opened, but there are no healing medicines applied. But there are others whose condition is no less dangerous, in whom the *wound is healed slightly*, who say, *Peace, peace, when there is no peace*, Jer. vi. 14. They are indeed, convinced of sin, and this is attended sometimes with an external humiliation, arising from the dread of God's judgments. This effect it had in Pharaoh, Exod. x. 16, 17. and Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 27—29. and they are willing to part with some particular sins, while they indulge others, that by this partial reformation they may free themselves from the condemning sentence of the law; but all this is to no purpose, sin gains strength hereby, and the guilt thereof is still increased. This is a wrong method taken to flee from the wrath to come; and therefore, when these convictions of sin have a good issue, in flying from it, they have recourse to Christ. This is called a being driven to Christ; by which we are to understand that they see themselves under an unavoidable necessity of going to him, as not being able to find peace or solid rest elsewhere. But since this effect is, in a peculiar manner, ascribed to the gospel, the law being only the remote means hereof, I would rather express it by their being drawn to him, or encouraged by the grace contained therein, to close with him by faith; and then the work is rendered effectual, and convictions end in a saving conversion. But if it be otherwise, or they apply themselves to indirect means, to ease themselves of the burden that lies on them, they are farther described as left inexcusable, and still remaining under the curse and condemning sentence of the law.

3. The moral law is of use to the regenerate. In considering which it may be observed; that there is something supposed in the answer, which treats on this subject, namely, that they who believe in Christ are delivered from it as a covenant of works; which is the only sense in which we are to under-

stand those scriptures, which speak of believers as *not* being under the law, Rom. vi. 14. and being *dead to the law*, chap. vii. 4. as *being redeemed from the curse thereof*, Gal. iii. 13. The moral law is to be considered, in two respects, as a rule of life, and so no one is delivered from it; or else, as a covenant of works, in the same sense in which it was given to man in innocency, the condition of which was his performing perfect obedience, in default whereof he was liable to a sentence of death. In this latter respect a believer is delivered from it.

This is the great privilege that such are made partakers of in the gospel; which sets forth Christ as our Surety, performing perfect obedience for us, and enduring the curse we were liable to; so that though it was a covenant of works to him, it ceases to be so to them who are interested in him; and accordingly it is farther added, that they are hereby neither justified nor condemned. Not justified; thus the apostle says, *By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified*, Rom. iii. 20. This is therefore only to be expected from him who is *the Lord our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. *in whom all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and glory*, Isa. xlv. 25. Nor are they condemned by the law; for that is inconsistent with a justified state; as the apostle says, *There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1. However, we must distinguish between a believer's actions being condemned by the law, or his being reprov'd thereby, and laid under conviction, for sins daily committed; and his being in a condemned state, according to the sentence thereof. We are far from denying that a believer is under an obligation to condemn or abhor himself, that is, to confess that he deserves to be condemned, by God, for the sins that he commits, which, if he should mark, or punish him according to the demerit of, he could not stand. Thus the Psalmist says, though speaking of himself as a believer, and consequently in a justified state, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified*, Psal. cxliiii. 2. This a believer may say, and yet not conclude himself to be in a state of condemnation; inasmuch as he sees himself, by faith, to have ground to determine that he is delivered from, and so not condemned by the law, as a covenant of works.

Moreover, it is observed, on the other hand, in the answer under our present consideration, that the moral law is of use to a believer, in those respects in which it is of use to all men; and therefore he is laid under the strictest obligation to perform all the duties which we owe to God and man, and to be humbled for those defects which he has reason to charge himself with, which call for the daily exercise of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.



But as to the special use of the moral law to those who are regenerate, as distinguished from all others, it is said to shew them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good. Thus *Christ is* said to be *the end of the law for righteousness*, Rom. x. 4. that is, he has answered the end and demand of the law, by performing that obedience which it requires, and thereby procuring a justifying righteousness, which is applied to every one that believes. This lays them under a superadded obligation to obedience, peculiar to them as believers; so that they are not only engaged to the practice of universal holiness, from the consideration of the sovereignty of God commanding in common with all others, but from *the love of Christ*, which does as it were *constrain them* hereunto, 2 Cor. v. 14. And hereby they are said to be provoked to more thankfulness, as they have greater inducements hereunto than any others; and this gratitude cannot be better expressed than by the utmost care to approve themselves to him in all things. Therefore the grace of God is so far from leading to licentiousness, that all who have experienced it, are hereby put upon the exercise of that obedience which they owe to God as their rightful Lord and Sovereign, and to Christ as their gracious Redeemer, whom they love entirely; and therefore keep his commandments.

I cannot but here take occasion to observe, not only with dislike, but a just indignation, how some, under a pretence of religion, sap the very foundation of it, while they frequently make mention of the gospel, and the liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free, and at the same time abuse it, not only by practising, but pleading for licentiousness. The Epicureans were libertines among the Heathen, and the Sadducees among the Jews; but these were vile and profligate out of principle; either denying the being of a God, or disowning his perfections as well as future rewards and punishments; and therefore it is no wonder they had no regard to the divine law. But I want words to express the wickedness of those who pervert the gospel of Christ, as though that exempted them from the obligation which all are under to universal obedience.

The apostle had to do with some such in his day; and therefore he represents them as saying, *Is the law sin?* that is, since we are delivered from the condemning sentence thereof, may we not take encouragement from thence to sin? or, as he elsewhere brings them in as saying, *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* chap. vi. 1. To both which he replies, with the greatest detestation, *God forbid*. After this, in an early age of the church, the Nicolaitans, Rev. ii. 6. and Gnos-

tics, and among them, the Valentinians held these pernicious opinions, and encouraged themselves in the practice of the greatest immoralities\*. And Augustin speaks of the Aetians and Eunomians, who lived in his time, who pretended that any one who persisted in the vilest crimes, would receive no detriment thereby, provided they adhered to the sentiments which they advanced †. And there are many, in later ages, whose sentiments have been, in this respect, subversive of all religion; and from their denying the obligation we are under, to yield obedience to the law of God, are justly called Antinomians.

However, that we may not appear to be unjust to the characters of men, let it be considered, that we are not here speaking of the charge of Antinomianism, which some, who defend or oppose the doctrines of grace, bring against each other; as supposing that their respective sentiments lead to licentiousness. The Papists and Pelagians pretend, though unjustly, that the doctrine of predestination, efficacious grace, and the final perseverance of the saints, is liable to this charge; while they on the other hand, lay themselves open to the like charge, by advancing doctrines which have the most pernicious tendency, as subversive of practical godliness, in various instances; particularly their asserting, that God in the gospel-covenant, dispenses with imperfect obedience instead of perfect; and this is no other than what we are able to perform without the aids of divine grace. But this we pass over, leaving each party to defend their scheme from this imputation.

As to others, who are more especially known by the character of Antinomians, these are of two sorts, namely, such who openly maintain that the moral law is not a rule of life in any sense; and that good works are not to be insisted on as having any reference to salvation; and therefore, if persons presume, as they, according to them, ought to do, that Christ died for them, and they were justified before they had a being, they may live in the practice of the greatest immoralities, or give countenance to them that do so, without entertaining the least doubt of their salvation; and that it is a preposterous thing for those who thus presumptuously conclude themselves to be justified, to confess themselves guilty of sin; since that would be to deny that they are in a justified state, or in any sense, to pray for the pardon thereof; since that would argue that it is not forgiven. Neither can they, with any tolerable

\* *Vid. Cov. Hist. lit. Tom. I. Page 30.*

† *Vid. Aug. de Hæres. Cap. liv. where speaking of Eunomius, he says, Fertur etiam usque adeo fuisse bonis moribus inimicus, ut asseveraret, quod nihil cuique obesset, quorumlibet perpetratio ac perseverantia peccatorum, si hujus quæ ad illud docebatur, fidei participo esset.*

degree of patience, entertain the least exhortations to practical godliness; because they pretend, that they are exempted from the obligation to perform any branch thereof, by their not being under the law. Nay, some of them have been so impudent, and daringly wicked, as to assert, that if they should commit murder, adultery, or any other crimes of the like nature, even this would be no bar in the way of their salvation; nor the most vile sins that can be committed, do them any hurt, or in the least affect their eternal state. I have, indeed, sometimes thought that this representation of Antinomianism was no other than a consequence, deduced from some absurd doctrines that have been maintained; or that so much of hell could never put on the mask or shew of religion in any degree; and that this character belonged to none but those who are open and professed Atheists. But though my lot has not been cast among persons of so vile a character, yet I have been informed, by those whose souls have been grieved with such conversation, that there are some in the world who thus set themselves against the law of God.

There are others, indeed, who are styled Antinomians, whose conversation is blameless, and are not therefore to be ranked with these men, or judged Antinomians in practice; who, nevertheless, do great disservice to the truth; and, it may be, give occasion to some to be licentious, by advancing unguarded expressions, which will admit of a double construction, without condescending to explain some bold positions, which they occasionally lay down.

Thus when they maintain eternal justification, without considering it as an immanent act in God, or as his secret determination, not to impute sin to those who are given to Christ; but ascribe that to it, which is only to be applied to justification, as it is the result of God's revealed will, in which respect it is said to be by faith: and when they encourage persons from hence, to conclude that their state is safe; and to maintain that it is the duty of every one to believe that he is thus justified; this has certainly a tendency to lead some out of the way of truth and holiness, whether they design it or no. And when others speak diminutively of good works as though they were in no sense necessary to salvation, because they are not the matter of our justification. This may give occasion to some to think that they may be saved without them.

And when others deny the law to be a rule of life, or assert that believers have nothing to do with it; though, it may be, they understand nothing else by it, but that it is not that rule, according to which God proceeds in justifying, or giving his people a right to eternal life; or, that a believer is not under the law, as a covenant of works; yet many would be ready to

think the words had a different meaning, and so be led out of the way thereby, how far soever this might be from their intention. And if a person seems studiously to avoid confessing of sin, or praying for forgiveness, some would be ready to judge of his sentiments by his practice; and certainly our denying this to be a duty in any sense, is not only contrary to scripture, but inconsistent with that humility and faith which are essential to practical godliness. Or when persons deny that self-examination is a duty; and speak of all marks and evidences of grace, though never so just and agreeable to the scripture-account thereof, as legal, or a low way, in order to a person's coming to the knowledge of himself; or suppose that they are unnecessary, as being inconsistent with the Spirit's testimony: This has a tendency to lead to presumption, which is a degree of licentiousness.

Moreover, when they assert that God is not angry with his people for their sins, nor, in any sense, punishes them for them, without distinguishing between fatherly chastisements, and the stroke of vindictive justice, or the external and sensible effects of that hatred which God cannot but exercise against sin, and his casting them out of a justified state: Such doctrines as these lead some persons to licentiousness, whatever be the secret meaning of those that advance them.

We have an instance of this, as the historian observes\*, in Agricola, who was Luther's towns-man, and great admirer; who, as it is probable, did not thoroughly understand what he maintained concerning the subserviency of the law to the gospel, and its having no place in the justification of a sinner; or else, from some unguarded expressions, which he was sometimes apt to make use of; this friend of his took occasion to advance some Antinomian tenets, viz. that repentance ought not to be urged from the consideration of the breach of the law; and that the gospel ought to be preached to sinners before they are brought under conviction by the law; and that how scandalous and debauched soever persons be in their lives, yet, if they do but believe the promises of the gospel, they shall be justified. In this, Agricola was followed by a party of men; and accordingly Antinomianism is said to have taken its rise, in this part of the world, from that time. Luther, on the other hand, was forced to take a great deal of pains to rectify his mistakes; which, though it tended to his conviction, yet it did not put a stop to the spread of his errors, which he had before propagated.

As for those who were charged with Antinomianism in England, in the last century, such as Dr. Crisp, Eaton, Salt-

\* See *Slued. Comment. de Stat. Relig. & Repub. Lib. xii.*

marsh, Town, and others, whatever their design might be, and how much soever they were remote from the charge of Antinomianism in practice; though it be alleged in their vindication, by some, that the principal thing they had in view, was to bear their testimony against the prevailing doctrine of Arminianism, that was studiously propagated by some persons of great character and influence in the nation: Nevertheless, we cannot but conclude, that they had done more service to the cause of truth, had they been more cautious in explaining their sentiments, and saved those, who had favourable thoughts of them in other respects, the trouble of producing some expressions out of their writings, to convince the world that they did not hold those dangerous notions which were charged upon them: and it is too evident to be denied, that many have taken them in the worst sense; who have from hence been ready to charge the most important doctrines of the gospel, as leading to licentiousness, and this has made some more sparing in defending those truths which ought to have been insisted on, and explained, though in other words more intelligible and unexceptionable.

**QUEST. XCVIII.** *Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

**ANSW.** The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God upon mount Sinai, and written by him in two tables of stone, and are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus; the four first Commandments containing our duty to God, and the other six our duty to man.

**H**AVING considered the moral law, as written on the heart of man at first, and the knowledge thereof, in some degree attainable by all who exercise their reasoning powers: We are in this, and some following answers, led to consider that epitome, or abstract thereof, that was given to the Israelites by the voice of God upon mount Sinai, which is contained in the Ten Commandments.

But since we are considering this instance of divine condescension to them, it may not be reckoned altogether foreign to our present design, for us to give some brief account of those other laws which God gave, together with the moral law; most of which were communicated from mount Sinai: And therefore we may observe, that together with the moral law, there were several forensic or judicial laws given by God for the government of the people of Israel, which more especially

respected their civil rights. And there were other laws which had a more immediate subserviency to their attaining the knowledge of those things which related to the way of salvation by the promised Messiah, which are more fully revealed in the gospel: And this is what we call the ceremonial law. Both these are to be considered before we come to speak concerning the moral law, as summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.

I. Concerning the judicial law. It cannot be supposed that so great a people, so much interested in the care of God, to whom he condescended to be their king, should be without a body of laws for their government: Accordingly there were some given them by him, which were founded in, and agreeable to the law of nature and nations; which all well-governed states observe unto this day, *viz.* that murder should be punished with death; theft with restitution, or some other punishment that may best tend to deter from it. Moreover, besides these, there were other judicial laws given to Israel, which had a more immediate tendency to promote their civil welfare, as a nation distinguished from all others in the world; which laws expired when their civil policy was extinct. And these were,

1. Such as tended to prevent the alienation of inheritances from the respective families to which they were at first given. Accordingly God commanded, that if a man died without children, his brother should marry his widow to raise up seed to him, to inherit his estate and name, Deut. xxv. 5, 6. Matt. xxii. 24.

2. If an Israelite was waxen poor, and obliged to sell his land, for the payment of his debts; the purchaser was to admit any of his family to redeem it; or, if they could not, he was, nevertheless, to restore the land at the *year of Jubilee*, which was every *fiftieth* year, Levit. xxv. 11, 12, 13, 25, 26, 27.

3. If an Hebrew servant was sold for the payment of debts, which he could not otherwise discharge; his master was obliged to release him after six years service, Exod. xxi. 2. But if the servant chose to stay with his master longer than that time, out of the love he bore to him; then he was to have his ear bored, as a token that he should serve him, without being subject to the aforesaid laws, which made provision for his discharge after a certain number of years, ver. 5, 6.

4. The land was to lie untilled, and the vine-yards and olive-yards were to be free for every one to come and eat of the fruit thereof every *seventh* year; designed more especially for the relief of the poor, amongst them, who had no distinct inheritance of their own, chap. xxiii. 10.

5. They were prohibited from taking usury of an Israelite, though they might of a stranger. The reason of which law might be, either that they might exercise brotherly kindness and charity to one another, in which sense the law is in force to this day; especially when the poor borrow money to supply themselves with necessary food, in which case it is now unlawful to take usury. Or else it is to be considered, that the Israelites lived upon their farms or cattle, by which they seldom got more than what was a necessary provision for their families. And therefore the paying usury whenever they were necessitated to borrow money, would have procured their ruin in the end. Therefore they were not to take usury of an Israelite, but of a stranger they might; because they enriched themselves by merchandise, and were gainers in a way of trade, by what they borrowed.

6. All the males were to come up to Jerusalem, to appear before God, and perform public worship in the temple three times a year, viz. at the solemn festivals; the passover, pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles, Deut. xvi. 16, 17.

7. Six cities of refuge were appointed for those to fly to, for protection, who killed any one by accident. Though a near kinsman, as an avenger of blood might kill the man-slayer before he came to one of these cities. The design of which law was to induce them to take care that none might lose their lives through inadvertency. And there was provision made in these cities for the man-slayer to dwell safely; whereby a just difference was put between such an one, and a wilful murderer, Numb. xxxv. 15, 26, 27. Thus concerning the judicial laws.

II. We now proceed to consider the ceremonial laws that were given them, the end whereof was to lead them into the knowledge of Christ, and the way of salvation by him, then to come, Heb. x. 1. Gal. iii. 24, 25. These may be considered under six heads, which we shall speak briefly to;

[1.] It was ordained, that all their males should be circumcised. This was designed to be a visible mark put on the church, whom God had set apart for himself, that hereby they might be distinguished from the world: But the principal design hereof was, that it might be a sign or seal of the blessings of the covenant of grace, in which God promised that he would be a *God to them*; and they were hereby to own themselves as his people, Gen. xvii. 7, 10.

[2.] There were various ways whereby persons were reckoned unclean, and ordinances appointed for their cleansing. They were rendered unclean, by eating those birds, beasts, fishes, and creeping things, which God had pronounced unclean, and not designed for food, Lev. xi. Moreover, they were polluted by touching the dead bodies of such unclean

birds, beasts, fishes, or creeping things, ver. 31. Again, some diseases, incident to the bodies of men, which were more than ordinarily noisome, rendered them unclean, as the issue, leprosy, &c. Lev. xv. 2, & seq. and ch. xiii. and the clothes they wore, the houses they lived in, the beds on which they lay, their ovens and the vessels used in eating or drinking, were, on several accounts, deemed unclean, and accordingly were either to be cleansed or destroyed; otherwise the owners thereof would be polluted hereby\*.

This law was designed to signify how odious and abominable sin, which is a moral pollution, is, in God's account, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, Hab. i. 13. We might also observe; that there are various ordinances appointed for their cleansing, in order to which, several sacrifices were to be offered, and divers washings with water, Lev. xiii—15. The former of these signified the way of our being delivered from sin by the blood of Christ, as the procuring cause of forgiveness, Heb. ix. 13, 14. Eph. i. 7. the latter, our being cleansed from sin by the internal, powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, in regeneration and sanctification, Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. Heb. x. 22. Tit. iii. 5, 6.

[3.] There were holy places, such as the tabernacle and temple, with the vessels and ornaments thereof. The tabernacle was erected according to the pattern which God shewed to Moses in the mount, Exod. xxv. 40. and was so framed, that it might be taken to pieces, and removed from place to place, as often as the host of Israel changed their station in the wilderness: And accordingly there were Levites appointed to take it down and set it up; and also waggons with oxen, to carry it, excepting those parts of it which belonged to the holiest of all, which were to be carried on their shoulders, Numb. vii. 6.

The temple was that fixed place appointed for public worship at Jerusalem; first built by Solomon, and afterwards rebuilt by Zerubbabel. And both this and the tabernacle signified, that God would dwell in the midst of his people, and accept of that solemn and instituted worship that was to be performed by his church, in all ages. This was designed to be a type of the incarnation of the Son of God, who is styled *Emmanuel*, *God with us*; and in allusion hereunto, he calls his body a temple, John ii. 19.

Moreover, the courts of this tabernacle and temple, and the ministry performed therein, had each their respective signification annexed to them. That, in which the priests came daily to minister, wherein gifts and sacrifices were offered, prefigured Christ's offering himself a sacrifice upon earth, for the sins

\* See a particular account hereof in Lev. xi. 15. Chapters.



of his people. And the inner court, which was the holiest of all, into which none but the high-priest was to enter, and that with blood and incense, signified Christ's *entering into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us*, Heb. ix. 24.

As for the vessels of the tabernacle and temple, these were either such as were in the first court, which is also called *the sanctuary; in which was the candlestick, the table, and the shew-bread*, Lev. xxiv. 2—7. Heb. ix. 2. the laver and the altar. Exod. xxx. 18. all which were designed for types. The candlestick signified the church, and the preaching the gospel therein; whereby light is held forth to the world, Rev. i. 20. Matt. v. 14. The shew-bread set up, signified the communion which the members of the church have with Christ, and with one another, 1 Cor. x. 17. as he styles himself, the *bread of life*, or, *the bread of God, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*, John vi. 33. The laver signified, that when we draw nigh to God, our persons and services ought to be pure and holy; to which the apostle alludes, when he says, *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water*, Heb. x. 22. The altar, which was holy, and sanctified the gift that the high-priest offered thereon, Matt. xxiii. 19. so that *every thing that touched it was holy*, Exod. xxix. 37. this signified, that the divine nature of Christ added an infinite worth to what he did in the human; in which he offered himself a sacrifice to God. These were the vessels in the outer court.

The vessels in the inward court, or holiest of all in which were the *golden censer, the ark of the covenant, and the Cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat*, Heb. ix. 3—5. were a symbol and type of God's special presence with his people, which is their glory; or of the Son of God's dwelling with us, in our nature. The mercy-seat, which was placed over it, signified that the mercy of God was displayed to sinners, through Christ. The cherubims of glory with their wings spread, overshadowing and looking down upon the mercy-seat, signified that the angels behold and admire the stupendous work of redemption, 1 Pet. i. 12. The altar of incense, and the golden censer, were types of the intercession of Christ for his people; and its fragrancy typified the acceptableness thereof in the sight of God.

There were, besides these, three more things in the holiest of all, which are particularly mentioned, *viz. the pot of manna*, which was miraculously preserved from corruption throughout their generations, as a memorial of the bread which God had fed them with in the wilderness, and a type of Christ, the bread of life, who was to come down from heaven, John vi.

48—50. There was also Aaron's rod, which was preserved in memory of the wonders that were wrought by it in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness: And it is said to have *blossomed and yielded almonds*, Numb. xvii. 8. which seemed to typify the flourishing state of the gospel; which is called, *The rod of God's strength*, Psal. cx. 2. Moreover, the two tables of the law were put into the ark, whereby the exceeding holiness of it was signified; and also that the law should be fulfilled and magnified by Christ, when he came to dwell among us. Thus we have given a brief account of the holy vessels of the temple and tabernacle.

We might also have added, that there were various ornaments thereof; they were adorned with silver, gold, and precious stones, carved, and curious needle-work; which rendered them exceeding rich and beautiful. The temple in particular, was the wonder of the world, far surpassing all other buildings, either before or since, Exod. xxv. 3—7. 1 Chron. xxix. 2—5. And this may be supposed to shadow forth the spiritual beauty and glory of the gospel-church, and of the heavenly state, in which it shall be brought to its utmost perfection, Rev. xxi. 11—23. Thus concerning those holy places, which were immediately designed for worship.

There were other holy places, such as the land of Canaan, which was styled the *Holy land*, and the inhabitants thereof a holy nation, or *the people of his holiness*, Isa. lxiii. 18. And as this was a place where God gave them rest, and a settlement, after forty years travel in the wilderness, it was a type of that rest which the church was to expect from Christ under the gospel, Isa. xi. 10. Heb. iv. 9. Moreover, Jerusalem was an holy city, Nehem. xi. 1. Matt. iv. 5. because thither the tribes went up to worship, Psal. cxxii. 4. and God was present with them there, Ezek. xxxvii. 27, 28.

[4.] There were other laws that respected those whom God had appointed to be ministers in holy things. These were the Priests and Levites, who were to assist them in some parts of their office; but especially the high-priest, who was the chief or head of them all, who is considered as an eminent type of Christ's Priestly office in several respects, Heb. v. 1—5. And there were various ceremonies instituted, which were observed in their consecration of them; particularly they were to be washed with water, Exod. xxix. 4. which was a rite used in the consecration of persons and things; and signified, that they who ministred in holy things, should be holy in their conversation. Moreover, there were several garments to be made and put on them, which are styled *holy*, and designed for *glory and for beauty*, chap. xxviii. 2, & seq. These signified the dignity and holiness of Christ's priesthood. And particularly

the breast-plate, which was only worn by the high-priest, adorned with precious stones, on which the names of the children of Israel were engraven, with which he was to go into the holy of holies. This signified the concern of Christ's people in the execution of his Priestly office, and his representing them when appearing in the presence of God for them. Again, they were anointed with the precious ointment, compounded for that purpose, chap. xxx. 25, 30. whereby they were set apart, or consecrated to minister in the priest's office, and were types of Christ; upon which account he is said to be *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, Psal. xlv. 7.

[5.] There were other laws respecting the temple-service, or the gifts and sacrifices that were to be offered there. There were many gifts presented or devoted to God; some of which were not designed for sacrifice, but to testify their acknowledgment of God's right to all we are and have; and among these, the first ripe fruits were offered, or presented, as gifts to him, Exod. xxix. 29. As for those things that were designed for sacrifice, these were offered, and their blood poured forth on the altar; which signified the expiation of sin by the blood of Jesus, Heb. ix. 22, 23, 26. And that part of the high-priest's office, which respected his carrying the blood with the incense, into the holiest of all, was a type of Christ's *entering into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God* for his people, chap. ix. 24.

[6.] There were other laws that respected the holy times or festivals, appointed for solemn worship. Some of these were monthly, as the new moons; others annual, as the passover; which was not only a sign memorizing their having been formerly delivered from the sword of the destroying angel, when he slew the first-born of Egypt; but it typified our deliverance from the stroke of vindictive justice, on which account Christ is called *our passover*, 1 Cor. v. 7. There was also the feast of harvest, in which the first-fruits were presented to God as an acknowledgment that he has a right to the best of our time and service. There was also the feast of tabernacles; which not only called to remembrance their dwelling in tents in the wilderness, but was an acknowledgment that we are strangers and sojourners upon earth; and was also a type of Christ, who was expected to come and pitch his tabernacle among us in his incarnation. There are many other laws, both judicial and ceremonial, that I might have mentioned; but since these things are only spoken of occasionally, as being imparted by God to Israel, by the hand of Moses, from mount Sinai, at the same time, or soon after, the Ten Commandments were given, Deut. iv. 12, 13. we shall add no more concerning them, but proceed,

To consider what is particularly mentioned in this answer concerning God's giving this abstract of the moral law contained in them, which were first delivered by a voice; in which respect God is said to have *talked with them face to face*, chap. v. 4. but at the same time there were many ensigns of terrible majesty attending the delivery of this law; the *mountain burned with fire*, Exod. xix. 18. There were *lightnings, thunders, and earthquakes, and the sound of a trumpet, that waxed louder and louder; which made the people, and Moses himself, exceedingly tremble*, Exod. xx. 18. Heb. xiii. 18, 19. and there was the ministry of angels who performed that part of the work which they were employed in on this solemn occasion. This is described in a majestic style, becoming the subject insisted on, when it is said, *The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law*, Deut. xxxiii. 2. Their ministry might probably consist in their forming the thunder, lightnings, and tempest. Nevertheless, the law was not originally from them, but given immediately by God. And the design of its being given in such an awful and majestic way was, that God might hereby set forth his greatness, and fill them with a reverential fear of him; and to intimate, that if they did not yield obedience to him, they were to expect nothing else but to be consumed by the fire of his jealousy. However, it was not an intimation that he designed to destroy, but to prove them; as it is said, that *his fear might be before their faces, that they should not sin*, Exod. xx. 20. That which we may farther observe is, that after God had delivered the Ten Commandments by words; he wrote them with his own finger, on two tables of stone; in which the moral law is summarily comprehended; which is particularly explained in several following answers.

**QUEST. XCIX.** *What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments?*

**ANSW.** For the right understanding of the Ten Commandments, these rules are to be observed,

**I.** That the law is perfect, and bindeth every one to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience, for ever, so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.

This implies, that how unable soever we are to yield perfect obedience, yet it does not cease to be a duty. And though some sins are smaller than others, yet the least is contrary to the law of God; and therefore not to be committed by us.

II. That it is spiritual, and so reacheth the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul, as well as words, works, and gestures.

This denotes that obedience ought to be performed in a spiritual manner. God is to be worshipped with our spirits; without which, all external modes of worship will avail nothing. Nevertheless, external worship is to be performed and expressed by words, works, and gestures; which supposes that our understandings are rightly informed, or that we do not worship an unknown God, and that our wills express a readiness to obey him out of choice, and without the least reluctance; and our affections must centre in him, as performing the duties incumbent on us, with the utmost delight and pleasure.

III. That, one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden, in several commandments.

Thus covetousness is forbidden in the Tenth Commandment. Nevertheless, as hereby the world is loved more than God, it is a breach of the first Commandment, and as such is styled *idolatry*, Col. iii. 5.

IV. That, as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden, and where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded. So, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.

Thus the fifth Commandment requires us to honour our superiors; therefore it forbids our reproaching or doing any thing dishonourable or injurious to them, Matt. xv. 4. The eight Commandment forbids stealing; and it also requires the contrary duty, namely, that we should labour for a competent maintenance, that we may not be exposed to any temptation thereunto. Thus it is said, *Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*, Eph. iv. 28. Moreover, as there is a promise of long life annexed to the fifth Commandment, this includes the contrary threatening to those that break it. Thus it is said, *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the*

*ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it, Prov. xxx. 17.* And on the other hand, whatever threatening is annexed to any commandment, the contrary promise is included, and belongs to those that repent of, or abhor, and turn from the sin therein forbidden. Thus it is said, *At what instant I speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it. If that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them, Jer. xviii. 7, 8.*

V. That what God forbids, is at no time to be done; what he commands, is always our duty, and yet every particular duty, is not to be done at all times.

Thus sin is, under no pretence to be committed. Accordingly Moses, when he was in a prosperous condition in Pharaoh's court, though he might have pretended, that his greatness, and the advantages which Israel might have expected from it, might have been an excuse for his continuing to enjoy the pleasures of sin there. Nevertheless, he was sensible that this would not exempt him from guilt; therefore *he forsook Egypt, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, Heb. xi. 25.* Again, what God commands is always a duty; so that there is no season of life in which it ceases to be so: as for instance, praying, reading, hearing the word, &c. Nevertheless these duties are not actually to be engaged in every moment of our lives. It is always our duty to visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, defend the oppressed; but such objects do not always present themselves to us, so as to render it our duty at all times.

VI. That, under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded, together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto.

Thus, according to the fourth Commandment, it is our duty to sanctify the Sabbath, and consequently to avoid every thing that may be a means or occasion of our breach of it. In the sixth Commandment murder is forbidden; so is likewise all sinful passion or anger with our brethren without a cause, *Matt. v. 22.* And in the seventh, adultery is forbidden; so is also *looking on a woman to lust after her, Matt. v. 28.* And as we are obliged to *abstain* from every sin forbidden, so *from all appearance of evil, 1 Thes. v. 22.* or what may be an occasion of it. Thus *fathers are not to provoke their children to*

*wrath*, Eph. vi. 4. and according to the moral reason of the Command, we are not to provoke any one to wrath, or do that which may excite their corruptions.

**VII.** That, what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavour that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.

Not to endeavour to prevent sin in others, is, in effect, to commit it ourselves. Thus Eli contracted the guilt of his sons crimes, by not endeavouring to prevent them. And persons are said to *hate their brethren in their hearts who do not rebuke them, but suffer sin upon them*, Lev. xix. 17. And Abraham is commended in that he *should command his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. From hence it follows, that it is a duty for parents to instruct their children in the ways of God, Deut. vi. 6, 7.

**VIII.** That, in what is commanded to others, we are bound according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them, and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.

That we are to be helpful to others, in that which is their duty, appears, from our obligation to endeavour that God may be glorified. Therefore we are, to our utmost, to promote their faith and joy in Christ. Thus the apostle says, *We are helpers of your joy*, 2 Cor. i. 24. And, on the other hand, we ought to take care that we do not partake with others in their sin. Thus the Psalmist says, *When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers*, Psal. l. 18.

**QUEST. C.** *What special things are we to consider in the Ten Commandments?*

**ANSW.** We are to consider in the Ten Commandments, the preface, the substance of the Commandments themselves, and several reasons annexed to some of them, the more to enforce them.

**QUEST. CI.** *What is the preface to the Ten Commandments.*

**ANSW.** The preface to the Commandments is contained in these words [*I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage*] wherein God manifesteth his sovereignty, as being Jehovah, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God, having his being

in and of himself, and giving being to all his words, and works; and that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all his people; who, as he brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so he delivereth us from our spiritual thralldom; and that therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his Commandments.

**QUEST. CII.** *What is the sum of the four Commandments, which contain our duty to God?*

**ANSW.** The sum of the four Commandments containing our duty to God, is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind.

**T**HESSE answers contain some things necessary to be observed; as,

I. That the substance of each commandment is to be considered by us, or what it is, that God enjoins or forbids therein; in which we find that every Commandment contains a distinct head of duty, and is to be explained according to the rules laid down in the foregoing answer. And also that some of them have reasons annexed to them; which is an instance of God's condescending goodness, that besides the consideration of our obligation to obey whatever he commands, because it is his will, we may have other motives to enforce this obedience. What these reasons or motives are, will be considered in their proper place.

II. That here is a general preface, which God has set before the commandments, which contains several motives to obedience; some of which were indeed peculiarly adapted to the Israelites, whereby they were put in mind of their late deliverance out of the land of Egypt. Nevertheless, if we consider the moral reason thereof, as this, together with the subject-matter of the commandments, to which it is prefixed, may be applied to God's people under all ages, we shall find that it extends farther than the obligation which Israel was under, as delivered from the Egyptian bondage. Therefore it may be observed,

1. That God reveals himself as the Lord, whose name alone is Jehovah, a God of infinite sovereignty and almighty power, as well as faithful to his promises; so that whatever he obliges us to do, or gives us encouragement to expect from him, we have the highest motive and inducement thereunto.

2. He styles himself his people's God; and so puts them in mind of that relation which they stand in to him, as the result of the covenant of grace, in which he gives them a warrant to lay claim to those spiritual blessings which he bestows on a



people high unto him; and this is considered as a farther obligation to obedience. The covenant of grace respects either the external dispensation thereof, which belongs to the church in general, viz. to all who are made partakers of the glad tidings of salvation, which are contained in the gospel; or else that particular claim which believers have to saving blessings which are made over to them therein, which respects all those graces which God is pleased to give his people here, and that glory which he has reserved for them hereafter; and this must certainly be reckoned the highest motive to duty.

3. As to what respects God's having brought Israel out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; this is to be extended farther than that particular providence, which was then fresh in their memories; and therefore it denotes all the deliverances which God is pleased to vouchsafe to his people, whether temporal or spiritual; and in particular, that which was procured for us by Christ, from the bondage and thralldom of sin and Satan, the condemning sentence of the law, together with that salvation which is inseparably connected with it; which is to be improved by us as an inducement to yield universal obedience to all God's commandments.

There are some, indeed, who think that this is a part of the first Commandment, and so the meaning is, Thou art to know, and practically consider, that I am the Lord thy God, as containing the affirmative part thereof; and then follows the negative, Thou shalt have no other gods; or else they suppose it to be a reason annexed to this Commandment in particular. But it seems most probable, that it is a preface to all the Commandments, and accordingly to be applied as a motive to enforce obedience to every one of them.

III. We have farther an account of the sum of the four Commandments, which contain our duty to God. Here it may be observed,

1. That the sum of all the commandments is love. This is what the apostle intends, when he says, that *the end of the commandment is charity*, or rather *love*, as it ought to be rendered, 1 Tim. i. 5. and accordingly he says, *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law*, Rom. xiii. 8. This love hath either God or man for its object, and comprizes in it the duties which we owe to God and man: and they are all reduced to this general head; that hereby we may understand; that obedience, whether it be to God or man, is to be performed with delight; otherwise it will be a burden to us and unacceptable to him, who has obliged us to love him and keep his commandments; because he first loved us.

2. These commandments, as they respect our duty to God and man, are comprized in two tables, which are to be divi-

ded according to their respective objects. Some ancient writers, indeed, have very injudiciously supposed that the five first Commandments belong to the first table, and the others to the second; and so make an equal division thereof; and the Papists have assigned but three to the first table, making the second Commandment an appendix to the first; and that the number ten may be compleat, they divide the tenth Commandment into two. The reason urged by them for this matter, will be considered in its proper place; but we are bound to conclude that the four first Commandments contain the duties of the first table, which respect those which we immediately owe to God; and these are to be performed, as our Saviour says, *with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind*, Luke x. 27. which is an idea superior to that which is contained in the duty we owe to man. And the six last Commandments contain the duties of the second table, of which our neighbour is the more immediate object.

That this division of the Commandments is just, appears from what the apostle says, when speaking concerning the duty contained in the fifth Commandment, *Honour thy father and mother*, who calls it *the first Commandment with promise*, Eph. vi. 2. Whereas it is not the first Commandment that has a promise annexed to it, since the second Commandment contains a promise of mercy to thousands of them that love God and keep his commandments; nor is it the first of the ten Commandments. Therefore the apostle can intend nothing hereby but that it is the first Commandment of the second table.

And now we are considering the Commandments as thus contained in two tables, and distinguished with respect to the more immediate objects thereof, we may farther observe; that though both of them are enjoined by the authority of God, and consequently are equally binding, so that the obedience which is acceptable in his sight, must be so extensive, as that we must *have respect to all his commandments*, Psal. cxix. 6. Yet it may be observed,

(1.) That the duties of the first table, in which we have to do with God as the more immediate object thereof, are to be considered as acts of religious worship, whereby we not only confess our obligation to obey him; but in performing it, adore and magnify his divine perfections as the highest end and reason thereof; which is not included in the idea of the duties which we owe to our neighbour, as contained in the commandments of the second table. These, indeed are to be religiously observed, not from any circumstance respecting our neighbour, but as duties which we perform in obedience to God\*.

\* *The former of these are generally styled the Elicit acts of religion, the latter the Imperate.*

(2.) Though the principal and most excellent branch of religion consists in our obeying the commandments of the first table; yet our obedience is not only defective, but unacceptable to God, if we neglect to perform those of the second. And, on the other hand, the performance of the duties of the second table is not sufficient to denominate a person a religious man, who lives in the neglect of those which are contained in the first.

(3.) The duties which we owe to our neighbour, as contained in the second table, are, for the most part, to give way to those which we owe to God, pursuant to those which are enjoined in the first, especially when they are considered as standing in competition with them. Thus we are obliged, in the fifth Commandment, to obey our parents or superiors. Nevertheless, if they command us to break the Sabbath, profane the name of God, or attend on such worship which he has not required, we are to disobey them, or to *obey God rather than men*, Acts iv. 19. And elsewhere it is said, *If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go, and serve other gods: thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him*, Deut. xiii. 6, 8. This our Saviour calls *hating father and mother, wife, children, and brethren*, Luke xiv. 26. without which we cannot be his disciples. By which he intends, that if the love which we otherwise owe to them, be inconsistent with that obedience which he requires of his followers; or, if we cannot oblige them, and at the same time perform the duties which we owe to him, the inferior obligation must give way to the superior.

QUEST. CIII. *Which is the first commandment?*

ANSW. The first commandment is, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

QUEST. CIV. *What are the duties required in the first commandment?*

ANSW. The duties required in the first commandment, are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honouring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing of him, believing him, trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in him, being zealous for him, calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submit-

sion to him, with the whole man, being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in any thing he is offended, and walking humbly with him.

**T**HE duties required in this Commandment, are contained in three general heads.

I. We are obliged to know God. This supposes that our understanding is rightly informed as to what relates to the divine perfections, which are displayed in the works of creation and providence, by which we are led into the knowledge of his eternal power and Godhead; and this is called the natural knowledge of God: but that knowledge which we are to endeavour to attain, who have a brighter manifestation of his perfections in the gospel, is of a far more excellent and superior nature; inasmuch as herein we see the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; or behold the perfections of the divine nature, as displayed in and through a Mediator; which is that knowledge which is absolutely necessary to salvation, as our Saviour says, *This is life eternal; that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,* John xvii. 3. By this means we not only know what God is, but our interest in him, and the foundation which we have of our being accepted in his sight.

II. We are farther commanded to acknowledge or make a visible profession of our subjection to God, and in particular, to Christ, as our great Mediator: His name, interest, and glory, should be most dear to us; and we are, on all occasions, to testify, that we count it our glory to be his servants, and to make it appear that he is the supreme object of our desire and delight, as the Psalmist says, *I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living,* Psal cxlii. 5. And elsewhere, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee,* Psal lxxiii. 25.

III. We are farther obliged by this Commandment, to worship and glorify God, pursuant to what we know, and the profession we make of him as the true God and our God. To worship and glorify God, is to ascribe all possible glory and perfection to him, and to have our hearts suitably affected therewith, as sensible of that infinite distance which we stand at from him. This is considered under several heads, which contain the substance of what is required in this Commandment; as,

1. We must make God the subject of our daily meditation; calling to mind what he is in himself, and what he is to us, or does for us; which is to be considered as a means to preserve us from sin, and a spur to duty, a motive to holy fear and reverence.

2. We are to honour, adore, and fear him for his greatness. Thus the Psalmist says, *Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord; who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him,* Psal. lxxxix. 6, 7.

4. As God is the best good, and has promised that he will be a God to us; so he is to be desired, loved, delighted, and rejoiced in, and chosen by us; as the prophet says, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night,' Isa. xxvi. 9. and the church, 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight,' Cant. ii. 3. and the apostle, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,' John xxi. 15.

4. As he is a God of truth, we are to believe all that he has spoken; and in particular, what he has revealed in his promises or threatenings, relating to mercies which he will bestow, or judgments which he will inflict. Thus our Saviour says, 'If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me,' John viii. 46. And it is said, when Israel 'saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses,' Exod. xiv. 31.

5. As he is able to save to the utmost, and faithful in fulfilling all his promises, we are to trust him with all we have from him, and for all those blessings which we hope to receive at his hands. Thus the prophet says, 'Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength,' Isa. xxvi. 4. And the apostle speaks of his *having committed* all to him, 2 Tim. i. 11. as the consequence of what he knew him to be.

6. When the name, interest, and glory of God is opposed in the world, we are to express an holy zeal for it. Thus the prophet Elijah says, 'I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword,' 1 Kings xix. 10. And as to what concerns our conversation in general, we are to be 'not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,' Rom. xii. 11.

7. Since he is a God hearing prayer, we are daily to call upon him, 'O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come,' Psal. lxxv. 2.

8. As he is the God of all our mercies, we are to thank and praise him for them. Thus the Psalmist says, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever,' Psal. cxxxvi. 1.

9. His sovereignty and dominion over us, calls for subjection and obedience, and a constant care to please him, and approve ourselves to him in all things. Thus the apostle says,

'Submit yourselves to God,' James iv. 7. And the Psalmist speaks of a person's 'cleansing his way, by taking heed there-  
'to according to his word,' Psal. cxix. 9.

10. As he is an holy, jealous, and sin-hating God, we are to be filled with grief and sorrow of heart when he is offend-  
ed, either by ourselves or others, as Ephraim says, 'I was a-  
'shamed, yea, even confounded; because I did bear the re-  
'proach of my youth,' Jer. xxxi. 19. And the Psalmist, 'Ri-  
'vers of waters run down mine eyes, because they,' that is, the  
world in general, 'keep not thy law,' Psal. cxxxix. 136.

11. A sense of our unworthiness and daily infirmities should  
excite us to *walk humbly with God*. This is enjoined as a ne-  
cessary duty, Mic. vi. 8. and is called a *being clothed with hu-  
mility*, 1 Pet. v. 5. Thus concerning the duties required in  
this Commandment,

That which may be farther observed is, that it is fitly placed  
before all the other Commandments, because it is, from the na-  
ture of the thing, necessary to our performing the duties which  
are required in them. The object of worship must first be  
known before we can apply ourselves, in a right manner, to  
perform any duty prescribed, whether respecting God or man.

It may be also farther considered, that it is not an easy mat-  
ter to keep the Commandment, because of the spirituality and  
vast extent thereof, and the many graces that are to be exer-  
cised by those that would perform it aright; and therefore we  
ought earnestly to beg of God that our hearts may be set a-  
right with him, and inclined and excited hereunto by him;  
which is a peculiar blessing to be desired and expected from  
the Holy Spirit. Thus the Psalmist says, *Incline mine heart  
unto thy testimonies*, Psal. cxix. 36.

QUEST. CV. *What are the sins forbidden in the first Command-  
ment?*

ANSW. The sins forbidden in the first Commandment, are,  
Atheism, in denying, or not having a God; idolatry, in  
having, or worshipping more gods than one, or any with, or  
instead of the true God; the not having and avouching him  
for God, and our God; the omission or neglect of any thing  
due to him required in this Commandment, ignorance, for-  
getfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy and  
wicked thoughts of him, bold and curious searching into his  
secrets, all profaneness, hatred of God, self-love, self-seek-  
ing, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our  
mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them  
off from him, in whole or in part; vain credulity, unbelief,  
heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, insensi-

bleness under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God, using unlawful means, and trusting in lawful means, carnal delights and joys; corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal, lukewarmness, and deadness in the things of God, estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God, praying, or giving any religious worship to saints, angels, or any other creatures, all compacts, and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions, making men the lords of our faith and conscience, slighting and despising God and his commandments, resisting and grieving of his Spirit, discontent, and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us, and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.

QUEST. CVI. *What are we especially taught by these words (before me) in the first Commandment?*

ANSW. These words *before me*, or before my face, in the first Commandment, teach us, that God who seeth all things, takes special notice of, and is much displeas'd with the sin of having any other god; that so it may be an argument to dissuade from it, and to aggravate it, as a most impudent provocation, as also to persuade us to do, as in his sight, whatever we do in his service.

**T**HE sins forbidden in this Commandment may be reduced to two general heads, Atheism and Idolatry.

*First*, Atheism; whereby men are so far from taking God for their God, that they deny that there is a God; or, at least, that he is what he has revealed himself to be. Thus the wicked man, who is styled a *fool*, is represented as *saying in his heart, There is no God.* Psal. xiv. 1. This Atheism is either speculative or practical. The former of these is that which is seated in the minds and consciences of men; who are so far blinded, perverted, and deluded, as to think that there is no God. Though, indeed, there are very few among these who are so bold and profane as to deny this truth when they attend to the dictates of nature, or duly exercise those reasoning faculties with which God has endowed them; which, if they neglect to do, they must be reckoned but one remove from brutes. Some, indeed, are ready to wish that there were no God, or inclined to deny those divine perfections that are essential to him, cast contempt on his government, or, it may be, deny a providence; which is, in effect, to deny that there is a God. Though it must be observed, that none proceed to this degree of wickedness, till, by a long continuance in sin, they are given up to judicial hardness of heart, and blindness

of mind, Rom. i. 28. Eph. iv. 17—20. And even these have been forced, at some times, to confess that there is a God, with whom is terrible majesty; when he has broken in on their consciences, and filled them with the dreadful apprehensions of his wrath, as a sin-revenging Judge. But where there is one speculative Atheist, there are a thousand practical ones, who live without God in the world; and these are described in this answer, as being guilty of those sins which none who duly consider his divine perfections would venture to commit.

To enlarge on every one of those instances, particularly mentioned in this answer, in which this sin is supposed to consist, would require a distinct treatise, and be inconsistent with our designed brevity in explaining the Ten Commandments. All that we shall therefore attempt at present, shall be to consider some instances, in which practical Atheism discovers itself, together with the aggravations of this sin; and then we shall enquire what judgment we are to pass concerning those who complain of atheistical and blasphemous thoughts; and consider whether this be a degree of that Atheism which we are speaking of; together with the causes of this sin, and the remedies against it.

I. The instances in which practical Atheism discovers itself. And,

1. They are chargeable with it who are grossly ignorant, and know nothing of God but the name, being utter strangers to those perfections whereby he makes himself known to the world, or who entertain carnal conceptions of him, as though he were altogether such an one as ourselves, Psal. l. 21.

2. When persons, though they know, in some measure, what God is, yet never seriously exercise their thoughts about him; which forgetfulness is a degree of Atheism, and will be severely punished by him, Psal. ix. 17. and l. 22.

3. When persons maintain corrupt doctrines, and dangerous heresies, subversive of the fundamental articles of faith, and contrary to the divine perfections. Of this kind are those that militate against his sovereignty and dominion over the wills, consciences and affections of man; when persons conclude that his counsels and determinations may be disannulled or defeated; or when we suppose that he changes, as we do; or when, under a pretence of advancing one perfection, we set aside the glory of another, when in order to magnify his mercy, we disregard his holiness or justice, and so presume of being happy without being holy; or when we give way to despairing thoughts, from the consideration of his vindictive justice, without improving the displays of his mercy, as set forth in the gospel.

4. When we repine and quarrel at his providence, and pre-



tend to find fault with the dispensations thereof, or charge God foolishly, and go about to prescribe laws to him, who is the Governor of the world, and may do what he will with the work of his hands.

5. When we refuse to engage in those acts of religious worship which he has appointed, or to attend on his ordinances, in which we may hope for his presence and blessing.

6. When we behave ourselves, in the conduct of our lives, as though we were not accountable to him, and had no reason to be afraid of his judgments. Accordingly, when we set our affections on other things, and take them off from him, when we are guilty of wilful impenitency and unbelief, and are incorrigible under divine rebukes; when our hearts and lives are estranged from him, as though we desired not the knowledge of his ways; when we resist and grieve his Spirit, are discontented and impatient under his hand, or ascribe that to second causes, or think that those things come by chance which are under the direction of his providence. In these, and many other instances, persons are notoriously guilty of practical Atheism, which is forbidden in this Commandment.

II. We are now to consider the aggravations and dreadful consequences of this sin.

1. It is contrary to the light of nature, and the dictates of conscience, a disregarding those impressions which God has made of his glory on the souls of men. And in those who have been favoured with the revelation of the grace of God in the gospel, in which his perfections have been set forth to the utmost, it is a shutting our eyes against the light and casting contempt on that which should raise our admiration, and excite in us the highest esteem of him whom we practically disown and deny.

2. It is directly opposite to, and entirely inconsistent with all religion, and opens a door to the greatest degree of licentiousness. To live without God in the world, is to give the reins to our own corruptions; it is not barely a sin of infirmity or inadvertency, but a running in all excess of riot; and therefore the consequence hereof must be dreadful; for that which strikes at the very being of God, cannot but expose the sinner to the sorest condemnation. But since there are some sins mentioned in this answer, which contain a degree of practical atheism; which believers themselves are prone to fall into, and complain of, as forgetfulness of God, unbelief, distrust of his providence, insensibleness under judgments, too great a degree of hardness of heart, pride, carnal security, discontent and impatience under his dispensations; this may tend very much to discourage them, and make them conclude that they are not in a state of grace; especially when they find, as some-

times they do, atheistical and blasphemous thoughts suggested to their minds. Therefore we must inquire,

III. What judgment we are to pass concerning those who are ready to charge themselves with practical atheism, especially as to what respects those unbecoming thoughts and conceptions which they sometimes have of the divine Majesty? whether this be altogether inconsistent with the truth of grace, together with the causes thereof, and the remedies against it? It is certain, that the best of God's people are sanctified but in part, and therefore are prone to commit those sins which seem to contain in them a denial, at least, a neglect of that regard which we ought to have for the divine perfections, and especially when we are not only followed with vain, but blasphemous thoughts; which gives great disturbance to us, when engaged in holy duties. This ought to be reckoned a very great affliction, and occasion many searchings of heart; since sometimes it brings much guilt with it. Nevertheless, we are not always from hence to conclude that we are in a state of unregeneracy. It is the prevalency of corruption, or the dominion of sin, which is inconsistent with the truth of grace, not the remainders thereof. A person may have faith, who yet complains of unbelief; he may have a due regard to God, as to what respects the course and tenor of his actions; but yet, in many instances, be chargeable with forgetfulness of him. He may have a love to him, and yet sometimes be guilty of indiscreet zeal, on the one hand, or luke-warmness and deadness of heart, on the other; his mind and affections may be sanctified, and yet he be sometimes followed with atheistical and blasphemous thoughts.

We have instances in scripture of good men, who have spoken, not only unadvisedly, but, as we may term it wickedly with their lips. Thus Job is justly reprov'd by Elihu for charging God with *finding occasions against him; putting his feet in the stocks, and marking all his paths*, Job xxxiii. 10, 11. as though his dealings with him had been unjust and severe; especially when he says at the same time, *I am clean, and without transgression; I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me*, ver. 9. And Jonah, when he was reprov'd by God for his passionate behaviour towards him, vindicates himself, and says, *I do well to be angry, even unto death*, Jonah iv. 9. These are expressions that favour of a degree of Atheism; and so do those unbecoming conceptions of God, whereby our thoughts are sometimes defiled and depraved. But it is one thing to be guilty of this through surprise and the prevalency of temptation; and another thing to have those thoughts indulged by, and lodged in us unrepented of.

And there are some instances in which believers are afflic-

ed with atheistical and blasphemous thoughts, when it is hard to say that they contract guilt thereby, or, at least, it must only be reckoned an infirmity arising from this imperfect state; and that more especially when they are injected by Satan, and are without the consent of our wills; but treated with the utmost abhorrence, constantly bewailed and resisted with all our might; more particularly when we take occasion hereby to exercise those graces which discover that we have other apprehensions of God than what are suggested at those times, when we are hurried by these temptations, and can scarce say, that we have the government of our own thoughts; especially if we are able to say, at such a time as our Saviour did, when unadvisedly tempted by Peter, who, was at that time the Devil's instrument, to persuade him to relinquish the work which he came into the world about. *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence to me,* Matt. xvi. 23.

And this leads us to consider the causes of such atheistical and blasphemous thoughts: Sometimes they proceed from a neglect of waiting on God in his ordinances, or indulging a carnal and stupid frame of spirit therein, and not maintaining that holy reverence, or becoming sense of his all-seeing eye, which we ought always to have. Moreover, there is nothing that has a greater tendency hereunto, than our conversing with those who make religion the subject of their profane wit and drollery; especially if we do this out of choice, and do not at the same time testify a just abhorrence of it.

As for those remedies which are to be made use of to fence against, and cure the sinfulness of our thoughts in such-like instances; it behoves us to repent of those sins, which may have been the occasion of, or given rise to them. And inasmuch as it is not in our own power to govern our hearts or affections, or restrain the breaking forth of corruption; it is necessary for us to commit our souls into Christ's hands, with earnest supplications to him that he would sanctify, regulate, and cleanse our thoughts, and bring us into, and keep us in a good frame. We ought also to desire, seek after, and improve all opportunities of conversing with those whose discourse is holy and profitable, Mal. iii. 16. by which means our affections may be raised, and our thoughts tinctured with divine things, which will leave an abiding impression behind them, Luke xxiv. 32. Which leads us,

*Secondly,* To consider this Commandment as forbidding idolatry. Thus, when it is said, *Thou shalt have no other gods;* the meaning is, thou shalt not worship idols, or set a creature in the place of God, or pay that regard to it that is due to him alone.

Here it may not be inconvenient to consider the difference

between idolatry as it is a breach of the first and second commandment. As it is a breach of the first Commandment, it contains in it a giving divine honour to that which is not God; but as it is against the second Commandment, it is a worshipping God by the creature, to whom an inferior kind of worship is given. Thus when the Papists worship God by images, supposing them to be a help to their devotion, or a means of performing that worship which they pretend to be given ultimately to God. Or when they ascribe any branch of divine glory to saints or angels; notwithstanding what they say to exculpate themselves from the breach of the first Commandment, they are justly chargeable with the breach of the second.

We are here to consider, the idolatry more especially that is forbidden in the first Commandment. Which is either what is more gross, such as that which is found among the heathen; or that which is more secret, and may be found in the hearts of all, and is discovered by the practice of multitudes of Christians, who profess the utmost detestation of idolatry in the other sense.

1. As to idolatry, in the former sense, together with the rise and progress thereof. In considering the first rise of it we may observe,

(1.) That it proceeded from the ignorance and pride of man, who, though he could not but know, by the light of nature, that there is a God; yet being ignorant of his perfections, or of what he has revealed himself to be in his word, was disposed to frame those ideas of God, which took their rise from his own invention. Accordingly the apostle says, *When ye knew not God, ye did service unto them, which, by nature, are no gods, Gal. iv. 8.*

(2.) When iniquity abounded in the world, and men withdrew from, and cast contempt on the ordinances of God, they invented and worshipped new gods. This some suppose Cain and his posterity did, when he *went out from the presence of the Lord, Gen. iv. 16.* and the sons of God, that is, the church, when they contracted marriages with the *daughters of men, chap. vi. 2.* and joined with them in idolatry; so that it is no wonder if persons leave the true worship of God, that they should chuse to themselves other gods.

(3.) Hereupon God gave them up to judicial blindness; so that they *worshipped the host of heaven, Acts vii. 43.* as the apostle says the Heathen did.

(4.) As to what concerns the idolatry which was practised among the Israelites, that took its rise from the fond ambition which they had to be like other nations, who were abhorred of God; counting this a fashionable religion, and finding the true worshippers of God to be fewer in number than the rest of the

world, so that, as the prophet speaks, they were *like a speckled bird*, despised and hated by the Heathen *round about them*, Jer. xii. 9. they approved of, and learned their ways. It was this that occasioned Solomon to *cleave to them in love*, 1 Kings xi. 2: which was not much unlike to the argument used by Demetrius and his followers, why Diana should be worshipped; *namely, because all Asia and the world worshipped her*, Acts xix. 27.

(5.) The Devil was permitted, for the trial of the faith of God's people, and as an instance of his righteous judgment on his enemies, to abuse the unthinking part of the world by various signs and lying wonders. Thus we read of *prophets*, and *dreamers of dreams*, who gave forth signs and wonders, which God sometimes judicially suffered to come to pass; whereby many took occasion to go *after other gods*, Deut. xiii. 1-3. and Antichrist is said *to come after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders*, 2 Thess. ii. 9. This was managed by the craft and covetousness of the priests, who made a gain of it, and amused the common people thereby. And the Heathen oracles, so much spoken of by ancient writers, which gave countenance to their idolatry, are reckoned, by some, to have been no other than a contrivance of those who had little else but secular interest in view. And when they predicted things future, or revealed secrets, this was generally done in doubtful expressions: so that whether the thing really came to pass or no, the end designed might be answered thereby; and doubtless there was a hand of Satan herein, to harden the world in that idolatry which was then practised by them. The gods they worshipped were as numerous as the countries and kingdoms where idolatry prevailed; accordingly every nation, yea, every city had its particular god and distinct modes of worship.

[1.] Some worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, supposing that their regular motion and influence on earthly bodies, was not to be attributed to the all-wise providence of God, but to some intelligent being, which resided in, and gave that motion and influence to them: upon the account whereof they worshipped them as gods. This some did in that early age in which Job lived, Job xxxi. 26. and the Israelites were warned against it, Deut. iv. 19. And afterwards we read of *idolatrous priests, who burnt incense to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven, and dedicated horses and chariots to the sun*, 2 Kings xxiii. 5, 11.

[2.] Others worshipped the earth, and many creatures therein, especially those that they received a more than ordinary advantage from. Thus the Egyptians worshipped the river Nile; by the overflowing of which, their country was rendered

fertile. And some who lived in maritime towns, worshipped the sea, thinking thereby to prevent an inundation from it. And the Philistines worshipped Dagon; inasmuch, as living near the sea, it afforded them plenty of fish.

[3.] Others worshipped those parts of the earth which they most delighted in; such as gardens, woods, groves, springs, &c. which they supposed to be inhabited by some gods, who produced the advantages which they received hereby, without regarding the providence of God, to which every thing is to be ascribed, that the earth brings forth for the support and delight of men.

[4.] Others supposed that there were particular gods, who had the oversight of men, succeeded their undertakings in the various affairs of life, conducted them when travelling by sea or land, gave good or ill success to their secular employments, and preserved them in sickness and health; and accordingly they paid divine adoration to them.

[5.] Others expressed the regard they had to virtue by worshipping some men after their death, who had signalized themselves by inventing some things which were of common advantage to mankind while they lived. And the Romans were so much addicted to this practice of idolatry, that some of their emperors, though tyrants and monsters in wickedness, while they lived, obliged their subjects to perpetuate their memories by worshipping them as gods when they were dead.

[6.] Some were so stupid, as that they worshipped stocks and stones, ascribing divinity to them; in which they acted below the reason of intelligent creatures. Thus the prophet speaks of their idols as first *growing in the wood*, then *framed by the smith, or carpenter, into gods*, and afterwards *worshipped by them*, Isa. xlv. 9—17. And the Psalmist, on this occasion, justly observes, *They that make them are like them; so is every one that trusteth in them*, Psal. cxv. 4—7, compared with 8.

We might, under this head, consider some things mentioned in scripture; in which idolaters not only acted contrary to the dictates of reason, but discovered themselves to be cruel and inhuman in their modes of worship. Thus Baal's worshippers in Ahab's time, cut themselves with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out of them, 1 Kings xviii. 28. and others made their children pass through the fire, in the worship they paid to Molech, or the sun, which the Psalmist refers to, when he says, *They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters*, Psal. cvi. 37, 38. This, indeed, some think, intends nothing else but their passing between two fires; so that they were scorched by them. Yet others, with greater

reason, suppose that they were inclosed in that brazen idol, and so burnt to death in the most barbarous manner\*.

The use which we ought to make of this doctrine, should be to excite us to bless God for the clear light of the gospel, whereby we are led to turn from dead idols to serve the living and true God: nevertheless we are to take heed lest we be chargeable with heart-idolatry; whereby we may be said to break this Commandment, though it be in a different way from that in which the Heathen did. This leads us to consider,

2. That idolatry which is sometimes found among Christians; who, though they abhor the thoughts of giving divine worship to a creature, yet, if they look into their own hearts, will have reason to charge themselves with those things which are in scripture called idolatry; namely, when they put any thing in the room of God, or love it more than him; and this may be considered in the following instances.

(1.) Self may be reckoned among those idols which many, who make profession of the true religion, pay a greater regard to than to God. Thus the apostle, speaking concerning the great degeneracy of the world, among other things, says, that *men should be lovers of their own selves*, 2 Tim. iii. 2. so that self-love turns away the heart from God, and excludes all practical religion. This we may be said to be guilty of; in which respect we are chargeable with heart-idolatry.

[1.] When we reject, or refuse to give credit to any of the great doctrines contained in divine revelation, unless we are able to comprehend them within the shallow limits of our own understandings; upon which account some are inclined to treat the most sacred mysteries of our religion with contempt; and for the same reason they might as well deny and disbelieve what is said concerning the infinite perfections of the divine nature, because they cannot be comprehended by us. This is no other than a setting up our own understanding, which is weak and liable to err, in opposition to the wisdom of God, and, in some respects, a giving superior glory to it.

[2.] When we are resolute and incorrigible under the various rebukes of providence, and persist in our rebellion against God, notwithstanding the threatenings which he has denounced, or the judgments which he executes. When the will of man is obstinately set on those things which are directly contrary to the will of God; and, though we are warned of the danger

\* To this the poet's observation might well be applied, *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!* Lucet. de Nat. Her. Lib. 1. And that human sacrifices were offered, appears from what we read of the king of Moab, who took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt-offering, 2 Kings iii. 27.

thereof, resolve notwithstanding, to add rebellion to our iniquities, like the wild ass used to the wilderness, or the swift dromedary traversing her ways, that cannot be easily turned out of her course. In this respect the will of man is set in opposition to God; and therefore he is, for this reason, justly chargeable with idolatry.

(3.) This also discovers itself in our affections, when they are either set on unlawful objects, or immoderately pursue those that would otherwise be lawful; when we love these things which God hates, or covet what he has expressly forbidden, as Achan did the wedge of gold, and the Babylonish garment; upon which account *covetousness* is, by the apostle, called *idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. And to this we may add, that we are chargeable with this sin, when we *make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*, Rom. xiii. 14. Thus the apostle speaks of some *whose god is their belly*, Phil. iii. 19.

And as for those things which are otherwise lawful, we may be guilty of idolatry in the immoderate pursuit of them, when they take up too much of our thoughts, time, and content; when our affections are so much set upon them, as though we had nothing better to mind; when we are not willing to part with them when God calls for them at our hands, and are more cast down at the loss of them, than we are when deprived of those spiritual blessings which are of the highest importance. In these instances we may be said to set up *self* as our idol in opposition to God.

And to this we may add, that there is a more subtle kind of idolatry, whereby *self* enters into, and takes its place in those religious duties, which believers are engaged in. Thus when they attempt to perform them in their own strength, as though they had a sufficiency in themselves, and had no occasion to depend on the almighty power of God to work in them that which is pleasant in his sight. And we are farther guilty of this sin, when, through the pride of our hearts, we are apt to applaud ourselves when we have performed some religious duties, and expect to be justified thereby; which is a setting up *self* as an idol, in the room of Christ. And lastly, when *self* is the end designed in what we do in matters of religion, and so robs God of that glory which is due to his name.

(2.) There is another idol, which is put in the room of God; and that is the world. When the profits, pleasures, or honours thereof are thought of with the greatest delight, as though they were our chief good, and pursued with more earnestness than Christ's interest and glory. When it has not only the highest place in our affections, but, as it were, engrosses them; this is that love of the world which, as the apostle says, is inconsistent with the love of the Father, 1 John ii. 15. and de-



notes us guilty of that idolatry which we are now speaking of; more particularly,

[1.] When our thoughts are so much engaged in the pursuit of it, that we grow not only cold and remiss as to spiritual things; but allow ourselves no time for serious meditations on them, or converse with God in secret.

[2.] When the world has our first and last thoughts every day; when we are so far from following the Psalmist's example, when he says, *When I awake, I am still with thee*, Psal. cxxxix. 18. as considering ourselves under the care of providence, and beholden to God for the mercies which we enjoy, that we are taken up with nothing else but the projects and schemes which we lay for the gaining or increasing our wealth, or worldly estate therein. And this having been the great business of the day, takes up and engages our wakeful thoughts by night, as though it were the main work and business of life.

[3.] When we pursue the world, without depending on God for his blessing to attend our lawful undertakings, and do not consider the good things thereof as his special gift, nor the disappointments that attend us therein, as ordered by his overruling providence, to engage us to walk more closely with him, and take up our rest in him as our only happiness.

[4.] When our hearts are hereby hardened, and grow cold and indifferent in religion, or when it follows and disturbs us in holy duties, and renders us formal in the discharge thereof.

[5.] When the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world have a tendency to quiet our spirits, and give us full satisfaction, though under spiritual declensions, and destitute of the special presence of God, which is our greatest happiness.

[6.] When we fret, or repine at the providence of God, under the disappointments we meet with in our secular affairs in the world. And,

[7.] When we despise the members of Christ, because they are poor in the world, are ashamed of his cross, and refuse to bear reproach for his sake.

(1.) There is another instance of heart-idolatry, viz. when we adhere to the dictates of Satan, and regard his suggestions more than the convictions of our own consciences, or the Holy Spirit. Satan's design in his temptations, is to turn us away from God; and when we are drawn aside thereby, we may be said to obey him rather than God. This is what all are more or less guilty of; but some are said, in an uncommon degree, to be his servants. Thus the apostle Paul styles the sorcerer, *who sought to turn aside the deputy from the faith, a child of the devil*, Acts xiii. 10. and our Saviour tells the Jews, *Ye are of your father the devil; and the lusts of your father ye will do*, &c. John viii. 44. He is also called *The god of this world*,

2 Cor. iv. 4. and the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. and accordingly he attempts to usurp the throne of God; by which means he has led a great part of the world after him. And, as he tempted our Saviour to fall down and worship him, Matt. iv. 9. though without success, he prevails upon others to do it to their own ruin. Here it may be observed,

[1.] That he has propagated several doctrines, in opposition to the gospel; and, indeed, all those doctrines which are subversive thereof, take their rise from him. Thus the apostle speaks of some who, *in the latter times, should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*, 1 Tim. iv. 1. This they do when they depart from the way of truth.

[2.] He has sometimes invented those modes of worship, which have been observed by some, in imitation of the sacrifices which God had ordained; and whatever pretence there might be of religion herein, he had doubtless a design, by this means, to set up himself, in opposition to God.

[3.] He has amused and hardened the hearts of his subjects, by pretended miracles, designed to oppose, and lessen the credit of those real miracles which have been wrought, to confirm the truth, by the finger of God, Exod. viii. 7.

[4.] He has endeavoured to extirpate the true religion, by raising persecutions against the faithful worshippers of God; which has been his constant practice, so far as he has been permitted, in all ages.

[5.] He has excited, in some of his subjects, the greatest degree of hatred, opposition to, and rebellion against God. Thus he *entered into the heart of Judas*, Luke xxii. 3. and *filled the heart of Ananias, that he lied to the Holy Ghost*, Acts v. 3. and has hardened the hearts of others, that they bade defiance to the Almighty, as Pharaoh, who said, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* Exod. v. 2.

[6.] He has persuaded many of his subjects to enter into a kind of confederacy with him, and with one another, to promote his wicked designs. Thus those wretched Jews did, who *bound themselves under a curse, that they would neither eat or drink till they had killed Paul*, Acts xxiii. 14. And we read of others who had *made a covenant with death and with hell*, Isa. xxviii. 15. The vilest instances of sins of this nature, were found among some who used sorcery, divination, witch-craft, and other diabolical practices; which is so horrid a crime, and so contrary to the dictates of human nature, that had we not an account of some in scripture, who used those abominable arts, we should be ready to think that none were ever guilty of them.

I will not deny but that many things, which are commonly related concerning witch-craft and sorcery, as practised in latter ages, are fabulous and incredible; and some things, said to be done by the power of the Devil, may be accounted for by natural causes; and others are ascribed to it, which are performed by the concealed arts of some who get a livelihood by cheating the unthinking part of mankind: nevertheless, I am far from thinking that the account we have hereof in scripture, is without any manner of foundation, as some modern writers suggest. That famous story of the witch of Endor, mentioned in 1 Sam. xxviii. 7—20. is an argument that there were such persons, at that time, in the world.

I am sensible that it will be objected to this, that she was a cunning woman, who lived by her wits, and deceived Saul, by pretending that she used some infernal art, as expedient to bring him to the speech of Samuel; which it may not be amiss for us to inquire into. Therefore let it be observed,

1st, That it is by no means to be supposed that she raised Samuel from the dead; for it is out of the Devil's power to call the soul of a saint out of heaven, with a design to subserve his interest thereby, and to set up his kingdom in opposition to Christ's; and it is not reasonable to suppose that Samuel should do the Devil so much service after his death, who was so great an enemy to him in his life. Besides, he was buried at Ramah, 1 Sam. xxv. 1. and can we think that he should be now raised at Endor?

2dly, On the other hand, we are not to imagine, that it was a mere trick or juggle of the woman, whereby she imposed on Saul; for though it is true, he did not see a shape, yet he heard a voice, and made a reply thereunto. Moreover we read, that he had an intimation given him, that Israel should be delivered into the hands of the Philistines; and that he and his sons should be with him to-morrow; that, is in the state of the dead; which the woman was not cunning enough to foretel; (a) or if she had guessed that it would be so, she would hardly have ventured to tell Saul such ungrateful tidings; which, if he had lived to see himself cheated, and her prediction confuted, it would have endangered her life. Had it been nothing but a cheat or juggle, she would rather have told him, that he would be safe and victorious; for which, if it had come to pass, she might have expected a reward; and if not, she had nothing to fear from him as a just punishment of her impiety.

3dly, We must therefore suppose, that she was a professed servant of the Devil, and had, as the text says, a *familiar spirit*; by which we are to understand that she conversed with

(a) Satan knew the state of the armies, and wished to drive Saul to despair.

Satan; who, that he might harden her the more in her sin, and lead others, like Saul, into a credulous, diabolical presumption, might reveal some secrets to her, and, at the same time, either assume the shape, or, at least, counterfeit the voice of Samuel.

Thus concerning those, who, by the practice of these arts, have professed themselves to be in a kind of confederacy with Satan. It is certain no good man ever practised them; and therefore some have found it very difficult to understand the sense of that scripture in Gen. xlv. 5. concerning the cup that was in Benjamin's sack; *Is not this the cup wherein my Lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?* And Joseph himself says, in ver. 15. *Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?* Though Joseph was a prophet, it is certain he was no diviner in that sense in which the word is commonly used in scripture; nor was this cup an instrument by which he practised any such art. Therefore, for the understanding of this scripture, we may consider,

1st, That the word which we render *to divine*, denotes, as it is observed in the margin, to make trial of, or search after, or to discover, or find out a matter; and instead of *whereby*, or *by which*, it ought rather to have been rendered *concerning which*; and then the meaning of the scripture is only this; *Is not this the cup wherein my lord drinketh?* And therefore, if it were lost or stolen, he would soon miss it; and make inquiry to find out the thief, as he has now done. And when Joseph says, ver. 15. *Wot ye not that such a man as I can divine?* The meaning is, Do you think that one who is so diligent and industrious in the management of all those affairs that are incumbent on me, would lose the cup in which I drink, and make no inquiry after it? Did you expect to go undiscovered, when you had such an one as I to deal with, who not only have an inclination, but all the advantages that can be desired, to make search after those who have dealt unjustly by me, as you have done?

2d, *To divine* may signify to *prophesy*; and so it may be taken in a good sense as well as in a bad one. Accordingly, when Joseph's servants speak of him as divining concerning the cup, they consider him as one who had an extraordinary gift from God of revealing secrets. Therefore, they might easily conclude that he would, by this means, find out the person who had stolen his cup. This is agreeable to the Egyptian mode of speaking; for those whom the Hebrews called *prophets*, they called *diviners*. And Joseph used the same expression when he says, *Wot you not that such a man as I could divine?* that is, Did you not know that I was a prophet, and by this means was advanced to my present honour in Pharaoh's court? So that, whether we take the words in this

or the other sense, it does not follow, that he used any arts that were diabolical or unlawful.

And now we are speaking concerning those arts, by which Satan deludes them, who, either directly, or by consequence, pay that regard to him which is due only to God. It may farther be inquired; what we are to conclude concerning the practice of judicial astrology, by those, who, in scripture, are called *star-gazers*, as a term of contempt, whose profession is universally condemned therein.

These are, especially in our age, a generation of men, who impose on the weakness of many superstitious and ignorant people, who, by encouraging them, are partakers with them in their sin. The art they pretend to, is not only uncertain, but presumptuous, and contains in it a contempt of the providence of God, in regarding the signs and intimations, which they suppose they receive from the stars, concerning the future contingent events, or those actions which take their rise from the free-will of man.

That which I would observe in general, concerning this practice, is, that we no where find in scripture, that the stars were designed to signify the prosperous or adverse circumstances in which men shall be in the world; or to foretel the riches or poverty, sickness or health, which we should experience in our passage through it, or how long we shall continue it; our times and circumstances in the world being only in God's hand; and it is in mercy to us that he has concealed these future events from us. To this we may add, that this art, and those that use it, is very often spoken against in scripture, and the church warned against it; when God says, *Learn not the way of the Heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven*, Jer. x. 2. And elsewhere, *Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels, let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up and save thee*, Isa. xlvii. 13. And elsewhere, they are ranked with *diviners*, and called *liars*, chap. xlv. 25.

If it be inquired, Whether any good men have ever practised this art, though without pretending to have had any intimation from Satan, but only proceeding according to the rules prescribed therein? It is not my business to censure men, but things. Therefore the best that can be said thereof is; that if any good men have studied or practised it, they have generally blamed themselves for it afterwards, or, at least, confessed the uncertainty and presumption thereof. And we read of some that, in the time of their ignorance, had addicted themselves thereunto; who, when it pleased God to convert them, have laid it aside, and burned the books from whence they learned it, Acts xix. 19.

It is objected against what has been said concerning the unlawfulness of judicial astrology, that Moses addicted himself to the study thereof, of whom it is said, *That he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, chap. vii. 22. To which it may be replied, that if, by *the wisdom of the Egyptians*, we understand, as most expositors do, judicial astrology, Moses might know, but not approve of, or practise this art, which was so much in use among the Egyptians. But it may be, nothing more is intended by it, but his knowing the regular motion of the stars, and the wisdom of God seen therein, without judging of future events thereby; which is not only lawful, but commendable: though, I am apt to think, that by *the wisdom of the Egyptians*, we are to understand those maxims of state, and the secrets of Pharaoh's court, which he had an opportunity to know, as being a great favourite with him, as Josephus observes, who thinks that he designed that he should succeed him in the throne\*. Thus having considered this Commandment as being broken by Atheism and idolatry, and the various kinds and degrees thereof; which is called our having other gods;

We proceed now to inquire what is meant by these words [before me] in the first Commandment, which are an intimation of the aggravation of the sins forbidden therein; whereby God puts us in mind of his all-seeing eye, which ought to deter us from the breach of it; especially when we consider, that inasmuch as he beholds all our actions, he cannot but be exceedingly displeased when we entertain any conceptions of him that tend to question his authority, dethrone his sovereignty, or alienate our affections from him, and set up any thing in competition with him. And this should teach us how we ought to set the Lord always before us, considering him as the heart-searching God, who is jealous for his own honour, and will not suffer this sin to go unpunished.

**QUEST. CVII.** *Which is the second Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The second Commandment is [*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands, of them that love me and keep my commandments.*]

\* Vid. *Jos. Antq. Lib. II. Cap. 5.*

**QUEST. CVIII.** *What are the duties required in the second Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The duties required in the second commandment are the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his word, particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ, the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word, the administration and receiving of the sacraments, church-government, and discipline, the ministry and maintenance thereof, religious fasting, swearing by the name of God, and vowing unto him. As also the disapproving, detesting, opposing all false worship; and according to each ones' place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.

**QUEST. CIX.** *What are the sins forbidden in the second Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The sins forbidden in the second Commandment, are, all devising, counselling, commanding, using, and any ways approving any religious worship not instituted by God himself, tolerating a false religion, the making any representation of God, of all, or of any of the three Persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly, in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever, all worshipping of it, or God, in it, or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them, all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others; though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever, simony, sacrilege, all neglect, contempt, hindering and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.

**QUEST. CX.** *What are the reasons annexed to the second Commandment the more to enforce it?*

**ANSW.** The reasons annexed to the second Commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, [*For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation, of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments*] are, besides God's sovereignty over us, and property in us, his fervent zeal for his own worship, and his revengeful indignation

against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom, accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations, and esteeming the observers of it, such as love him, and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.

**B**EFORE we proceed to consider the subject-matter of this Commandment, we shall premise something, in general, concerning the difference between it, and the first Commandment. The first Commandment respects the object of worship; the second, the manner in which it is to be performed. Accordingly the former forbids, our not owning God to be such an one, as he has revealed himself to be, in his word; as also the substituting any creature in his room, or acknowledging it, either directly, or by consequence, to be our chief good and happiness; the latter obliges us to worship this God, in such a way as he has prescribed, in opposition to that, which takes its rise from our own invention. These two Commandments therefore being so distinct, we cannot but think the Papists to be chargeable with a very great absurdity, in making the second to be only an appendix to the first, or an explication of it; the design whereof seems to be, that they might exculpate themselves from the charge of idolatry, in setting up image-worship, which they think to be no crime; because they are not so stupid as to style the image a god, or make it the supreme object of worship; whereas this Commandment, forbidding false worship, is directly contrary to their practice of worshipping God thereby.

The method, in which this Commandment is laid down, is the same with that of several others, *viz.* as we have therein, an account of the duties required, the sins forbidden, and the reasons annexed to enforce it. We shall therefore

I. Consider the duties commanded. These are contained in two heads.

1. The obligation we are under to observe, or attend upon, such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed. Religious worship is that whereby we address ourselves to God, as a God of infinite perfection; profess an entire subjection and devotedness to him as our God; put our trust in him for a supply of all our wants, and ascribe that praise and glory, that is due to him, as our chief good, most bountiful benefactor, and only portion and happiness.

As for the ordinances, our attendance on them depends on a divine command, to which God has annexed a promise of his gracious presence, whereby our expectations are raised, that we shall obtain some blessings from him, when we engage



therein in a right manner, in which respect they are instituted means of grace, and pledges of that special favour which he designs to bestow on his people. This is that which more especially renders a duty enjoined, an ordinance. Accordingly our Saviour says, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*, Matt. xviii. 20.

Now these ordinances are either solitary or social; such as we are obliged to perform in our closets, chap. vi. 6. in our families, or in those public assemblies where God is worshipped. These are particularly mentioned in this answer; and they are prayer, thanksgiving, reading, preaching, and hearing the word, the administration and receiving the sacraments; to which we may add, praising God by singing; all which will be insisted on in a following answer, and therefore we pass by them at present, and shall only observe; that as these are duties which are daily incumbent on us, so there are other duties or ordinances, which are only to be performed as the necessity of affairs require it; such as religious fasting, whereby we express public tokens of mourning and humiliation, and perform other duties agreeable thereunto, when God is provoked by crying sins; or when his judgments are upon us, and our families, or the church of God in general. Thus the prophet Joel, when speaking concerning several desolating judgments, which Israel was exposed to, commands them to *sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; and to weep between the porch and the altar; and say, spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach*, Joel ii. 15, 17. This is not to be done at all times, but when the providence of God calls for it. Therefore we have no warrant for the observation of annual fasts; when that which was the first occasion thereof, is removed; much less for those weeks of fasting which the Papists observe, which they call Lent; for which, no sufficient reason can be assigned why it should be observed at that rather than any other time of the year. And their fasting on certain days of the week cannot be vindicated; much less their doing this without joining other religious duties to it, or their abstaining from some kinds of food, while they indulge themselves in eating others that are equally grateful to the appetite; which is a ludicrous and superstitious way of fasting.

Again, another occasional duty or ordinance is, our setting apart time for thanksgiving to God for deliverances from public or national calamities, or those which more immediately respect ourselves and families; in which those religious duties are to be performed, that tend to express our spiritual joy and thankfulness to God, who is the Author thereof, and at the

same time, we are to pray, that he would enable us to walk as such who are hereby laid under renewed engagements to be his; thus the Jews observed some days of thanksgiving for their deliverance from Haman's conspiracy, Esth. ix. 20, & seq. And this is to be religiously observed, wherein it differs from that carnal joy, which is generally expressed by those who receive mercies, but do not give glory to God, the sole Author thereof.

Moreover, besides these occasional ordinances, there is another mentioned in this answer, namely, vowing to God. Thus the Psalmist says, *Vow, and pay unto the Lord*, Psal. lxxvi. 11. which either, more especially, respects their entering into a solemn obligation, or promise to give something that was to be applied to the support of the public and costly-worship which was performed under the ceremonial law; upon which account it is said, in the following words, *Bring presents unto him*; or it may be considered as to what concerns the moral reason of the thing, as including in it our resolution to set apart, or apply some portion of our wordly substance, as God has prospered us in our secular affairs, to the maintaining and promoting his cause and interest in the world. And we ought, at the same time, to devote ourselves to him, whereby we acknowledge his right to us, and all that we have. Thus the apostle says, concerning the churches of Macedonia, not only that they devoted their substance to God, but that they gave themselves, also unto the Lord, 1 Cor. viii. 5.

This does not include in it our resolution to do those things that are out of our own power; or, that we will exercise those graces that are the special gift of the Spirit of God, but rather a dedication of ourselves to him, in hope of obtaining that grace from him which will enable us to perform those duties, which are indispensably necessary to, and inseparably connected with salvation. This is such a vowing to God, as will not have a tendency to ensnare our own consciences, or detract from his glory, who is alone the Author of all grace; nor does it contain in it the least instance of presumption, but it is a duty which we ought to perform by faith, to his glory and our own edification.

And to this we might add another ordinance, mentioned in this answer; namely, swearing by the name of God; which, as we have elsewhere expressed it, contains a swearing fealty to him, and our consecrating and devoting ourselves to him\*. And as to what respects swearing, as it is a religious duty to be performed in subserviency to civil duties, we shall have occasion to speak of that under the third Commandment; and therefore we pass it over at present, and proceed to consider,

\* See more of this in Vol. I. Page 236.

2. That these, and all other religious duties or ordinances which God has enjoined, are to be kept pure and entire. As we are not to cast off the ordinances of God in general, so we must take heed that we do not, while we perform some, live in the neglect of others; for that is not to keep them entire. Thus private duties are not to shut out those which are social in our families or the public assemblies; nor entrench on that time which ought to be allotted for them; and, on the other hand, it is not sufficient for us to worship God in public, and, at the same time, cast off all secret duties. This reproves the practice of some modern enthusiasts, who pray not, unless moved by the Spirit, as they pretend; and deny their obligation to observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper.

Moreover, as we are to keep the ordinances of God entire, we are also to keep them pure; that is, to allow of, or practise nothing but what is warranted by the rules which God has given us in his word, in opposition to those who corrupt his worship, by intruding those ordinances into it which are of their own invention; and pretending, that though God has not commanded them, yet the service which we perform (which can be no other than will-worship) will be acceptable to him. This leads us,

II. To consider the sins forbidden in this Commandment. The general scope and design hereof, as to what concerns the negative part of it, is God's prohibiting all false worship, either in our hearts, outward actions or gestures, whereby we adhere to our own imaginations rather than his revealed will; which is the only rule of instituted worship. The things forbidden in this commandment may be reduced to three heads;

1. A not attending on the ordinances of God with that holy, humble, and becoming frame of spirit, that the solemnity of the duties themselves, or the authority of God enjoining, or the advantages which we may expect to receive by them, call for. When we do not seriously think what we are going about before we engage in holy duties, or watch over our own hearts and affections, or else worship God in a careless and indifferent manner, in which case we may be said to draw nigh to him with our lips, while our hearts are far from him.

2. We farther break this commandment, when we invent ordinances which God has no where in his word commanded; or think to recommend ourselves to him by such gestures, or modes of worship, which we have no precedent or example for in the New Testament; this is what is generally called superstition and will-worship. Thus we read in the degenerate age of the church, that *the statutes of Omri were kept, and the works of the house of Ahab*, Micah vi. 16. as intimat-

ing that false worship which was practised by them. And here we cannot but observe, that there are many things in which the Papists are chargeable with superstition and will-worship, if not with idolatry. As for instance,

(1.) Their worshipping the bread in the sacrament, as supposing it to be the real body and blood of Christ, and not barely the sign thereof; understanding the words of our Saviour, in which, in instituting this ordinance, he says, *This is my body*, Matt. xxvi. 26. in a literal sense; whereas it ought to be taken in a figurative. Again,

(2.) Their lifting up the bread in the sacrament, pretending that this is a real offering of Christ, and, at the same time, the people being obliged to shew all possible marks of sorrow; such as beating their breasts, shaking their heads, &c. as though they really saw Christ on the cross; whereas it is a profaning the Lord's supper, to say that Christ is really and visibly offered therein by the hands of the priest; which is contrary to what the apostle says of his being but *once offered to bear the sins of many*, Heb. ix. 28.

(3.) They use several superstitious ceremonies in baptism, which have, indeed, a shew of religion, but want a divine sanction, and are no other than an addition to Christ's institution. Thus they use spittle, salt, and cream, besides the water with which the child is to be baptised, and anoint it with oil; and use exorcism, commanding the unclean spirit to depart out of it, and signing it with the sign of the cross; at which they suppose the Devil to be so terrified, that he is hereby obliged to leave it, being by this means, as it were, frightened away. But the principal reason they give for their adding this ceremony to Christ's institution, is to signify that the child is hereby obliged to fight manfully under Christ's banner; which obligation is neither increased nor diminished thereby; and it is a sign which he makes no mention of.

(4.) Their frequent crossing of themselves, as a preservative against sin, and a means to keep them from the power of the Devil, and to render their prayers acceptable in the sight of God.

(5.) The splendor and magnificence of their churches, and especially the shape and figure of them, as accommodated to that of Solomon's temple, and their situation east and west; and also their bowing to the altar, which is placed in the east; for which there is not the least shadow of argument in scripture, nor example in the purest ages of the church.

(6.) The ludicrous and unwarrantable ceremonies used in the consecration of churches, and the reverence that every one must shew to places thus consecrated, though it be not in the divine worship. And to this we may add, that there are

many superstitious ceremonies in consecrating all the vessels and utensils that are used in their churches; yea, the very bells are baptised, or, as they express it, consecrated that so the Devil may be afraid of the sound thereof, and keep his distance from those places of worship in which they are fixed; which charms can be reckoned no other than the sport of the powers of darkness, or looked on by them with contempt.

(7.) They ascribe a divine, yea, a meritorious virtue, to the frequent repeating the Lord's prayer in Latin, commonly called *Pater noster*, and the angel's salutation of the virgin Mary, mentioned in Luke i. 28. called *Ave Maria*; which words they put a corrupt sense upon, contrary to the proper meaning thereof; which, if only recited, whether understood or no, it is reckoned acceptable service.

(8.) The distinction of garments, and the relative holiness of persons that wear them as signified thereby. To which we may add, the canonical hours which are appointed for the performing divine service; especially if we consider the reason which they allege for it, namely, because there was something remarkable done or suffered by Christ, at those hours in the day. These things argue them guilty of superstition.

(9.) We might also take notice of the many things which they make merchandise of, as consecrated bread, wax candles, &c. to which they ascribe a spiritual virtue, or some advantages to be received hereby, by those that purchase them; which tends to advance the price thereof. There are also the relicts which they call the church's treasure, or those rarities which they purchase at a great rate; though some of the wiser Papists have made but a jest of them. We pass by many other superstitious ceremonies used by them, for brevity sake, and shall only observe,

(10.) Their bowing at the name of Jesus; which can hardly be vindicated from the charge of superstition, especially because no extraordinary instance of reverence is expressed at the mention of those incommunicable attributes of God, which are ascribed to him; nor, indeed, do they bow the knee at the mentioning of the word Saviour, Christ, or Emmanuel, or when any other divine characters are given him.

The only scripture they make use of to vindicate this practice, is in Phil. ii. 10. *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*; whereas it is plain, that this *bowing the knee* does not signify a bodily gesture, but only a subjection of soul to Christ, as *angels, authorities and powers* are said to be made *subject to him*, 1 Pet. iii. 22. These, indeed, are a very considerable part of the inhabitants of heaven, but they have no knees to bow; and as for *things under the earth*, to wit, the powers of darkness; they do not bow to him in a way of wor-

ship, but are subjected to him as conquered enemies. Which leads us to consider,

3. That they are guilty of the breach of this Commandment, who frame an image of any of the persons of the Godhead, or of any creature in heaven or earth, as a means or help made use of in order to their worshipping God. Here it must be enquired,

(1.) Whether the making images, absolutely, or in all respects, be unlawful. To which it is generally answered, that if pictures representing creatures, either in heaven or earth, be made with no other design, but in an historical way, to propagate the memory of persons, and their actions to posterity, it seems not to be a breach of this Commandment. But the sin forbidden therein, expressed in those words, *Making to ourselves the image or likeness of creatures in heaven or earth*, is when we design to worship God by them; and accordingly the using bodily gestures to them, such as those which are used in the worship of God; as bowing, uncovering the head, &c. wherein a person designs an act of worship, is idolatry. And if nothing else is intended but the worshipping of God by them, it can hardly be excused from the appearance of idolatry at least; so that, according to one of the rules before laid down for the understanding the Ten Commandments, it is to be reckoned a breach of the second Commandment; which is what we are now considering\*.

(2.) It must farther be enquired, whether it be unlawful to represent any of the persons in the Godhead, by pictures or carved images? to this we answer, that God being infinite and incomprehensible, it is impossible to frame any image like him, Isa. xl. 18. chap. xlvi. 5. Acts xvii. 29. Moreover, he assigns this as a reason why Israel should make no image of him, *because they saw no manner of similitude when he spake to them in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire*; and adds, *lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image*, Deut. iv. 15, 16. And the apostle styles this an offering the highest affront to God, when he speaks of some who *changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man*. Rom. i. 23.

There are others, who, though they do not much care to defend the practice of making pictures of God, yet plead for describing an emblem of the Trinity, such as a triangle, with the name Jehovah in the midst of it. But that which I would observe concerning this practice is, that if the design hereof be to worship God by it, it is idolatry; but if not, it is unwarrantable, and, indeed, unnecessary; since a Trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence, is to be understood as reveal-

\* See Page 498.

ed in scripture, and not brought to our remembrance by an emblem, which is an ordinance of our own invention.

It is farther enquired, whether we may not describe our Saviour, as he sometimes is by the Papists, in those things that respect his human nature? whether we may not pourtray him as an infant in his mother's arms; or, as conversing here on earth, or hanging on the cross; as they not only describe him; but adore this image or representation of Christ crucified, which they call a crucifix? To this we answer; that whatever of Christ comes within the reach of the art of man to delineate or describe, is only his human nature, which is not the object of divine adoration; and therefore this rather tends to debase than give us raised and becoming conceptions of him as such.

As to what is argued by some, to prove that it is not unlawful to make an image of God, inasmuch as he is sometimes represented as having a body, or bodily parts; and the prophet Daniel describes God the Father, as *the ancient of days*, Dan. vii. 9. therefore, they suppose, that it is not unlawful for them to make such representations of him by images. To this it may be answered, that God's being described by the parts of human bodies, is in condescension to the weakness of our capacities, or agreeable to human modes of speaking; in which *the eye* signifies wisdom, *the arm* power, *the heart* love, &c. We are, notwithstanding those modes of expression, to abstract in our thoughts, every thing that is carnal, or applicable to the creature when conceiving of him, and therefore not to give occasion to any to think that he is like ourselves, by describing him in such a way. The Papists not only plead for making such like images, but set them up in churches, calling them the laymen's books, with a design to instruct them in those things which the image represents. To which it may be replied, that such a method of instruction is without any warrant from scripture, as well as contrary to the practice of the purest ages of the church, who always thought that the word of God was sufficient to lead them into the knowledge of himself, without making use of a picture to that end.

But notwithstanding this colour is put on their practice, of setting up such-like images in churches; yet there are some who plead for the worship of images, only with this distinction, that it is a subordinate or a relative worship that they give to them, while, at the same time, the highest worship is given to God only; in which respect they cannot exculpate themselves from the charge of idolatry. And, indeed, in some of their books of devotion, we find the same expressions used, when they address themselves to the creature, as though they were paying divine adoration to God; particularly in the book, that is well known among them, called the *Virgin Mary's Psalter*;

in which her name is often inserted instead of the name of God, which is the highest strain of blasphemy. Thus when it is said, *O come let us kneel before the Lord our Maker*, Psal. xcvi. 6. instead of *the Lord*, they put the *Virgin Mary*. And when it is said, *Have mercy upon me, O God*, &c. Psal. li. 1. they pray, *Have mercy upon me, O Lady*, &c. which expressions cannot be read without detestation. And there are many more to the like purpose, in that book.

When this has been objected against them as a specimen of their idolatry, all the reply they make to it is; that the book was written by a private person, as an help to devotion, but not established by the authority of the church, which is not to be charged with every absurdity which some of their communion may advance. To which it may be replied, that the church of Rome has been very ready to condemn better books, written by those who were not in their communion; whereas they never publicly condemned this book, but rather commended it, as written with a good design.

Besides we may farther observe, that there are many blasphemous expressions given to the virgin Mary, in their Breviaries and Missals, which are used by public authority. Thus she is often addressed to in such characters as these, viz. the mother of mercy, the gate of heaven, the queen of heaven, the empress of the world; and sometimes she is desired not only to pray her son to help them, but, by the authority of a mother, to command him to do it. At other times they desire her to help and save them herself; and accordingly they give her the title of Redeemer, and Saviour, as well as our Lord Jesus Christ. And sometimes they profess themselves to put their trust and confidence in her. If this be not idolatry, where is there any to be found in the world?

To this we may also add, that idolatry which is practised by them in their devotion, to the images of other saints. Every saint in their Kalendar is called upon, in his turn; among whom some indeed were good men, as the martyrs, who refused to be worshipped while on earth; how much soever these worship them now they are in heaven. But there are others whom the Popes have canonized for saints, who were little better than devils incarnate, while they were here upon earth; and others have been rebels and traitors to their king and country, and suffered the just reward of their wickedness; such as these are found among those whom they pay this worship to. There are also others whom they worshipped as saints; concerning whom it may be much questioned whether there ever were such persons in the world; these may be called fabulous saints. Nevertheless, images are made to their honour, and prayers directed to them. And there are other things worshipped by them, which never had life, as the picture of the



cross, and many pretended relics of the saints. So that upon the whole, we cannot but think that we have, in this mode of worship, a notorious instance of the breach of this Commandment. And we cannot but conclude, that herein they have apostatized, or turned aside from the purity of the gospel.

It may be observed, that the church, for the first three hundred years after Christ, had comparatively, but little superstition, and no idolatry; but in the fourth Century, superstition began to insinuate itself into it; then it was that the pictures of the martyrs, who had suffered in Christ's cause, were first set up in churches, though without any design of worshipping them; and this was not universally approved of. As for image-worship, it was not brought into the church till above seven hundred years after Christ; and then there was a considerable opposition made to it by some; and this kind of worship was set up in one reign, and prohibited in another; but afterwards it universally prevailed in the Romish church, when arrived to that height of impiety and idolatry, without opposition, as it is at this day. We now proceed to observe,

III. The reasons annexed to this Commandment, which are taken from the consideration of what God is in himself; *I am the Lord*, or *Jehovah*; which being a name never given to any creature, is expressive of all his divine perfections, which render him the object of worship, and oblige us to perform that worship which he requires, in such a way as is agreeable thereunto; he also styles himself a God to his people, *I am thy God*; therefore to set up strange gods, or to worship him in a way not prescribed by him, is a violation of his covenant, as well as not performing the duty we owe to him, and would render us unfit to be owned by him as his people. And it is farther observed, that they who thus corrupt themselves, and pervert his worship, are styled haters of him, and therefore can expect nothing but to be dealt with as enemies. This he gives them to understand, inasmuch as he styles himself a *jealous*, or *sirevenging God*, *visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children*. For the understanding of which, let it be considered,

1. That though God does not punish children with eternal destruction, for the sins of their immediate parents, yet these oftentimes bring temporal judgments on families. Thus all the children of Israel that murmured and despised the good land, so far bare their fathers iniquity, that they wandered in the wilderness near forty years.

2. These judgments fall heavier on those children that make their parents sins their own; which was the case of the Jews. Upon which occasion our Saviour tells them, that *all the blood that was shed upon the earth, should come upon them; from the*

*blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar, Matt. xxiii. 35. They approved of, and committed the same sins which their fathers were guilty of, and consequently are said to fill up the measure of their sins; therefore the judgments of God, which they exposed themselves to, were most terrible.*

3. Whatever temporal judgments may be inflicted on children for their parents sins, shall be sanctified, and redound to their spiritual advantage, as well as end in their everlasting happiness, if they do not follow their bad example; and therefore it is farther observed, that God *shews mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments.* These are very great motives and inducements to enforce the observation of all God's Commandments, and this in particular.

**QUEST. CXI.** *Which is the third Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The third Commandment is, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain.*

**QUEST. CXII.** *What is required in the third Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The third Commandment requires, that the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, writing, by an holy profession, and answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves and others.

**QUEST. CXIII.** *What are the sins forbidden in the third Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The sins forbidden in the third Commandment are, the not using of God's name as is required, and the abuse of it, in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works; by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths, and vows, if lawful, and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful, murmuring and quarrelling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees, and providences, misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable ques-

tions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines, abusing it, the creatures, or any thing contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices, the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any ways opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways, making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by uncomfortable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walkings, or backslidings from it.

**QUEST. CXIV.** *What are the reasons annexed to the third Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The reasons annexed to the third Commandment in these words [*the Lord thy God*] and [*for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*] are, because, he is the Lord and our God, and therefore his name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us, especially, because he is so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this Commandment, as that he will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment, albeit, many such escape the censures and punishments of men.

**A**S the second Commandment respects the manner in which God is to be worshipped, agreeably to his revealed will; in this we are commanded to worship him with that frame of spirit which is suitable to the greatness of the work, and the Majesty of him with whom we have to do. By the name of God we are to understand all those things whereby he is pleased to make himself known; and these are his names, titles, attributes, words and works. The attributes of God have been largely insisted on in that question, *What is God\*?* His names and titles have also been considered, as belonging to all the persons of the Godhead, in proving that the Son and Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father †. His word is that in which the glory that is contained in his names, titles and attributes, is set forth in the most glorious manner. Thus the Psalmist says, *Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name*, Psal. cxxxviii. 2. or, thou hast given a brighter discovery of thyself in thy word, than thou hast done in any thing else, by which thou hast made thyself known to thy creatures. And as for the works of God, whether of nature or of grace, these are designed to lead us into the knowledge of his power, wisdom, goodness, holiness and faithfulness, which are eminently glorified in all that he does. Now this Commandment respects our having a due regard to all those ways whereby he makes himself known, and contains a prohibition of every thing that may tend to cast the least dishonour upon them.

\* See Vol. I. Quest. iv.

† Quest. xi.

The method in which we are led to speak to it, is to consider,

I. What is required in it. This supposes, that it is an indispensable duty for us to make mention of the name of God. Since he has given us some discoveries of himself, by what means soever he has done it, it would be an instance of the highest contempt of the greatest privilege, for us to express no regard to them; which they may be said practically to do, who make no profession of religion, and desire not to be instructed in those things which relate to the name and glory of God; which argues a person to be abandoned to the greatest wickedness, and to live without God in the world.

Now there are several duties mentioned in this answer, in which we are said to make use of God's name; particularly, when we attend on his ordinances, viz. the word, sacraments and prayer; and take religious oaths, and make solemn vows; which, doubtless, are to be performed with the utmost reverence. We have many instances, in scripture, of holy men who, when they have drawn nigh to him in prayer, have adored his divine perfections, with a becoming humility. Thus Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, addresses himself to God; *There is no god like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart*, 1 Kings viii. 23. And Jacob, when wrestling with God in prayer, says, *O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return to thine own country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant*, Gen. xxxii. 9, 10. And Hezekiah expresses himself thus in prayer, *O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, thou hast made heaven and earth*, 2 Kings xix. 25. And Daniel in prayer, styles him, *The great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant, and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments*, Dan. ix. 4. And Abraham, when standing before the Lord, and pleading in behalf of Sodom, says, *Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes*, Gen. xviii. 27. And the inhabitants of heaven, who are nearest the throne of God, are represented as worshipping him with the greatest reverence, *casting their crowns before the throne*, in token of their being unworthy of the honour that they are advanced to, and saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and power*, Rev. iv. 10, 11. which is to be understood of him, exclusive of all others. And as this reverence is to be expressed when we

ask any thing at the hand of God, by a parity of reason, it ought to be expressed in any other religious duty, on which he has made, some impressions of his glory.

If it be enquired, whether this reverence is consistent with that boldness which believers are said to have in prayer, when they are exhorted to *come boldly unto the throne of grace*, Heb. iv. 16. and to *have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus*, chap. x. To this it may be answered, that the word there used \*, which is called boldness, may be rendered a liberty of speech. So that though he be infinitely above us, and a God of infinite holiness and purity, and therefore has the utmost abhorrence of sin, which we have reason to charge ourselves with, yet we are encouraged to come to him, as sitting on a throne of grace: from whence he displays his glory, as a sin-pardoning God, who otherwise appears in his jealousy, as a sin-reverging Judge. Therefore this boldness is nothing else but our making use of that liberty which God gives us to come into his presence with hope of being accepted in his sight, in and through a Mediator.

We might farther observe, that as we are to express an holy reverence, in drawing nigh to God, in all religious duties; so we ought not to think of any of his works, but with a due regard to, and the highest veneration of, his glory shining forth therein. Thus it is said, *Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold*, Job xxxvi. 24. and this reverence is to be expressed in our meditations, words and writings; so that we should never think or treat of divine subjects, but in an holy manner; we should never speak of any thing, by which God manifests his glory, but with a design to beget in ourselves and others, a reverential fear of, and the highest esteem for him.

II. We are now to consider the sins forbidden in this Commandment; and accordingly, we violate it by not using the name of God in such a way as it is required. This includes in it,

1. The ~~not~~ making any profession of religion, as being afraid or ashamed to own, that in which the name of God is so much concerned. Persons, indeed, do not usually arrive to this height of wickedness at once; but the mind is alienated from God, and his worship, by degrees. There is first a great deal of lukewarmness, formality, and hypocrisy, reigning in the heart of man; so that if they attend on the ordinances of God's worship, it is with great indifferency, many prejudices entertained against them, and with such a frame of spirit as savours more profaneness than true religion. After this they are ashamed of Christ and his cause, being influenced by the re-

\* Παιδία,

proach that is cast on it in the world. Thus the Jews pretended, concerning Christianity, that it was *a sect every where spoken against*, Acts xxviii. 22. And Demas forsook the apostle, *having loved this present world*, 2 Tim. iv. 10. being more concerned for his reputation in it, than for Christ's interest. After this, such cast off all public worship; and this is generally attended with a seared conscience, and running into all excess of riot.

2. Persons take the name of God in vain, when though they make a profession of religion, yet it is not in such a way as God has required; and this is done by using his titles, attributes, or any ordinances or works, in which he makes himself known in an unbecoming manner; with ignorance, when we speak of the divine perfections, and, at the same time, have no just ideas of what is intended thereby; or when we use the name of God with a vanity or levity of spirit, and mention sacred things in a common way, whereby we may be said to profane them; or when we superstitiously pay a kind of veneration to the sound of words, relating to divine matters, but regard not the thing signified thereby. This is using the name of God in such a way as he has not required, and consequently taking it in vain.

3. The name of God is taken in vain by blasphemy; which is a thinking or speaking reproachfully of him, as though he had no right to the glory that belongs to his name; which is, in effect, a cursing him in our hearts, and offering the greatest injury that can be done, to a God of infinite perfection; which, though it be no real lessening his essential glory, yet it argues the greatest malignity, and highest degree of impiety in those that are guilty of it. This was so great a crime, that, by God's command, it was punished with death, Lev. xxiv. 16.

4. This Commandment is broken by not using religious oaths in a right manner, or by violating them; and, on the other hand, by all sinful and profane oaths and cursing.

(1.) By not using religious oaths in a right manner. It is certain, that we are, upon extraordinary occasions, to make mention of the name of God, by solemn oaths, in which we appeal to him as a God of truth, the searcher of hearts, and the avenger of falsehood. That this is a duty, appears,

[1.] In that we have various instances, in scripture, of God's condescending to confirm what he has spoken by an oath; wherein he appeals to his own perfections for the confirmation of our faith. Thus he is represented as *swearing by himself*, and by *his holiness*, Gen. xxii. 16, 17. Psal. lxxxix. 35.

[2.] There are several examples and commands, in scripture, which make it our duty to appeal to God, on some occasions, by solemn oaths. Thus it is said, *Thou shalt fear the Lord*

*thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name*, Deut. vi. 13. And elsewhere, *To me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear*, Isa. xlv. 23. But we must observe that there is a vast difference between God's swearing by himself, or by any of his perfections, and man's swearing by him. When God swears by himself, it is a display of the glory of his perfections, as a God that cannot lye; but when man swears by him, it is an act of religious worship, containing an acknowledgment of his perfections, and an appeal to him, as a God of truth, and the avenger of a lye. Therefore an oath is not to be taken, but in matters of great importance, which cannot be decided without it; and being an act of religious worship, it ought to be performed in the most solemn manner; otherwise we profane the name of God, and so violate this commandment. This respects not so much the form used in swearing, as the levity of spirit with which it is done, or our pretending to confirm that which is false hereby.

The form used in solemn oaths has been various.

1st, We read of some ceremonies used in swearing, that were only occasional. Thus when Jacob and Laban took a solemn oath to each other, at their parting, a *pillar was erected*, and a *heap of stones* gathered together, and they both *eat upon the heaps and swear by the God of Abraham and Nahor, and the fear of Isaac*, that they would do no injury to each other, Gen. xxxi. 45,—53. Also we read, that when Abraham made his servant swear, that he would take a wife for Isaac, from among his kindred, and not out of the land where he dwelt, he ordered him to *put his hand under his thigh*, chap. xxiv. 2, 3, 4. This form of swearing seemed to be an appeal to God, as having promised that his seed should be increased and multiplied, and that in his seed, all the families of the earth should be blessed; which was a circumstance well adapted to the matter and occasion of the oath, viz. that he should provide such a wife for Isaac as God approved of.

2dly, The common form of swearing used of old, seems to have been by *lifting up the hand* to heaven, thereby signifying their appeal to God, whose throne is there; accordingly the *lifting up the hand to heaven* imports the same thing as to swear, according to the scripture-mode of speaking, Deut. xxxii. 40. In this manner Abraham swore, Gen. xiv. 22, 23. and the angel which appeared to John, Rev. x. 5. and this is undoubtedly, a very good and justifiable form of swearing; and it is used, in some Protestant countries, even at this day.

As to the form used by us in public solemn oaths, viz. laying the hand on the Bible, or on the gospels, and kissing the book, it is no where warranted by scripture, and therefore is not so eligible as that of *lifting up the hand*; yet because it is

the common legal form used among us, it is rather to be complied with, than that the duty should be neglected; because, as has been but now observed, some forms of swearing are said to have been used in scripture, and not reprov'd, which were of men's invention. And the thing principally to be looked at in an oath, is, the solemn appeal made therein to God. Therefore it is the frame of spirit with which this is done, that is chiefly to be regarded. And what we have promised to do, is religiously to be observed, that so our oaths may not be violated.

*Obj.* The objections against the use of religious oaths, are principally taken from two or three scriptures, not rightly understood, in which they seem to be forbidden; as when our Saviour says, *I say unto you, Swear not at all*, Matt. v. 34: and in James v. 12. the apostle speaks to the same purpose; and it is farther objected, that the prophet speaks of this as a national sin; when he says, *Because of swearing the land mourneth*, Jer. xxiii. 10.

*Ans.* In these scriptures profane swearing is forbidden; whereby persons make use of the name of God to confirm what they say, in a light and trifling manner; or swearing by creatures, as the heaven, the earth, or any creature therein. But they do not forbid swearing, as containing in it a religious appeal unto God in a solemn manner, for the confirming of what we assert. And when the prophet speaks of the *land's mourning because of swearing*, it may be rendered, as in the margin of our Bibles; *because of cursing the land mourneth*; intimating, that it was a custom among them, to imprecate the wrath of God against one another; which was a sin highly provoked to the Majesty of heaven. And, besides, it appears that the prophet is speaking of profane cursing or swearing, by what is said in the words immediately following; *for both prophet and priest are profane*. So that people of all ranks and degrees, were profane; the prophets and priests by abusing the sacred mysteries; and the people, in their common discourse, using oaths and curses; for which things the land mourned. This is the plain sense of that scripture; and therefore no arguments can be drawn from thence to prove that solemn and religious oaths are unlawful.

It is, indeed, unlawful to swear by creatures, as is observed in the scriptures but now mentioned; for they are not omniscient, and therefore not to be appealed to for the decided matters, which are known to none but ourselves, and the Searcher of hearts; neither are they to be reckoned avengers of the cause of injured truth; for they have not a sovereignty over man, or a right to judge and punish them in such a way as God has; for that belongs only to him, and therefore to swear



by their name, is to give them a branch of his glory, and consequently to take his name in vain.

(2.) This Commandment is broken by violating religious oaths, both those that are assertory or promissory. Therefore, when men assert that, for truth, which is uncertain; or, especially if they know it to be false, and so design to deceive, they break this Commandment. As for promissory oaths, they contain an appeal to God concerning what respects some things to be done by us, conducive to the good of others. Now we are guilty of the breach of this Commandment.

[1.] When we assert a thing, without implying this condition that ought to be contained in it, if God will, or he be pleased to enable us to do it. This the apostle particularly mentions, when he blames those who say, *To day or to morrow we will go to such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain. Whereas they know not what shall be on the morrow.* And therefore, they ought to say, *If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that,* James iv. 13, 15.

[2.] When we promise a thing, that is out of our power to perform; and, much more, when we do not design to perform it.

[3.] When we promise a thing, which is in itself unlawful; as the Jews did, who *bound themselves under a curse, that they would not eat nor drink till they had killed Paul,* Acts xxiii. 12. If we have obliged ourselves by an oath, to perform that which is unlawful, as we sin in making, we should do so in fulfilling it. There are, however, some cases in which persons may not perform what they have sworn to do, and yet not be guilty of perjury, or violation of their oaths; as,

1<sup>st</sup>, When they have used their utmost endeavours to fulfil what they have promised to do, but yet cannot accomplish it. Though here it must be observed, that if the thing promised was absolutely out of their power when the promise was made, the oath (as we but now observed) was unlawful. But supposing the thing was in their power when they promised it; but an unforeseen providence has put it out of their power at present, though they have used their utmost endeavours to perform it, they are not chargeable with the guilt of perjury.

2<sup>dly</sup>, If we have promised to do a thing that is for the advantage of another; but now see reason to alter our mind, apprehending some detriment will accrue thereby to ourselves; we must, notwithstanding, fulfil our promise. Thus the Psalmist says, *he sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not,* Psal. xxv. 4. However, if the person to whom we have made the promise, who is to receive the advantage by our fulfilling it, is willing to discharge us from our obligation, we may omit to do it, and not be guilty of perjury.

How it might be required; whether we are always obliged to keep a promise extorted from us by violence? In answer to which, it is generally supposed, by divines, that we are not. Nevertheless, the person can hardly be excused from sin in making such a promise, when he designs not to perform it, although some small degree of force or threatening were used; especially since the will cannot be obliged to consent, or the tongue to utter the promise. And to all this we may add, that they are guilty of the breach of this Commandment (how much soever they may think themselves guiltless) who use equivocations, or mental reservations, in taking solemn and religious oaths. Thus the Papists make no scruple of swearing to support the government under which they live, and yet take the first opportunity that offers to subvert it, pretending they swore to support it as it stood before the reformation; or when they swear allegiance to their sovereign, and yet do what they can to dethrone him; and have this mental reservation, that they intended only to do it for the present, till they have a convenient opportunity to join in a successful rebellion. By this means they break through the solemn tie of religious oaths, elude the law, and impose upon the common sense of mankind, in such a way, as even the Heathen themselves are afraid and ashamed to do.

(3.) This farther leads us to consider this Commandment as broken by swearing profanely; namely, when we make use of the name of God, and pretend to confirm what we assert by an appeal to him, and, at the same time, are far from doing this in a religious manner. This many do, who give vent to their passions by profane swearing, by invoking the name of God upon light and trifling occasions, without that due regard that ought always to be paid to his divine Majesty.

Under this head we may observe, that cursing is a vile sin, whether a man imprecates the wrath of God on himself or others. They who curse themselves, do, in effect, pray that God would hasten their everlasting destruction; as though their damnation slumbered, or as if it were a thing to be wished for. These do that which the devils themselves would not venture to do. And to curse others is to put up a profane wicked prayer to God, to pour out his vengeance upon them, which is the highest affront to him; as though the vials of his wrath were to be emptied on men, when they pleased, to satisfy their passionate revenge against them. This also includes in it a vile instance of uncharitableness, towards those whom we are commanded to love as ourselves, Matt. xxii. 39. And how contrary is it to that golden rule laid down by our Saviour, *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them?* chap. xvii. 12. Thus we are said to

break this Commandment by perjury or profane swearing. And to this we may add, that it is notoriously broken by sinful vows; either when we resolve, or determine, to do what is unlawful, or bring ourselves under solemn engagements, to do that which is lawful, to our own strength, without dependence on the grace of God in Christ.

(4.) It is farther observed in this answer, that men take the name of God in vain, by sinful lots; but this is to be farther explained. Therefore let it be considered; That when lots were an ordinance by which God, in an extraordinary manner, determined things that were before unknown; they being an instituted means of appealing to him for that end; as in the case of Achan and others, Josh. vii. 13, 14. Acts i. 26. then lots were not to be used in a common way, for that would have been a profaning a sacred institution. But since this extraordinary ordinance is now ceased, it does not seem unlawful, so as to be an instance of profaneness, to make use of lots in civil matters; (a) provided we do not consider them as an ordinance which God has appointed, in which we think we have ground to expect his immediate interposure; and to depend upon it as though it were a divine oracle. In this view it would be unlawful at present, to use lots in any respect whatsoever.

(5.) Persons are said to break this Commandment by murmuring, quarrelling at, curiously prying into, and misapplying God's decrees or providences, or perverting what he has revealed in his word, *i. e.* when we apply things sacred to profane uses, and have not a due regard to the glory of God, which is contained therein; when we pervert scripture, by making use of those sacred expressions that are contained therein, in our common discourse, as some make the scripture the subject of their profane wit and drollery. This is certainly a taking God's name in vain. And, it is farther added, that we do so, by maintaining false doctrines, *i. e.* when we pretend, that such a doctrine is from God, when it is not, or that he makes himself known hereby; when the doctrine is altogether disowned by him.

(6.) This Commandment is farther broken, by making use of God's name as a charm; as when the writing, or pronouncing some name of God, is pretended to be an expedient to heal diseases, or drive away evil spirits; which is a great instance of profaneness, and that which he abhors.

(7.) This Commandment is farther broken, by reviling of

(a) If they appeal to God in an irreverent manner, they are a violation of this commandment. If they be not appeals to him, they are in fact, an application to him without any knowledge of him, and this is Atheism.

opposing God's truth, grace, and ways; whereby we cast contempt on that which is most sacred, and lightly esteemed that which he sets such a value on, and makes himself known by. To this we may add, that this is done by hypocrisy, and sinister ends in religion, whereby we walk, so that we are an offence to others, and backslide from the ways of God. This in an abuse of that which ought to be our glory, and a disregarding that, whereby God manifests his name and glory to the world.

III. We are now to consider the reasons annexed to the third Commandment. And these are taken,

1. From the consideration of what God is in himself, as he is the Lord, whose name alone is Jehovah; whereby he puts us in mind of his sovereignty over us, and his undoubted right to obedience from us; and hereby intimates that his excellency should fill us with the greatest reverence and humility, when we think or speak of any thing, by which he makes himself known. Moreover, he reveals himself to his people as their God, that so his greatness should not confound us, or his dread, as an absolute God, whom we have offended, make us despair of being accepted in his sight. Therefore we are to look upon him as our reconciled God and Father in Christ; which is the highest motive to obedience.

2. The observation of this Commandment is farther enforced, by a threatening denounced against those that break it; concerning whom it is said, That the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. This implies that there will be a judgment, a reckoning day, when all shall be called to an account; and it shall be known whether they are guilty or not guilty. It is farther observed, that the profaning of God's name is a sin that carries in it a great weight of guilt, and renders the sinner liable to punishment, in proportion thereunto; and accordingly God is said not to hold them guiltless, or that they shall not escape the punishment from him; though they may, and often do, escape punishment from men.

There are many instances of the profanation of the name of God, which no laws of man can reach. As when we attend on his ordinances without that inward purity of heart, and those high and becoming thoughts of him, which we ought always to entertain. On the other hand, human laws against open profaning the name of God, are not severe enough to deter men from it; and if they are, they are seldom put in execution; which is one reason why we behold the name of God so openly blasphemed, and yet this iniquity go unpunished from men. Nevertheless, such are to expect that God will follow them with the tokens of his displeasure, sometimes with temporal, at other times with spiritual judgments. And this is assigned as a reason why we ought to make men-

tion of the name of God, or of every thing whereby he makes himself known, in such a way, as that we may glorify him thereby.

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**QUEST. CXV.** *Which is the fourth Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The fourth Commandment is, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

**QUEST. CXVI.** *What is required in the fourth Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The fourth Commandment requireth of all men, the sanctifying, or keeping holy to God, such set time as he hath appointed in his word; expressly, one whole day in seven, which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian Sabbath, and in the New Testament, called the Lord's day.

**I**N this Commandment it is supposed, that God is the sovereign Lord of our time; which is to be improved by us, to the best purposes, as he shall direct. And, inasmuch as there are some special reasons which he has appointed for the exercise of religious worship, these are called *holy days*, and as we are to abstain from our secular employments therein, while engaging in religious duties, they are called *sabbaths*; and that more especially, because they are sanctified, by God, for his service. These are considered more generally, as including in them all those set times which God has appointed in his word, which is contained in the moral reason of this Commandment; and therefore, if he was pleased to institute, as he did under the ceremonial law, various Sabbaths, or days appointed for rest, and the performance of religious worship, his people are obliged to observe them. And therefore, I take the meaning of this commandment to be, Remember a sabbath day, or every sabbath day, or every day which God hath sanctified for that end, to keep it holy; and then follows the particular intimation of the weekly sabbath. This, as is ob-

served in the answer we are explaining, was the seventh day of the week, from the beginning of the world, to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since; which is the Christian Sabbath, and, in the New Testament, is called the Lord's day. In considering the subject-matter of this Commandment, we must

I. Inquire, since it is contained in the decalogue, which is an abstract of the moral law; whether we are obliged to observe the Sabbath by the law of nature, or by some positive law. For the understanding of which, let it be premised, that some laws are moral by way of eminency, or, in the highest sense, as distinguished from all positive law; and others we may call moral-positive, that is, the laws are positive; but yet there is some moral reason annexed to enforce our obedience to them. And this moral reason is either what is founded in the sovereignty of God commanding, which takes place in all positive laws, which, in this respect, are moral, though they could not be known without a divine revelation; or else positive laws may have a moral circumstance annexed to them, to engage us to obedience, taken from some glory that redounds to God, or good to ourselves, by the observation thereof; or from some other reason which God annexes to them. As for instance, the reason annexed to the fourth Commandment, is taken from God's resting from the work of creation on the seventh day, and its being sanctified for our performing religious duties therein. Here we shall consider,

1. In what respects the Sabbath is moral in the highest and most proper sense of the word, as before mentioned. That this may appear, we shall lay down the following propositions, which may be considered in their respective connexion.

(1.) It is a branch of the moral law, that God should be worshipped. This is founded in his divine perfections, in the relation we stand in to him, and in the consideration of our being intelligent creatures, capable of worship.

(2.) The moral law obliges us to perform social worship. This appears from hence, that man, as a creature, is capable of society, and naturally inclined and disposed to it: which we cannot but know, when we look into ourselves, and consider the disposition of all intelligent creatures, leading them together with ourselves, to this end; so that without any positive law to direct us, we should be naturally inclined to converse with one another.

(3.) As man is a creature designed to worship God, as the law of nature suggests, so it appears, from the same law, that he is obliged to perform social worship. For if we are obliged to converse with one another, and thereby to be helpful to each other, in other respects; certainly we are obliged, by the

~~same~~ law to converse with one another therein, and to express our united concurrence in those things that relate to the glory of God.

(4.) The law of nature farther suggests, that as the whole of our business, in this world, is not included in that of society, which is rather to be occasional than stated; and there are other secular employments, which we are to be engaged in, in which we do not converse with others; so we are not to spend our whole time in public or social worship. Therefore,

(5.) It follows from hence, that some stated times are to be appointed for this end; and it is agreeable to the law of nature, that God, who is the sovereign Lord of our time, as well as the object of social worship, should appoint these times; that is, that he should ordain a Sabbath, or what proportion of time he pleases, for us to perform those religious duties which he enjoins, therein. These considerations, relating to our observation of the Sabbath, are purely moral, and not positive.

2. We shall shew in what respects the Sabbath is positive, and not moral in the highest and most propense sense of the word. Here let it be considered, that it is the result of a positive law, that one proportion of time should be observed for a Sabbath, rather than another; namely, that it should be a seventh, rather than a third, fourth, fifth, or sixth part of our time; for this could not have been known by the light of nature, any more than the other branches of instituted worship that are to be performed therein. So that, whether it be the seventh day in the week, or the first, which we are to observe, this being founded in the divine will, we conclude it to be a positive law. This we are obliged to assert, that we may fence against two extremes, namely, that of those who, on the one hand, deny the Sabbath to have any thing of a moral circumstance contained in it; and that of others, who suppose that there is no idea of a positive law in it. That, in some respects, the fourth Commandment is a branch of the moral law, may be proved from the following arguments:

(1.) It is inserted, among other commandments that are moral, which were proclaimed by the voice of God from mount Sinai, whereas the ceremonial and judicial laws were not; though they were given by divine inspiration. *These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount, out of the midst of the fire of the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a great voice; and he added no more,* Deut. v. 22. viz. at that time.

Moreover, they were written on two tables, with the finger of God, which none of the other laws were; and were laid up in the ark before the Lord, Exod. xxxi. 18. all which denotes

the dignity and perpetuity of these laws, above all others that were ceremonial, judicial, or merely positive.

(2.) The Sabbath was enjoined to be observed not only by the Israelites, who were in covenant with God, together with their servants, who were made proselytes to their religion, and were obliged to observe the ceremonial and other positive laws; but it was also to be observed by the stranger within their gates, namely, the Heathen, who dwelt among them, who were not in covenant with God, and did not observe the ceremonial law; these were obliged to obey the Sabbath, it being, in many respects, a branch of the moral law.

(3.) If the observation of the Sabbath had been a duty of the ceremonial, and, in no respects, of the moral law, it would have been wholly abolished at the death of Christ; but, though then the day was altered, yet there was still a Sabbath observed, after his resurrection, even when the ceremonial law was no longer in force.

(4.) The weekly Sabbath is distinguished from all the ceremonial festivals; which are also called *sabbaths*, in that God lays a special claim to it, as his own day; and therefore it is called, in this Commandment, *The sabbath of the Lord thy God*; and it is styled, *his holy day*; Isa. lviii. 13. by way of eminence, to distinguish it from other days, which he has appointed to be, in other respects, devoted to his service; and when changed, it is called *The Lord's day*, Rev. i. 10. which is a peculiar honour put upon it. For these reasons we conclude, that the Sabbath has in it something moral, and is not a part of the ceremonial law.

*Obj. 1.* It is objected, that the Sabbath is included, by the apostle, among the ceremonial laws, which were designed to be abrogated, under the gospel-dispensation; and therefore he says, in Col. ii. 16, 17. *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

*Answ.* To this it may be replied, that by the *Sabbath days*, which are a shadow of things to come, we are to understand the Jewish festivals; such as the new moons, the passover, pentecost, the feast of tabernacles, &c. which are often called *sabbaths*: wherein holy convocations were held. So that when the apostle says, *Let no man judge you*, in respect of this matter, he means, let none have occasion to reprove you for your observing of those days, which were merely ceremonial, the design whereof was to typify the gospel-rest. Now, that the apostle does not mean the weekly Sabbath, is plain; for hereby he would contradict his own practice, and that of the churches



in his day, who observed it; whereas, the other sabbaths were abolished, together with the ceremonial law.

Moreover, it is evident, that he intends no more than the ceremonial sabbaths, or Jewish festivals; because he adds, *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, as well as in respect of an holy day, &c.* by which he does not mean, let no man have reason to judge or condemn you for gluttony or drunkenness, but for your abstaining from several sorts of meat, forbid by the ceremonial law; by which he means that the distinction of meats is removed under the gospel-dispensation. And consequently the ceremonial sabbaths, or holy days, are taken away; which are intended by the *sabbath day* in that place, and not the weekly Sabbath; and therefore our translation rightly renders it, the *sabbath days*, not the Sabbath day. Or if it ought to be rendered *the sabbath day*, or the weekly Sabbath, because it is distinguished from the holy days before mentioned; then it may be farther replied to it, that he means the seventh-day Sabbath, which was abolished, together with the ceremonial law, in opposition to the Lord's day; and how far this was a sign or shadow of good things to come, will be considered in what will be replied to the next objection.

*Obj. 2.* It is farther objected, by those who pretend that the Sabbath is a branch of the ceremonial law, that it is said, in *Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.* *The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever, &c.*

*Ans.* To this it may be replied; that whenever the weekly Sabbath has an idea annexed to it, agreeably to that of the ceremonial law; as when it is said to be *a sign* between God and Israel, as in this scripture, we are to understand nothing hereby, but that there was a ceremonial accommodation annexed to it, as an ordinance for their faith, in particular, signifying the gospel-rest; which signification was not annexed to it from the beginning; but when it was given to Israel. From the beginning, it was not a type; but when God gave the ceremonial law, it was made a type. Even as the rainbow, which proceeds from natural causes, and was, doubtless, set in the heavens before Noah's time; yet it was not ordained to be a sign of the covenant between God and him, till God ordered it to be so, in his time. Thus God ordained the Sabbath to be a type or sign to Israel, when he gave them the ceremonial law, though it was not so before. And at Christ's resurrection it ceased to be an ordinance, for their faith in the gospel-rest, or to be observed, when another day was substituted in the room of it, to wit, the first day of the week.

*Obj. 3.* It is farther objected, that when the observation of the Sabbath was enjoined, God bade the Israelites, in *Deut. v.*

15. to remember that they were servants in the land of Egypt and that the Lord their God brought them out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm; and therefore commanded them to keep the Sabbath-day.

*Answ.* To this it may be replied,

1. That God's bringing his people out of Egypt, is no argument that this is a part of the ceremonial law, which was given soon after that time. For we read in the preface to the ten Commandments, of his bringing his people out of the land of Egypt; which is assigned as a reason why they should observe all the Commandments. Therefore it might as well be inferred, that they are all a part of the ceremonial law, as that the fourth Commandment is so; because enforced by the same motive.

2. Though this particular reason is given to induce the Israelites to observe this Commandment, and it is in a more especial manner, applied to that dispensation of providence which they were lately under; yet this could not be said to take place in the first institution of the Sabbath, if we suppose that it was instituted before Moses's time, which we shall endeavour to prove under a following head.

3. This particular reason, taken from their having been servants in Egypt, is added to enforce the obligation laid on masters, to let their servants rest on the Sabbath-day; namely, because they themselves were once servants in Egypt, without any regard had herein to the matter of the Commandments, or any intimation that it is a branch of the ceremonial law.

II. We shall now consider when this law, relating to the observation of the Sabbath, was first given. There are various opinions about this matter.

1. Some think the Sabbath was first instituted when God spake to Israel from mount Sinai; inasmuch as it is one of the ten Commandments, which God gave them from thence (a).

(a) "The devoting of a seventh Part of Time in a holy manner to the Lord, belongs unchangeably to the moral nature and obligation of the fourth Commandment, which is transferred in the New Testament, from the seventh to the first day of the week. (See *John* xx. 26. and *Acts* xx. 7.) To this it may not be amiss to add the judicious note of Mr. *Kennicott* in his dissertation on the oblations of *Cain* and *Abel*, p. 184, 185, where he says, "The sabbath, or weekly day of holiness, might well be called a sign to the Jews;" for the Jewish sabbath was a sign, as being founded on a double reason, the second of which (the Egyptian deliverance) evidently distinguished that people from all others, and was therefore as a sign constantly to remind them of the particular care of heaven, and what uncommon returns of goodness they were to make for so signal a deliverance. But there is great reason to believe, that the sabbath of the Israelites was altered with their year, at their coming forth from Egypt; and a short attention to this point may not be here improper, the case then seems to be this. At the finishing of the creation, God sanctified the seventh day; this seventh day, being the first day of Adam's life, was consecrated by way of first-fruits to God; and therefore Adam may reasonably be supposed to have began his computation of

But to this it may be replied, that the Sabbath was observed some days before Israel came into the wilderness of Sinai, viz. when they were in the wilderness of Sin. Thus Moses, when speaking concerning their gathering twice as much *mannas* as was usual, the day before the Sabbath, assigns this as a reason for it, *To morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord*, Exod. xvi. 13. And that this was before they encamped at mount Sinai, appears from hence, namely, that it is said, that they came into the wilderness of Sin on the *fifteenth day of the second month*, ver. 2. Whereas they did not come into the wilderness of Sinai, till the *third month*, chap. xix. 1. Therefore,

2. Others fix the Epocha of the giving this law, from their coming into the wilderness of Sin; this being the first time, in which the Sabbath is expressly said to be observed, in scripture.

But to this it may be replied; that nothing can be justly inferred from the mode of expression, used by Moses in this scripture, as though it argued the giving a new law, that had not been before observed; but only the putting them in mind of the observation of that day, which had, for some time been

the *days of the week* with the *first whole day* of his own existence; thus the sabbath became the first day of the week; but when mankind fell from the worship of the true God, they first substituted the worship of the sun, in his place, and preserving the same weekly day of worship, but devoting it to the sun, the sabbath was called *Sunday*; for that *Sunday* was the first day of the week, and is so still in the east, is proved by Mr. *Selden* (Jus. Nat. and Gent. Lib. 3. Cap. 22.) Thus the *sabbath of the Patriarchs* continued to be the *Sunday of the idolaters*, till the coming up of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*; and then, as God altered the beginning of their year, so he also changed the day of their worship from *Sunday* to *Saturday*; the first reason of which might be, that as *Sunday* was the day of worship among the *Idolaters*, the *Israelites* would be more likely to join with them, if they rested on the same day, than if they were to work on that day, and serve their God upon another. But a second reason certainly was, in order to perpetuate the memory of *their deliverance on that day from Egyptian slavery*; for *Moses*, when he applies the fourth Commandment to the particular cases of his own people, *Deut. v. 15*, does not enforce it, as in *Ex. xx. 11*. by the consideration of *God's resting on that day* which was the sabbath of the *Patriarchs*; but binds it upon them by saying, *Remember that thou wast a servant in Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm; therefore the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to keep this sabbath-day*. Allowing then the preceding observations, we immediately see, how the sabbath naturally reverted to *Sunday*, after the abolition of *Judaism* without any express command for the alteration." To which he adds a quotation from *Bp. Cumberland*, (Orig. Gent. Antiq. p. 400.) which speaks of the *Gentiles*, as called, after *Christ's* time into the same universal church with the *Patriarchs*; and another from *Justin Martyr*, *Τῆς δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου ἡμέρας κοινὴ πάντες τῆς εὐσεβείας ποιούμεθα ἐπιθεὶς πρῶτη ἡμέρα, ἐν ᾧ θεὸς τὸ σκότος ἐκ τῆς ἡλίου πρῶτης, κοσμοῦ ἠσώσθη καὶ Ἰησοῦς χριστὸς ὁ ἡμετέρος σωτὴρ τῆς αἰῶνις ἡμετέρας ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀπέθῃ*. *Apol. c. s. 89*. The purport of which is, that all christians generally assembled for religious worship on the *Sunday*; because it is the first day in which God finished the creation of the world; and on the same day of the week, *Jesus Christ, our Saviour, rose from the dead.*"

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disregarded; and accordingly it is assigned as a reason of their gathering twice the quantity of manna on the sixth day, which supposes that they knew before hand, that they were to rest on the seventh; though it is highly probable, that the observation of this Commandment had been neglected, for some years past while they were in Egypt; and it may be, that they were not suffered, by those who held them there in bondage, to observe this, and many other of the divine laws. Nevertheless, the memory of the Sabbath was not wholly lost among them, which Moses puts them now in mind of.

The most probable opinion therefore relating to the institution of the Sabbath, is, that it was given to man from the beginning; which may be argued,

(1.) From the reason annexed to the Commandment, to wit, God's resting from his work of creation; and it immediately follows, that when he rested from his work, he blessed and sanctified the seventh day; that so man might celebrate and commemorate his power and glory displayed therein, Gen. ii. 1, 2, 3.

*Obj.* To this it is objected; that God's blessing and sanctifying the seventh day, may be understood *proleptically*, as denoting, that at first he sanctified, or ordained that it should be a Sabbath, to his people in the following ages; and that this did not take place till Moses's time; and accordingly they suppose, that he having been speaking of the creation of the world, and God's resting from his work, gives them to understand, that this was the reason of the law, which was now given them, concerning the observation of the Sabbath, which they never heard of before.

*Ans.* But to this it may be replied, That this sense of the text will appear very absurd to any unprejudiced person; since if God's resting from his work, which is mentioned immediately before, as the reason of his sanctifying the seventh day, is to be taken literally, why must his sanctifying the Sabbath be taken figuratively? if the one be an account of what was just done, why should the other be an account of what was not to take place till two thousand and five hundred years after?

(2.) If God had a church in the world, and public worship was performed by them from Adam to Moses's time, then, there were set times, in which they were to meet together for that end, and consequently a Sabbath, which was equally necessary for the good of the church, in foregoing as well as following ages; and therefore we cannot suppose that it should be denied that privilege then, which had been granted it ever since; or, that from Moses's time they should be obliged to celebrate the glory of God, as their Creator, sovereign Ruler, and bountiful Benefactor; and that a seventh part of time

should be allotted them for this service, by his express command, and yet he should lose the glory, and his people the advantage arising from it, before that time.

*Obj.* It is objected to this, that the scripture is wholly silent as to this matter, and therefore nothing can be concluded in favour of the argument we are maintaining.

*Answ.* Some think that the scripture is not wholly silent as to this matter; but that it may be inferred from what we read in Gen. iv. 3, 4. in which it is said, that *in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought an offering unto the Lord;* which was, doubtless, an instance of public worship. We render the words *in process of time*; but they may, with equal justice, be rendered, as it is observed in the margin, *at the end of days*; that is, at the end of that cycle of days which we generally call *a week*, or on the seventh day; then the offering was brought, and the solemn worship performed, and hereby the Sabbath sanctified according to God's institution. But if this argument be not allowed of, it does not follow that the scripture's not mentioning their observing a Sabbath, gives us just ground to suppose that they did not observe any. It might as well be argued, that because the scripture speaks very little of any public worship performed before the flood, that therefore there was none in the world; or, that because we do not read of the church's observing a Sabbath, and many other parts of instituted worship all the time of the judges, which is said to be *about the space of four hundred and fifty years*, Acts xiii. 20. therefore it follows that a Sabbath, was not observed by them, during the whole of that interval, and all instituted worship was wholly neglected.

The next thing to be inquired into is, whether the Sabbath was instituted before or after the fall of our first parents? And it may be observed; that it appears to have been instituted before their fall; because the reason of its institution was God's resting from his work of creation, of which we read before the account of their fall, as appears from the scripture before mentioned.

*Obj.* It is objected that Adam in innocency had no manservant nor maid-servants, nor stranger within his gate; and therefore was not in a capacity of observing this Commandment.

*Answ.* To this it may be replied, That before the world was increased, our first parents might observe the principal thing contained in this Commandment, by setting apart a day for religious worship: and when the world increased, the other part of the Commandment, which was only circumstantial, might take place. And, indeed, this objection might be as much alleged against Adam's being obliged to yield obedi-

ence to the fifth, seventh, and eighth Commandments, as against his obeying the fourth.

III. It is farther observed, in this answer, that the day which we call a seventh part of time, was the seventh day of the week, from the beginning of the world, till the resurrection of Christ; and the first day of the week, ever since, to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian Sabbath, or the Lord's day. That the seventh day of the week was observed as a Sabbath, at first, is taken for granted; and we do not find that it was abolished by a positive law, so that there should be no Sabbath; but the day was changed, by substituting another in the room of it. If, according to the fourth Commandment, there is to be but one Sabbath in the week, and the other six days thereof are allowed for our own lawful employments; and if the first day of the week can be proved, as we shall attempt to do, to be the Christian Sabbath, then it follows, that the seventh day ceases to be a Sabbath.

It may be, indeed, observed, from several ecclesiastical writers, that some in the three first centuries, observed, both the seventh and the first day of the week. As for the apostles, they often assembled with the Jews, in their synagogues, on the seventh day, Acts xiii. 14. and xvii. 2. but this was done with a design to propagate the Christian religion among them, which could not, with equal conveniency, be done on other days. And the church afterwards met together on that day, as well as the Lord's day, apprehending that though it was not now to be reckoned God's holy day, or the Christian Sabbath; yet it was expedient, that hereby they should keep up the memory of his having, on that day, finished the work of creation; and others kept it as a day of fasting, accompanied with other religious exercises, in memory of Christ's lying that day in the grave. But this can hardly be justified in them. However, it is evident that they did not pay the same regard to it as the Lord's day, nor style it God's holy day, nor the Christian Sabbath, by way of eminency. And some have expressly intimated, that whatever regard they paid to the seventh day, or what assemblies soever they held for worship therein, they did not observe it in the same way as the Jews did\*; neither were they obliged to hold meetings on that day, as they were on the Lord's day, it being, in part, left to their discretion; and it was supposed, that they had sufficient leisure from their secular callings; and therefore might attend to the worship of God on that day, as an opportunity offered itself; though they did not count it equally holy with the Lord's day; nor were they obliged, when the worship was over, to abstain

\* Vid. Athenas. *Hom. de Semente.*

from their secular employment\*. But this I only mention occasionally, to obviate an objection taken from the practice of some of the ancient church, in observing the seventh day of the week, which does not much affect the cause we are maintaining, our design being to prove that the first day of the week is ordained to be the Christian Sabbath.

But before we enter on that subject, it may be necessary, to prepare our way for it, to premise,

1. That it does not, in the least, derogate from the honour and glory of God, to change the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. It would, indeed, derogate from the glory of God, if he should take away one Sabbath, and not institute another in the room of it; for then he would lose the honour of that public worship, which he has appointed to be performed on that day.

Moreover, if there be a greater work than that of creation, to be remembered and celebrated, it tends much more to the advancing the glory of God, to appoint a day for the solemn remembrance thereof, than if it should be wholly neglected. And to this we may add, that if all men must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, then it is expedient, that a day should be set apart for his honour, namely, the day on which he rested from the work of redemption, or, as the apostle says, *ceased from it, as God did from his*, Heb. iv. 10.

2. It was expedient, that God should alter the Sabbath, from the seventh to the first day of the week; for,

(1.) Hereby Christ took occasion to give a display of his glory, and in particular of his sovereign authority, to enjoin what time he would have us set apart for his worship under the gospel-dispensation, as well as what worship he will have performed therein; and to discover himself to be, as he styles himself; *The Lord of the Sabbath day*, Matt. xii. 8.

(2.) We, in the observation thereof, signify our faith, in a public manner, that Christ is come in the flesh, and that the work of our redemption is brought to perfection; and consequently, that there is a way prepared for our justification and access to God, as our God, in hope of finding acceptance in his sight.

3. All the ordinances of gospel-worship have a peculiar relation to Christ; therefore it is expedient that the time in which they are to be performed, under this present gospel-dispensation, should likewise have relation to him; therefore that day must be set apart in commemoration of his work of redemption, in which he finished it, and that was the first day of the week.

\* Vid. Ignat. Epist. ad Magn. And much more to the same purpose may be seen in a learned book, intitled *Dies Dominica*, in cap. iii. & alibi passim.

This leads us to consider, what ground we have to conclude that the Sabbath was changed, from the seventh to the first day of the week after the resurrection of Christ. And this will appear,

(1.) From the example of Christ and his apostles, who celebrated the first day of the week as a Sabbath, after his resurrection. Thus we read in John xx. 19. *that the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto you.* And ver. 26. *After eight days, or the eighth day after, inclusive, again his disciples were within; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you.* Where we may observe,

[1.] That it was not merely an occasional meeting, but a fixed one, which returned weekly. Therefore they met eight days after, or the following first day of the week; which was the second Christian Sabbath.

[2.] On both these days of their meeting together for public worship, Christ appeared in the midst of them, and spake peace unto them; which includes his owning the day, and confirming their faith in the observation of it as a Sabbath, for the future.

*Obj.* It is objected, that the reasons of the apostles' meeting together on the first day of the week, was for fear of the Jews; and not because it was substituted in the room of the seventh day, as a Sabbath perpetually to be observed.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, that they did not meet together for fear of the Jews; but when they were assembled, the doors were shut for fear of them. Besides, it may be farther replied, that the fear of persecution would have been no warrant for them, not to keep the seventh-day-Sabbath; or to substitute another day in the room of it. To all which we might add, that they might more securely meet together on the seventh day of the week, than on any other day, if they were afraid of disturbance from the Jews; for then they were engaged in worship themselves; and, it is probable, would be rather inclined to let them alone, for want of leisure, to give them disturbance in their worship.

(2.) It farther appears, that the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, in that this was a day, in which the church met, together with the apostles, for solemn public worship. Thus we read in Acts xx. 7. *that upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.* Where we may observe,

[1.] That it was not a private, but a public meeting of the



church; for it is said, that the disciples, that is, the church, met together.

[2.] It was not a day occasionally appointed by the apostle, but the stated usual time of their meeting; for it is not said Paul designed to preach to them on that day, and therefore they met together; but when they came together, *on the first day of the week*, that is, on the day of their usual meeting, *Paul preached unto them.*

[3.] The apostle had been with them some days before; for it is said in the foregoing verse, that *he abode their seven days.* Why did they not meet together, and he preach to them the day before, to wit, the seventh day of the week, on which day he was with them; but because that was no longer a Sabbath, but changed to the first day?

[4.] The end of their meeting was to break bread. Now, though the word is to be preached in season and out of season; yet no day is so proper to break bread on, or celebrate the Lord's supper, as that on which he rose from the dead. Besides, when a day is particularly described as that which is set apart for solemn worship, such as preaching and breaking of bread is supposed to be, that must be understood to be the Sabbath.

5. They could not be said now to meet together for fear of the Jews, as was before objected to their observing the first Sabbath; for it was at Troas, where the Jews had nothing to do, nor could they persecute them; for it was a church of converted Gentiles.

*Obj. 1.* It is objected, that the word which we render *the first day of the week* \*, might be rendered *one day of the week*, or on a certain day.

*Ans.* Our translation of the Greek word, is by far the most proper, as all know, who understand that language. Besides, the same words are used in John xx. 1. and Luke xxiv. 1. in both which scriptures Christ's resurrection is said to be *on the first day of the week*; how preposterous would it be, to render them, on a certain day of the week? and if they are, in those scriptures, and others that might be referred to, to be rendered, the first day of the week, as all allow they must, why should they be rendered otherwise in the text under our present consideration?

*Obj. 2.* It is farther objected, that their meeting together, on the first day of the week, to break bread, does not argue it to be a Sabbath; because formerly the Lord's supper used to be administered whenever the word was preached, and that was

\* *Ἐν τῇ μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν.* *On the first from the Sabbath; so the Jews named the days of the week.*

on other days, besides the first day of the week; yea, we read, that in some ages of the church, the word was preached, and the Lord's supper administered, every day.

*Answer.* To this it may be replied, That though the Lord's supper may be administered on another day, yet this is said to be the day more especially appointed for this solemn ordinance, or for public worship, as has been already observed. Besides, though the Lord's supper was administered on other days after this: yet it will be hard to prove that it was administered on any other day but the Lord's day, in the apostles time.

(3.) The change of the Sabbath, from the seventh to the first day of the week, may be farther argued from 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2. in which the apostle says, *As I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him; that there be no gatherings when I come.* In which words we may observe,

[1.] That there is a work of charity recommended; a duty most proper for the Sabbath, as a testimony of our thankfulness to God for spiritual blessings, held forth to, or received by us, on that day; and it is a day in which our hearts are most like to be enlarged to others, when most affected with the love of God to us. Those duties which the prophet recommends as suitable to a fast, which God had chosen, are very suitable to all public ordinances, and in particular to Sabbaths, namely, to loose the bands of wickedness, and to undo the heavy burdens, and to deal forth bread to the hungry, Isa. lviii. 6, 7. If the poor of the church were to be provided for, this was to be done, not by a private, but a public collection, whereby more might be raised, and no burden laid on particular persons. It is moreover said, that they were to lay by as God had prospered them; that is, not only in proportion to the increase of their worldly substance, or the success that attended their secular employments on other days; but their compassion to the poor ought to be enlarged, in proportion to the spiritual advantage they received from Christ, under his ordinances.

[2.] This was not to be done on one single first day of the week, but on the return of every first day; as all who read this scripture impartially must understand it\*. Therefore it follows, that the first day of the week was a day in which the church met together for solemn, public, and stated worship.

[3.] It was not commanded only to this church at Corinth, but is agreeable to what had been commanded to all the churches of Galatia; therefore it follows, that the churches of Galatia were obliged to observe the first day of the week, as

\* Κατὰ πόλιν καθ' ἑκάστην.

well as that at Corinth. And inasmuch as this epistle is directed to *all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. i. 2. it may by a parity of reason, be applied to them; and accordingly it may be argued, that it was a universal practice of the church, at that time, to meet together for religious worship, on the first day of the week, which argument cannot but have some weight in it, to prove the doctrine that we are maintaining, relating to the change of the Sabbath, from the seventh to the first day of the week.

(4.) The change of the Sabbath, from the seventh to the first day of the week, farther appears, in that there is a day, mentioned in the New Testament, which is styled *the Lord's day*. Thus it is said, *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day*, Rev. i. 10. Where it may be observed,

[1.] That there is a peculiar claim that Christ lays to this day as his own, distinct from all other days. As the seventh day of the week was, before this, called, as it is in this Commandment, *The Sabbath of the Lord thy God*, and elsewhere, his *holy day*, Isa. lviii. 13. so there is a peculiar day which our Saviour, who is the Lord here spoken of, claims as his holy day. And what can this be, but that day which he has instituted in commemoration of his having finished the work of our redemption?

[2.] It may be farther observed, that when God is said to lay claim to things in scripture, it denotes, that they are of his appointment, and for his glory. Thus the bread and the wine in that ordinance, which Christ has appointed in remembrance of his death, is called *the Lord's supper*, or *the Lord's table*, denoting that it is an ordinance of his own appointment; in like manner *the Lord's day* may be fitly so called for this reason, as instituted by him.

The arguments that have hitherto been brought to prove that the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, are principally such as are founded on a scripture-consequence. We shall now proceed to prove that this consequence is just, viz. that because the first day of the week was observed by our Saviour, his apostles, and the church in general, as the Lord's day, that is, a day instituted by him, in commemoration of his having finished the work of our redemption; therefore we ought to observe it for that end. Here it may be considered,

1st, That it is not to be supposed, that it was universally observed by the church at random, or by accident, without some direction given them herein. For since the apostles were appointed to erect the gospel-church, and, as God's ministers, to give laws to it, relating to the instituted worship that was to be performed therein, it is as reasonable to sup-

pose, that they gave direction concerning the time, in which public solemn worship should be performed.

2dly, Whatever the apostles ordered the church to observe, in matters belonging to religious worship, they did it by divine direction; otherwise the rules they laid down for instituted worship, could not be much depended on; and they, would doubtless, have been blamed, as not having fulfilled the commission, which they received from Christ, to *teach the church to observe all things whatever he had commanded them.* Nor could the apostle have made this appeal to the church as he does; *I have not skunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God,* Acts xx. 27. and elsewhere, *I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,* 1 Cor. xi. 23. and *I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received,* chap. xv. 3. Nor would he have acted agreeably to the character he gave of himself and the rest of the apostles; concerning whom he says, *Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful,* chap. iv. 1. And he says concerning himself, *I have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful,* chap. vii. 25. And elsewhere, *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord,* chap. xiv. 37. and consequently, that whatever directions he gave about the time, as well as mode of worship, were instamped with his authority; therefore, an apostolic intimation contained a divine command relating hereunto.

Those things that were delivered to the church, by persons under divine inspiration, are not to be reckoned among the traditions which the Papists plead for, which took their rise in those ages when inspiration was ceased. The apostle uses the word *tradition* in the same sense in which we are to understand a divine oracle, or a command given by those who were divinely inspired; and accordingly he says, *I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances,* or, as it is in the margin, *traditions, as I have delivered them to you,* chap. xi. 2. and elsewhere, he exhorts them, *to hold the traditions which they had been taught, whether by word, or his epistle,* 2 Thess. ii. 15. that is, all those things which had been communicated to them by divine inspiration, in whatever form they were transmitted to them, whether by word or writing; which different circumstances of imparting them, do not in the least detract from their divine authority. The laws which God gave to his church, were either immediately from himself, as the ten Commandments, or else they were given by those who were inspired for that purpose; and, indeed, the greatest part of gospel-worship was of this latter

sort; and what was transmitted by the apostles relating hereunto, was either verbal or real; the former containing an intimation of what they had received of the Lord, the latter was enforced by their example and practice; which, supposing them to be under divine inspiration, was a sufficient warrant for the faith and practice of the church, whether relating to the mode or time of worship; and consequently the practice and example of the apostles and church, in their day, in observing the first day of the week, is a sufficient argument to convince us concerning the change of the Sabbath, from the seventh to the Lord's day, which was to be observed, by the church, in all succeeding ages.

As to that question which is proposed by some, namely, when it was that Christ gave instructions to the apostles, concerning the change of the Sabbath? It is an over-curious enquiry, since it is enough for us to conclude, that this, together with other laws given by them, relating to the gospel-dispensation, were given by him, during that interval of time, in which *he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, Acts i. 3. of which, we may reasonably suppose this to have been one. But if this be not reckoned sufficient for the confirming our faith therein, we have the highest reason to conclude, that it was given by the inspiration of the Spirit, whom Christ had before promised unto the apostles to guide *them into all truth*; and that he should *shew them things to come*, John xvi. 13. by which we are to understand, that he was to lead them, not only into those truths, which were necessary for them to know as Christians, but to impart to the churches as ministers, as a rule of faith and practice. This is what, I think, may give us sufficient satisfaction, as to the divine original of the Lord's day, without our being obliged to have recourse to an ecclesiastical establishment, without a divine institution; which would very much detract from the dignity and glory of it, and the regard that we ought to pay to it, as the Lord's holy day. We have considered it as instituted by the apostles; and that they had instructions in all things relating to the edification of the church; and that they were so faithful in what they imparted, that they cannot be, in the least, suspected of intruding any invention of their own into the worship of God, in this, any more than any other branch thereof, to suppose which, would leave us in the greatest uncertainty, as to what concerns matters of the highest importance.

Thus concerning the observation of the Lord's day, as founded on a divine warrant, given to the church by the ministry of the apostles, who were appointed, by God, to make

known those laws to them, which respect the manner and time in which he will be worshipped, under the gospel-dispensation.

The next thing to be considered, is, that the church in, and after the apostles time, universally attended to the religious observation of the Lord's day; which was celebrated as a Sabbath in all succeeding ages. This is so evident, from the history of what relates thereunto, that it needs no proof. That the apostles and the church, in their day, observed it, has been already considered; and that the observation thereof was continued in the church, after their death, appears from the writings of most of the Fathers, who speak of it as a day in which the church met together for public worship, and paid a much greater deference to it than any of the other days of the week, wherein they occasionally attended on the exercise of religious duties. Thus Ignatius, who lived in the beginning of the second Century, advises every one who loved Christ, to celebrate the Lord's day, which was consecrated to his resurrection; and he calls it the queen, and chief of all days\*. Also Justin Martyr, who lived about the middle of the same Century, in one of his apologies for the Christians, says, That on that day, which they, viz. the Heathen, call Sunday, all who live in cities or villages, meet together in the same place, where the writings of the spostles and prophets are read, and we all assemble; it being the day in which God finished the creation, and Jesus Christ, our Saviour, rose from the dead. For the day before Saturday he was crucified, and the day after it, that is, Sunday, he appeared to his apostles and disciples, and instructed them in those things which we propose to your consideration †.

In the third Century, when persecution so much raged against the church, it is well known, that Christians distinguished them-

\* *Vid. Ignat. Epist. ad Magnes.*

† *Vid. Just. Mart. edit. a Grab. Apol. 1. § 87, & 89. It may be observed, that that Father is not alone in his calling it Sunday; for Tertullian [Adv. Gent. Cap. xvi.] calls it so. And Jerom says it may be so called, because the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings; but it is generally called the Lord's day; and that not only by others, but by the same Fathers; except in their apologies for the Christian religion against the Heathen, they used the word in compliance with their mode of speaking. But that which is more strange, and savours a little of affectation, is, that Justin, and some other of the Fathers, should chuse to use a circumlocution, instead of Friday, as he calls it, the day before Saturday. And Ignatius, [in Epist. ad Trall.] calls it parasevea, or, the preparation for the Sabbath, as the Jews did; and Irenæus calls it the day before the Sabbath, [in Lib. v. adv. Her. Cap. xxiii.] which the learned Grabe supposes to be for this reason; that they might shew how much they detested the name of Venus, to whom Friday was dedicated by the Heathen. And they ought to have been as cautious of using the word Sunday, since that was not only dedicated to the Sun. But some took occasion from thence, to asperse the Christians, as though they had worshipped the Sun; which Tertullian, in [Apol. adv. Gen. Cap. xvi.] is obliged to exculpate them from.*

selves, by the character of observers of the Lord's day, which they reckoned a badge of Christianity \*.

I need not descend any lower, to prove that the Lord's day was universally observed by the church, in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, in all succeeding ages; for that is generally allowed. Therefore, all that I shall add to illustrate this argument, taken from the practice of the Christian church, from our Saviour's resurrection, to this day, is,

1st, That it cannot reasonably be supposed, that God would suffer his church universally to run into so great a mistake, as to keep a wrong day as a weekly Sabbath; and that not only in one or two, but in all ages, since our Saviour's time. Now, whatever error particular churches have been suffered to imbibe, God has not left them all in general; and that before the corruption and apostasy of the church of Rome, as well as since the Reformation, to be deceived, which they must be said to have been, had they esteemed that God's holy day, which he has neither instituted, nor owned as such.

2d, God has not only suffered all his churches to go on in this error, if it be an error, and not undeceived them, but he has, at the same time, granted them many signal marks of his favour; and has, to this day, in many instances, owned the strict and religious observation thereof; which we can hardly suppose he would have done, if it were not of his own institution; nor that he would have given a sanction to it, by being present with his people, when attending on him therein, in the ordinances of his own appointment. This leads us to consider,

IV. The proportion of time that is to be observed as a weekly Sabbath. Thus it is said in this answer, we are to keep holy to God, one whole day in seven. A day is either artificial or natural. The former is the space of time from the sun's rising, to its setting; the latter contains in it the space of twenty four hours. Now the Lord's day must be supposed to continue longer than the measure of an artificial day; otherwise it would fall short of a seventh part of time. But this has not so many difficulties attending it, as that has which relates to the time of the day when it begins. Nevertheless, we have some direction, as to this matter, from the intimation given us, that Christ rose from the dead *on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, while it was yet dark*, John xx. 1: Luke xxiv. 1. Therefore the Lord's day begins in the morning, before sun rising; or, according to our usual way of reck-

\* *Dominicum agere, or celebrare, was a phrase well known in that age, in which many Christians were put to death, upon their being examined, and boldly professing that they observed the Lord's day; and the assemblies, in which all the parts of public worship were performed on that day, were generally called Synaxæ.*

oning, we may conclude, that it begins immediately after mid-night, and continues till mid-night following; 'which is our common method of computing time, beginning the day with the morning, and ending it with the evening; and it is agreeable to the Psalmist's observation; *Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour in the morning, until the evening*, Psal. civ. 23. Rest, in order of nature, follows after labour; therefore the night follows the day; and consequently the Lord's day evening follows the day, on which account it must be supposed to begin in the morning.

Again, if the Sabbath begins in the evening, religious worship ought to be performed sometime, at least, in the evening; and then, soon after it is begun, it will be interrupted by the succeeding night, and then it must be revived again the following day. And, as to the end of the Sabbath, it seems not so agreeable, that, when we have been engaged in the worship of God in the day, we should spend the evening in secular employments; which cannot be judged unlawful, if the Sabbath be then at an end. Therefore, it is much more expedient, that the whole work of the day should be continued as long as our worldly employments are on other days; and our beginning and ending the performance of religious duties, should in some measure, be agreeable thereunto. Again, this may be proved from what is said in Exod. xvi. 23. *To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord*. Whereas, if the Sabbath had begun in the evening, it would rather have been said, this evening begins the rest of the holy Sabbath.

Another scripture generally brought to prove this argument, is in John xx. 19. *The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you*; it is called *the evening of the same day*; so that the worship which was performed that day, was continued in the evening thereof. This is not called the evening of the next day, but of the same day in which Christ rose from the dead; which was the first Christian Sabbath.

*Object.* To this it is objected, that the ceremonial Sabbaths under the law, began at evening. Thus it is said, in Lev. xxiii. 5. *In the fourteenth day of the first month, at even, is the Lord's passover*; and ver. 32. speaking concerning the feast of expiation, which was on the tenth day of the seventh month, it is said, *It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest; and ye shall afflict your souls in the ninth day of the month, at even: From even unto even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath*.

*Answ.* To this it may be answered; that the beginning of sacred days is to be at the same time with that of civil; and



this was governed by the custom of nations. The Jews' civil day began at evening; and therefore it was ordained that from evening to evening, should be the measure of their sacred days. Our days have another beginning and ending; which difference is only circumstantial. Whereas, the principal thing enjoined, is, that one whole day in seven, be observed as a Sabbath to the Lord.

**QUEST. CXVII.** *How is the Sabbath, or Lord's day to be sanctified?*

**ANSW.** The Sabbath, or Lord's day, is to be sanctified, by an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are, at all times, sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful, and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship; and to that end we are to prepare our hearts, and with such fore-sight, diligence and moderation to dispose, and seasonably to dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.

**QUEST. CXVIII.** *Why is the charge of keeping the Sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors?*

**ANSW.** The charge of keeping the Sabbath is more especially directed to governors of families and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oft-times to hinder them by employments of their own.

**I**N explaining the former of these answers, which more especially respects the manner how the Sabbath is to be sanctified, let it be considered,

I. That we are to prepare our hearts, and with such fore-sight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose, and seasonably to dispatch, our worldly business, that we may be more free and fit for the business of that day. We do not read, indeed, that there is any time sanctified, or set apart by God, in order to our preparing for the Sabbath; but this matter is left to our Christian prudence. Yet we read in the New Testament, of the day of preparation for the Sabbath; that is, the day before the Jewish Sabbath; which persons who had any sense of the

importance of the work to be performed on the following day, thought it their duty to prepare for before-hand, at least, to give dispatch to their worldly business; that their thoughts might be fixed on the work on which they were to engage on the day ensuing. Thus we read, that *that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on: And they returned and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment*, Luke xxiii. 54, 56. The mixing of ointments and spices, which were compounded according to the custom of those times, for the embalming of the dead, was a work of labour, and not fit to be done on the Sabbath. Therefore they did this the day before, that they might not be brought under any necessity of performing that servile work therein, which might be done on another day. And this practice of dispatching worldly business, in order to their being prepared for the sacred employment of the Sabbath, seems to have been inculcated, when the observation of that day was revived by Moses in the wilderness of Sin; on which occasion he says, *To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord. Bake that which ye will bake, and seethe that ye will seethe: and that which remaineth over, lay it up for you to be kept until the morning*, Exod. xvi. 23. The meaning of which is, they were to gather the manna, which would take up a considerable time, and grind or prepare it for baking or seething; which was a servile, or laborious work, that might as well be done the day before. Accordingly they were commanded then to dispatch or finish it, that they might rest in, and sanctify the Sabbath immediately following.

As for the time which the more religious Jews took, in preparing for the Sabbath before it came, something of this may be learned from the practice of holy Nehemiah; whereby it appears, that they laid aside their worldly business, in order to their preparing for the Sabbath the day before, at sun-set, or when it begun to be dark. Thus it is said, *That when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, he commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath*, Neh. xiii. 19. However, this is discretionary, and therefore some Jewish writers observe, that many of them began to prepare for the Sabbath the evening before, at six o'clock, and some of them at three; and others spent the whole day before in the dispatch of their secular business, that they might be better prepared for the Sabbath; and this, as to what is equitable or moral therein, is doubtless, an example to us: so that we may say as Hezekiah did in his prayer; *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God; the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary*, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

**This leads us to consider the duties to be performed preparatory to the right observing the Lord's day; and, in order hereunto, we ought, the evening before, to lay aside our care and worldly business, that our thoughts may not be incumbered, diverted, or taken up with unseasonable or unlawful concerns about it. This is a duty very much neglected; and the omission thereof is one reason of our unprofitable attendance on the ordinances of God on the Lord's day. Thus many keep their shops open till midnight; and by this means make encroachments on part of the morning of the Lord's day, by indulging too much sleep; which occasions drowsiness under the ordinances, as well as their thoughts being filled with worldly concerns and business therein. And to this we may add, that all envyings, contentions, evil surmising against our neighbour, are to be laid aside, since these will tend to defile our souls and to deprave our minds, when they ought wholly to be taken up about divine things. Thus the apostle advises those to whom he writes, to lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, and as newborn babes to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.**

Moreover, we are to endeavour to bring our souls into a prepared frame for the duties of the Lord's day, the evening before, by having our thoughts engaged in those meditations that are suitable thereunto; particularly, we are to consider the many lost Sabbaths we have to account for, or repent of, as also the wonderful patience of God, who has, notwithstanding spared us to the approach of another Sabbath; and what precautions are necessary to be used, that we may not profane or trifle it away. It would also be expedient for us to meditate on the vanity of worldly things, which we have laid aside all our care about, and think how contemptible the gain thereof is, if compared with communion with God, which is our great concern; and therefore we are to consider ourselves as having a greater work to transact with God on his own day, and desire to have no disturbance from the world therein. And to these meditations we ought to join our fervent prayers to God; that the sins committed by us in former Sabbaths may be forgiven, that he may not be provoked to withdraw the influences of his Spirit on the approaching day; and that the world with the cares thereof, may not then be a share to us, through the temptations of Satan, together with the corruption of our own hearts, whereby our converse with God would be interrupted, that by this means we may wait on the Lord without distraction. We ought also to pray, that he would also assist his ministers in preparing a seasonable word, that may be blest to ourselves and others. Thus the apostle exhorts the church,

to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and to watch thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints; and for him, that utterance might be given unto him, that he might open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, Eph. vi. 18, 19. We ought to be very importunate with God, that he would sanctify, and fill our thoughts from the beginning to the end of the Lord's day, which he has consecrated for his immediate service and glory.

II. We are now to consider what we are to rest and abstain from, on the Lord's day; and this is included in two general heads, namely, not only from things sinful, but what is in itself lawful, on other days.

1. As for those things which are sinful on other days, they are much more so on the Sabbath; for hereby we contract double guilt, not only in committing the sin, but in breaking the Sabbath; and such sins are, for the most part, presumptuously committed, and greatly tend to harden the heart; and not only hinder the efficacy of the ordinances, but if allowed of, and persisted in, are a sad step to apostacy.

2. We break the Sabbath by engaging in things that would be lawful on other days; and that in two particular instances here mentioned;

(1.) When we engage in worldly employments. These, we are wholly to lay aside, or abstain from; particularly buying or selling, or encouraging those who do so. We have a noble instance of zeal in Nehemiah, relating to this matter; wherein he says, *In those days saw I in Judah, some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and leading asses; as also wine, grapes and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, what evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day?* Neh. xiii. 15, 16, 17. And the prophet Jeremiah speaks to the same purpose, when he prohibits their *carrying burdens on the Sabbath day, or doing any work therein*; and exhorts them to *hallow the Sabbath day, as God commanded their fathers*, Jer. xvii. 21, 22. This may tend to reprove those tradesmen who post their books, state their accounts, or prepare their goods, which are to be exposed to sale on the following day. And if we do not run these lengths, in profaning the Sabbath; yet we are highly guilty when our thoughts and discourse run after our covetousness, which is, in effect, a saying as they did who complained, *When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and*

*the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, Amos viii. 5. This the prophet reproves, when he says, They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness, Ezek. xxxiii. 31.*

(2.) The Sabbath is violated by recreations; which we are therefore to abstain from: otherwise we spurn at the Sabbath; accordingly the prophet Isaiah speaks of those who sanctify *the Sabbath*, as turning away their foot from doing their pleasure on God's holy day, and calling the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, honouring him, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words, Isa. lviii. 13.

[1.] The recreations we are to abstain from, on the Lord's day, are unnecessary visits, by which the worship of God in families, is interrupted, the minds of men perverted, and filled with vanity, the motions of the Spirit quenched, and the advantage of public worship greatly hindered, if not wholly lost.

[2.] Walking in the fields; whereby instead of meditating on the word, the mind is diverted from it. To which we may add,

[3.] The taking unnecessary journeys; which, according as they are circumstanced, will appear to be no other than finding our own pleasure, and doing our own works on God's holy day.

We read, indeed, in Acts i. 12. of a *Sabbath-day's journey*; which seems to argue, that it was not unlawful to travel on the Lord's day. But, that we may not mistake this matter, let it be considered, that a *Sabbath-day's journey*, according to Jewish writers, contained the length of two thousand cubits, or, about a mile; which was, ordinarily speaking, the length of their cities, together with their respective suburbs. Therefore, since this is the measure of a Sabbath-day's journey, it implies, that they were not to go out of their cities to divert themselves, or to undertake journeys, under a pretence of business. Thus they were commanded *to abide every man in his place on the seventh day*, Exod. xvi. 29. that is, not to wander out of their tents, to take the air, though they were obliged to go out of their tents to the tabernacle, the place of public worship, which was pitched in the midst thereof, for the conveniency of coming to it. Hither, indeed, they went, from their respective tents; which was the only journey they took, unless in case of necessity, on the Sabbath-day.

To this we may add, that it is not lawful, on the Sabbath-day, for persons to divert themselves by talking of news, or common affairs; which unseasonable discourse oftentimes gives

a check to those lively frames of spirit we have had under the word preached; and by indulging such discourse, we not only break the Sabbath ourselves, but by our example, induce others to do the same. I do not say but that it may be reasonable to meditate on the providence of God towards the church and the world, on the Lord's day, as well as at other times; but then we must take heed that his glory, and not barely our own diversion, is a great inducement thereunto.

III. When it is said, in the fourth Commandment, that *those shall do no manner of work on the Sabbath day*, there is an exception hereunto, or an intimation, that works of necessity and mercy, though they contain in them something servile or laborious, may, notwithstanding, be done on the Lord's day. Some things are necessary, as they tend to the support of nature; as eating and drinking; and therefore the providing food for that end, is, doubtless, lawful; especially if too much time be not spent therein, too many servants, or others, detained from the worship of God thereby, or entertainments and splendid feasts made; in which, variety of things are prepared, to please the appetite; and all this attended with vain and trifling conversation, unbecoming the holiness of the day. There are also other works of necessity, which may be done on the Sabbath-day, viz. such as are subservient to the worship of God; without which, it is impossible that the public exercises thereof should be performed. Thus, under the ceremonial law, there were many laborious services that attended public worship; particularly the killing those beasts that were appointed for sacrifice, on the Sabbath-day; though we are exempted from this under the gospel-dispensation. To this, it is probable, our Saviour refers, when he says, 'Have ye not read in the law, how that the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless,' Matt. xii. 5. that is, perform those servile works, subservient to public worship; which, according to your method of reasoning, would be a profaning the Sabbath.

Here it is enquired, by some, whether it be lawful to kindle a fire on the Sabbath-day, since this seems to be forbidden the Israelites; to whom Moses says, 'Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations, upon the Sabbath-day,' Exod. xxv. 3. Some are of opinion, that if this be lawful at present, agreeably to what we generally practice, it is a peculiar privilege attending the gospel-dispensation; which may give us occasion to explain what is meant by this prohibition.

1. It cannot be hereby forbidden, to kindle a fire, for their refreshment, in cold weather; for that is as necessary as any of the other conveniences of life, such as eating, drinking, sitting down when we are weary, &c. and it was done with very

little pains or difficulty; so that it would not much hinder the religious exercises of that day. On the other hand, the not making a fire, provided the season of the year was extremely cold, would indispose men for the worship of God. Therefore,

2. It is most probable, that the meaning of that scripture is this; that since, at that time, wherein this law was given, many of them were employed in the work of building and adorning the tabernacle; which, as all artificers know, required the kindling of fires for the melting of metals, heating of iron tools, &c. and, whereas the people might be apt to think, that, because the building of the tabernacle required expedition, they might kindle fires, and therewith employ themselves in the work thereof, on the Sabbath-day. Therefore Moses tells them, that it was not a work so absolutely necessary, as that it required, that they should attend to it herein; which seems to be the reason of that law, which prohibited the kindling a fire on the Sabbath-day.

As for the application of this law, to the dressing of food, which seems to be prohibited in that scripture, 'Bake that ye will bake to day, and seethe that which ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay it up to be kept for you until the morning,' Exod. xvi. 23. The meaning thereof seems to be this; Bake, or seethe that which is necessary for your food, the day before the Sabbath, and lay up the rest, to be baked or seethed on the Sabbath. The command more especially prohibits their gathering manna on the Sabbath, and preparing it for baking or seething; which would have taken up too great a part of the day, and have been a diversion from the religious worship thereof. But the baking or seething, which would have afforded but a small interruption to the work thereof, does not seem to have been forbidden.

And this leads us to enquire, what judgment we may pass on the *stoning the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath-day*; which we read of in Numb. xv. 32, &c. The gathering of sticks for the making a fire on the Sabbath-day, seems to be a work of necessity; and therefore some may be ready to conclude that the punishment inflicted on him was too severe. But, instead of excepting against the greatness of the punishment inflicted, I would rather infer from hence, that the crime was very great. For,

(1.) He might have gathered sticks on other days, and thereby have provided a sufficient quantity for his necessary use, on the Sabbath-day; or else, he should have been content to have been without a fire on that day; rather than give so ill a precedent of the breach of the Sabbath.

(2.) It is probable he did this, not to supply his present ne-

cessities, but to increase his store; and; that he did not gather a few sticks, but a large quantity; which cannot be pretended to be a work of necessity.

(3.) It is not unlikely, that the man made a practice of it, for several Sabbaths together; and so lived in a total contempt and neglect of God's public ordinances.

(4.) It is also reasonable to suppose, that he did this presumptuously, publicly, and in defiance of the divine command, after having been reprov'd for it; and he might obstinately vindicate this wicked practice, and resolve, for the future, to persist in it; for that is the nature of a presumptuous sin. And it is plain, that he sinned presumptuously therein; inasmuch as God, in the verses immediately foregoing, had threatened, that *the soul that doth ought presumptuously*, or, as it is in the margin, *with an high hand*, who *reprov'd the Lord herein, should be cut off*; and then this account of the man's being stoned for gathering sticks on the Sabbath-day, is brought in as an instance of a just punishment of a presumptuous sinner.

These things being duly considered, we cannot take occasion from hence, to conclude, as many do, that there is this difference between the legal and the gospel-dispensation, in that the Sabbath was formerly to be observed more strictly than now; and that this was a part of the yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, the relaxation whereof is reckoned a branch of that liberty which we have under the gospel. But this sounds very ill in the ears of all serious Christians, who think the duties of religion, and the strictness of our obligation thereunto, a privilege rather than a burden. Thus concerning the lawfulness of our performing works of necessity on the Sabbath-day.

We proceed farther to consider, that works of mercy ought to be done on that day; such as visiting and preparing medicines for the sick, relieving the poor, providing food and water for cattle, and other brute creatures. This our Saviour vindicates by his practice, and illustrates by asserting the necessity of *lifting out a sheep, that was fallen into a pit*, on the Sabbath-day, Matt. xii. 10—13. However, when we maintain the lawfulness of performing works of necessity and mercy, on the Sabbath-day, the following cautions ought to be attended to;

[1.] Let the necessity be real, not pretended; of which, God and our own consciences are the judges.

[2.] If we think that we have a necessary call to omit, or lay aside our attendance on the ordinances of God, on the Sabbath-day, let us take heed that this necessity be not brought on us by some sin committed, which gives occasion to the



judicial hand of God; and that province, which renders it necessary for us to absent from them, should be rather submitted to, than matter of choice or delight.

[3.] If necessity obliges us to engage in secular employments on the Lord's day, as in the instances of those whose business it is to provide physic for the sick, let us, nevertheless, labour after a spiritual frame, becoming the holiness of that day, so far as may consist with what we are immediately called to do.

[4.] As we ought to see that the work we are engaged in is necessary; so we must not spend more time therein than what is needful.

[5.] If we have a necessary call to engage in worldly matters, whereby we are detained from public ordinances, we must endeavour to satisfy others, that the providence of God obliges us hereunto; that so we may not give offence to them, or they take occasion, without just reason to follow their own employments; which would be a sin in them.

IV. We are to sanctify the Sabbath, by spending the whole day in the public and private exercises of God's worship, and herein to maintain a becoming holy frame of spirit, from the beginning of the day to the end thereof. Therefore,

1. In the beginning thereof; let not too much sleep make intrenchments on more of the morning of the day than what is needful, particularly, more than what we allow ourselves before we begin our employments on other days. And let us begin the day with spiritual meditations, and carefully watch against worldly thoughts, as what will give us great interruption and hinderance in the work thereof. And let us be earnest with God in prayer, that he would prepare our hearts for the solemn duties we are to engage in; let us consider the Sabbath as a very great talent that we are entrusted with; and that it is of the greatest importance for us to improve it, to the glory of God and our spiritual advantage.

2. While we are engaged in holy duties, especially in the public ordinances of God's worship, let us endeavour to maintain a becoming reverence, and filial fear of God, in whose presence we are, and a love to his holy institutions, which are instamped with his authority. Let us moreover watch and strive against the first motions and suggestions of Satan, and our corrupt hearts, endeavouring to divert us from, or disturb us in holy duties. And let us often lift up our hearts to God, by spiritual, short ejaculatory prayers, for help from him, to enable us to improve the word, and, at the same time, endeavour to our utmost, to affect our hearts with a sense of the great worth of gospel-opportunities. Let us also cherish, improve, and bless God for all the influences of his Holy Spirit,

which he is pleased, at any time, to grant to us; or bewail and lament the want thereof, when they are withheld.

3. In the intervals between our attendance on the ordinances of God's public worship, we are to engage in private duties, and worship God in, and with our families; and in order hereunto, call to mind what we have heard, impress it on our own souls, recommend it to those whom we converse with, and are concerned for; and take heed that we do nothing, between one public ordinance and another, which may unfit us for the remaining duties of the day; but, on the other hand, strive against, and give a check to the least motions thereof in our own souls.

4. The Sabbath is to be sanctified in the evening thereof, when the public ordinances are over; at which time we are to call to mind what we have received from God, with thankfulness, and how we have behaved ourselves in all the parts of divine worship, in which we have been engaged. Let us enquire, whether the Sabbath was welcome to us, and we rejoiced in it as a blessing, as well as set about the observing of it as a duty? as the Psalmist says, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord,' Psal. cxxii.

1. Moreover, let us enquire, whether our ends were right in all the duties we performed? whether the glory of God, and the good of our own souls, has been our great concern? Or, whether we have been only influenced by custom, and rested in a form of godliness, without regarding the power thereof, and loved the opinion and praise of men more than of God? Let us enquire, whether our minds, our affections and outward gestures have been grave, sedate, and composed, and we ready to receive whatever God has been pleased to impart in his word? and whether we have had a due sense of the divine perfections impressed on our spirits, and of the infinite distance there is between the great God and us? whether we have seen our need of the word, as Job says, that he *esteemed the words of God's mouth more than his necessary food?* Job xxiii. 12. and, whether we have not only attended to, but applied every truth to our own souls, as desiring to retain, improve, and make it the rule of our conversation?

We are also to consider, what we have received from God under his ordinances; whether we have had any sensible communion with him, any experiences of his love, or impressions of his power on our hearts? whether we have had fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ? whether, as we have gone from one ordinance to another, we have gone from strength to strength, our faith being more lively, our love to God increased, and our spiritual joy enlarged by every duty? Let us enquire, whether we have learned some doctrine from

the word, which we understood not, or, at least, have been more confirmed therein, after some degree of wavering, or have been affected with some truth which we never saw such a beauty and glory in before? whether we have been melted under the word; if it has been, as the prophet speaks, *like fire*; or, as *the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces*, Jer. xxiii. 29. or, as the disciples say one to another, *Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?* Luke xxiv. 32.

And we may comfortably conclude, that we have received good under the ordinances, if we have been brought into an holy and lively frame of spirit; and the more we attend to them, the more our hearts are drawn forth to desire and delight in them; and especially when public duties fit us for private, and from the advantage that we receive from such opportunities, we are more disposed to walk with God in all the affairs and businesses of life, so that our whole conversation in this world, receives a tincture from the benefit which we gain by that communion which we enjoy with God in his ordinances on his own day.

Thus we are to take a view of our behaviour when engaged in public worship; and if we have received any spiritual advantage, the glory thereof is to be given to God. But if, on the other hand, upon a strict and impartial enquiry into the frame of our spirits under the ordinances, we have, as it too often happens, reason to complain of our deadness and stupidity under them; if we have not experienced that sensible communion with God, which we have at other times enjoyed, or have reason to say, that we wax worse, rather than better, under them; let us dread the consequence hereof, lest this should issue in a judicial hardness of heart, and habitual unprofitableness, under the means of grace. We ought, in this case, to search out, and be humbled before God, for that secret sin, which is as a root of bitterness which springs up within us, and troubles us; and be still pressing after that special presence of God in his ordinances, that will have a tendency to promote the life and power of religion in our souls.

And to this we may add; that besides our dealing thus with ourselves in our private retirements, after having attended on public worship, we are to endeavour to sanctify the Sabbath in our families, in the evening thereof. Family-worship is to be neglected no day; but on the Sabbath, it is to be engaged in with a particular relation to the duties which we have been performing in public; accordingly it is mentioned in one of the answers we are explaining, that the charge of keeping the Sabbath is directed to the governors of families, and other superiors; inasmuch as they are bound, not only to keep it

themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those who are under their charge, and not to hinder them, as many are prone to do, by employing them in those works which are foreign to the duties of the day. Masters of families are not only to restrain immoralities in those who are under their care, on the Sabbath-day, but to lay their commands on them, to engage with them in the worship of God therein, as they expect a blessing from him on their undertakings. Thus Joshua resolves, that *he and his house would serve the Lord*, Josh. xxiv. 15. and God speaks to the honour of Abraham, when he says, *I knew him that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. Superiors have no power to dispense with any of God's commandments, to disengage those who are under them, from yielding obedience thereunto. But, on the other hand, they are obliged to see that all, under their care, perform their duty to God, as well as to them, and, particularly, that of sanctifying the Sabbath. Therefore they are to restrain them from taking their own diversions, or finding their own pleasure in sinful recreations on the Lord's day; and impress on them those suitable exhortations, that may have a tendency to promote religion in their families; by which means they may hope for a peculiar blessing from God, in every relation and condition of life.

**QUEST. CXIX.** *What are the sins forbidden in the fourth Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The sins forbidden in the fourth Commandment, are, all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them, all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful, and by all needless works, words, and thoughts about worldly employments and recreations.

**QUEST. CXX.** *What are the reasons annexed to the fourth Commandment the more to enforce it?*

**ANSW.** The reasons annexed to the fourth Commandment, the more to enforce it, are taken from the equity of it, God allowing us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserving but one for himself, in these words, [*Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work,*] from God's challenging a special propriety in that day, [*The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*] from the example of God, who, *in six days made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is*

*and rested the seventh day; and from that blessing which God put upon that day, not only in sanctifying it to be a day for his service, but in ordaining it to be a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it; [wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it.]*

**QUEST. CXXI.** *Why is the word Remember set in the beginning of the fourth Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The word *Remember* is set in the beginning of the fourth Commandment, partly because of the great benefit of remembering it; we being thereby helped, in our preparation, to keep it; and in keeping it better, to keep all the rest of the commandments, and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation, and redemption, which contain a short abridgment of religion; and partly because we are very ready to forget it; for that there is less light of nature for it, and yet it restraineth our natural liberty in things at other times lawful; that it cometh but once in seven days, and many worldly businesses come between, and too often take off our minds from thinking of it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it; and that Satan, with his instruments much labour to blot out the glory, and even the memory of it, to bring in all irreligion and impiety.

**T**HE method in which we shall proceed, in speaking to these answers, shall be,

I. To consider the sins forbidden in this Commandment; and these are,

1. The omission of the duties required. Sins of omission are exceeding prejudicial; because, though they have a tendency to harden the heart, and stupify the conscience; yet they are, of all others, least regarded. As for the omission of holy duties, on the Sabbath-day; this is a slighting and casting away a great prize, put into our hands; and therefore, in such a case, it will be said, *Wherefore is there a price put into the hands of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it*, Prov. xvi. 16. It may be also observed, that this is generally attended with the neglect of secret duties, and is an in-let to all manner of sins, and to a total apostasy from God.

2. The next thing forbidden in this Commandment is, the careless performance of holy duties; that is, when our hearts are not engaged in them, or we content ourselves with a form of godliness, denying the power thereof, have no sense of God's all-seeing eye, or dread of spiritual judgments, or being given up to barrenness and unprofitableness, under the means of grace. Such a frame of spirit as this, is always attended with

a declining state of religion; especially if we do not lament and strive against it.

And to this we may add, that we greatly sin, when we profane the day by idleness; and that either by sleeping away a great part of the morning of the day, as though it were a day of sloth, and not of spiritual rest, designed for religious exercises; or drowsiness under the ordinances, as though we had no concern in them; whereby we give all about us to understand, that we do, as it were, withdraw our thoughts from the work, which we pretend to be engaged in. In some, indeed, this proceeds very much from the weakness of their natural constitution. Such may be heavy and weary in duty, though they are not weary of it; and this is what they lament, and are far from giving way to; though they are, sometimes, unavoidably overtaken with it. In this case, though it cannot be excused from being a sin; yet it is such, as, it is to be hoped, our Saviour will cover, with the mantle of his love, or, at least, not charge upon them for their condemnation; though he may reprove them for it, to bring them under conviction. Thus he dealt with his disciples, when he *came to them, and found them asleep*, Matt. xxvi. 40, 41. and though he tacitly reproves them, yet he does not infer from hence, that they were wholly destitute of faith; but charges their unbecoming carriage therein, on the weakness of faith, being impowered by the infirmities of nature, when he says, *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*.

There are other sins forbidden in the fourth Commandment, that are particularly mentioned in this answer, which have been occasionally insisted on; in considering how the Sabbath is to be sanctified; in which we have shewn, that, as we are not to do that which is in itself sinful, so we are to abstain from our worldly employments and recreations, and endeavour to fence against that vanity of thoughts, which will have a tendency to alienate our affections from God, or hinder the success of ordinances; and therefore we pass them over at present, and proceed to consider,

II. The reasons annexed to this Commandment. And,

1. It is highly reasonable that we should sanctify the Lord's day, since he is pleased to allow us six days out of seven, for the attending to our worldly affairs, and reserves but one to himself. This supposes that we are allowed to engage in our secular callings on other days: and therefore, though it be brought in occasionally, in this commandment, it is a duty belonging to the second table rather than the first; particularly, it seems to be a branch of the eighth Commandment; however, it is alleged as a reason of our observing this Commandment. It is a very large allowance that God has made, of six days

in seven, for our own employments. If, on the other hand, he had allowed us but one day in seven for them, and laid claim to six days, to be set apart for religious worship, none would have had reason to complain, since he, being the absolute Lord of our time, may demand what proportion of it he pleases; and they who are truly sensible of the real advantage that there is in the attendance on all God's holy institutions, and consider the Sabbath as a privilege and blessing, would not only think it reasonable, but a great instance of the kindness of God to man, had this earth so much resembled heaven, that there should be a perpetual Sabbath celebrated here, as there is there, where the saints count it their happiness to be engaged without interruption, in the immediate service of God.

*Obj.* It is objected, by some, that they cannot spare a seventh part of time for religious duties, out of their worldly business; and that it is very hard for them to get bread for their families, by all their diligence and industry. Others allege, that the Sabbath is their market-day, wherein, by selling things, they get more than they do on other days.

*Ansru.* 1. As to the former part of the objection, taken from the difficulty of persons subsisting their families, it may be replied; that God is able to make up the loss of the seventh part of time, so that their not working therein, shall not be a real detriment, to those who are in the lowest circumstances in the world, God has ordered it so, that our observing his holy institutions, shall not, in the end, prove detrimental to us. Thus when Israel was commanded to rest, and not to cultivate their land for an whole year together, every seventh year, providence so ordered it, that they were not sufferers thereby, inasmuch as the year before brought forth enough for three years, Lev. xxv. 20—22. and when they were not to gather manna on the seventh day of the week, there was a double quantity rained upon them, which they gathered the day before, Exod. xvi. 22—24. Therefore, why may we not conclude, that, by the blessing of God, what is lost by our not attending to our secular callings on the Lord's day, may be abundantly made up, by his blessing succeeding our endeavours on other days.

As to that part of the objection, in which it is pretended that the Lord's day is their market-day, in which they expect more advantage than on other days; it may be replied, that if this is true, it arises from the iniquity of the times; and it should be a caution to us, not to encourage those who expose their wares to sale on the Sabbath-day; since if there were no buyers, there would be no sellers; and this public and notorious sin would be hereby prevented. We have a noble instance of this in Nehemiah, whose wisdom, zeal, and holy resolution, put an effectual stop to this practice, in his dealing with those

who *sold fish on the Sabbath-day*, Neh. xiii. 16,—21. First, he *shut the gates of the city against them*; and when he saw that they continued without the walls, hoping, by some means or other, to get into the city, or to entice some to come out to buy their merchandize; then he *testified against them*, and commanded them not to continue without the walls, and by this means, gave a check to that scandalous practice. Moreover, this gain of iniquity is not to be pretended as a just excuse for the breach of a positive commandment; since, what is gotten in a way of presumptuous rebellion against God, it is not like to prosper, whatever pretence of poverty may be alleged, to give countenance thereunto.

2. Another reason annexed to enforce our observation of the Sabbath-day, is taken from God's challenging a special propriety in it. Thus it is called the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; a day which he has consecrated, or separated to himself, and so lays claim to it. Therefore it is no less than sacrilege, or a robbing of him, to employ it in any thing but what he requires to be done therein.

3. God sets his own example before us for our imitation therein. Thus it is said, *In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day, and hallowed it*. It is observed, that God was six days in making the world; whereas, had he pleased, he could have created all things with the same beauty and perfection in which they are at present, in an instant; but he performed this work by degrees, that he might teach us, that whatever our hand finds to do, we should do it in the proper season allotted for it; and as he ceased from his work on the seventh day, he requires that we should rest from ours, in conformity to his own example.

4. The last reason assigned for our sanctifying the Sabbath, is taking from God's blessing and sanctifying it, or setting it apart for an holy use. To bless a day, is to give it to us as a particular blessing and privilege. Accordingly we ought to reckon the Sabbath as a great instance of God's care and compassion to men, and a very great privilege, which ought to be highly esteemed by them. Again, for God to sanctify a day, is to set it apart from a common, to an holy use; and thus we ought to reckon the Sabbath as a day signalized above all others, with the character of God's holy day; and as such, it is to be employed by us in holy exercises, answerable to the end for which it was instituted.

III. It is observed in the last answer we are explaining, that the word *Remember* is set in the beginning of the fourth Commandment; from whence we may observe, our great proneness, through worldly business, and Satan's temptations, to forget the Sabbath. We may also learn from hence, the



importance of our observing it; without which, irreligion and profaneness would never universally abound in the world; and, on the other hand, in our observing this day as we ought to do, we may hope for grace from God, whereby we may be enabled to keep his other commandments. Again, the word *Remember*, prefixed to this Commandment, not only imports that we are to call to mind, that this particular day which God has sanctified, is a Sabbath, or to know what day it is, in the order of the days of the week; but we ought to endeavour to have a frame of spirit becoming the holiness of the day, or, to remember it, so as to keep it holy. It is certain, that it is an hard matter, through the corruption of nature, to get our hearts disengaged from the vain amusements and entanglements of this present world; by which means we lose the advantage that would redound to us, by our conversing with God in holy duties. Therefore we are to desire of him, that he would impress on our souls a sense of our obligation to duty, and of the advantage which we may hope to gain from it. And to induce us hereunto, let it be considered,

1. That the profanation of the Sabbath is generally the first step to all manner of wickedness, and a making great advances to a total apostasy from God.

2. The observing of it is reckoned as a sign between God and his people. It is, with respect to him, a sign of his favour; and with respect to man, it is a sign of their subjection to God, as their King and Lawgiver, in all his holy appointments.

3. We cannot reasonably expect, that God should bless us in what we undertake, on other days, if we neglect to own him, on his day, or to devote ourselves to him, and thereby discover our preferring him, and the affairs of his worship, before all things in the world.

From what has been said in explaining this Commandment, we may infer,

(1.) That, this may serve to confute those who think that the observation of days, in general, or, that the keeping the first day of the week as a Sabbath, is a setting up the ceremonial law, without distinguishing a right between a ceremonial and a moral precept. For, how much soever the observation of the seventh day, might have a ceremonial signification annexed to it, as it was given to Israel, from mount Sinai, it is possible for the typical reference thereof, to cease; and yet the moral reason of the Commandment remain in force to us, as it is a day appointed by God, in which he is to be worshipped, so that we may have ground to expect his presence, and blessing, while attending on him in his holy institutions.

(2.) Others are to blame, who think that every day is to be

kept as a Sabbath, pretending that this is most agreeable to a state of perfection. But this is contrary to God's allowing us six days for our own employment; and, indeed, none, who make use of this argument, do, in reality, keep any day as a Sabbath, at least, in such a way as they ought.

(3.) Others are guilty of a great error, who think that the Sabbath is, indeed, to be observed; but there is no need of that strictness which has been inculcated; or, that it should be kept holy, from the beginning to the end thereof. Some suppose, that the only design of God in instituting it was, that public worship should be maintained in the world; and therefore, that it is sufficient if they attend on it, without endeavouring to converse with him in secret.

(4.) What has been said, is directly contrary to their opinion, who think that the Lord's day was a mere human institution; without considering, as has been hinted, that what the apostles prescribed, relating thereunto, was by divine direction; which opinion, if it should prevail, would open a door to great carelessness and formality in holy duties, and would be an inducement to us to profane the day in various instances.

QUEST. CXXII. *What is the sum of the six Commandments, which contain our duty to man?*

ANSW. The sum of the six Commandments, which contain our duty to man, is to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to do to others what we would have them do to us.

AS the first table of the ten Commandments respects our duty to God, the other contains our duty to our neighbour; which is comprized in the general idea of *love*. This is therefore styled the sum of the following six Commandments; and it is included in our Saviour's words; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, Matt. xxii. 39. and elsewhere, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*, chap. vii. 12. Here it may be observed,

I. That we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves. This implies in it,

1. A caution against a selfish temper; as though we were born only for, or were obliged to do good to none but ourselves. This is what the apostle reproves, when he says, *Men shall be lovers of their own selves*, 2 Tim. iii. 2. that is, they shall study and consult the happiness, ease, and comfort of none but themselves.

2. It farther implies in it, our using endeavours to promote the good of all, whom we converse with; and thereby render-

ing ourselves a blessing to mankind. It does not, indeed, exclude self-love, which it supposes to be a duty; but obliges us to love others as well as ourselves, in things that relate to their spiritual and temporal good. This leads us to enquire,

(1.) Whether we ought to love others better than ourselves; or what the apostle intends, when he says, *Let each esteem other better than themselves?* Phil. ii. 3.

*Answ.* [1.] It cannot be hereby intended, that they, who have attained a great measure of the knowledge of the truths of God, should reckon themselves as ignorant of, or unstable in, the doctrines of the gospel, as those who never made them the subject of their study and enquiry; nor, that they, who have had large experience of the grace of God, should conclude that they have no more experience thereof than those who are unregenerate, and have not taken one step heavenward. But,

[2.] The meaning is, that the greatest saint should not think himself better than the least, any otherwise than as he has received more from the discriminating grace of God; as the apostle says, *Who maketh thee to differ from another; and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. And, indeed, such an one may see more sin in himself than he can see in any other; and therefore, may have reason to reckon himself, as the apostle speaks, *the chief of sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15.

[3.] The best saints would have been as bad as the vilest of men; had they been left to themselves; and it may be, some of them who have had less grace, have had fewer talents, and opportunities of grace, than they have had; which they have improved better, in proportion to what they have received, than they have, the many advantages which God has been pleased to bestow on them.

(1.) Our next enquiry may be, whether our love to our neighbour should extend so far, as that we should be willing, were it needful, to lay down our lives for them; as it is said, in 1 John iii. 16. *We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;* and in Rom. v. 7. *Peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die.*

*Answ.* [1.] By *laying down our lives* in these scriptures, is principally intended hazarding our lives, or exposing ourselves to the utmost danger, even of death itself, for others. But,

[2.] We are not to do this rashly, and at all times; but when God, who is the sovereign Lord of our lives, calls us to it. And,

[3.] This ought not to be for every one, but for the *brethren*; especially for those who are more eminently useful in the church of God than ourselves or others. Accordingly the

apostle says, *for a good man; that is, one who is a common good, or a blessing to many others, one would even dare to die.*

[4.] This must be, at such times, when in exposing ourselves for the sake of others, we give our testimony to the gospel; and, in defending them, plead the injured cause of Christ and religion.

II. This loving our neighbour as ourselves is farther illustrated in this answer, by doing to others what we would have them to do us. This is one of the most undeniable, and self-evident truths contained in the law of nature. So that whatever disputable matters there may be, as to what respects other duties, this is allowed of by all mankind. Many, indeed, do not conform their practice to this rule; which gives occasion to the injuries done between man and man. However the vilest of men, when they deliberate on their own actions, cannot but blame themselves for acting contrary thereunto. Thus Saul did, when he said unto David, *Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good; whereas I have rewarded thee evil,* 1 Sam. xxiv. 17. Therefore we conclude, that it is one of the first principles of the law of nature; and may well be called, as it is in this answer, the sum of the Commandments of the second table, or that, to which they are all reduced. There are two things, which we shall lay down, relating to this golden rule, of doing to others as we would that they should do to us.

1. It is miserably neglected by a great part of the world; as,

(1.) By them who turn away their hearts from the afflicted; so as not to pity, help, or endeavour to comfort them in their distress. The Psalmist was of another mind, when he says, *As for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother. I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother,* Psal. xxxv. 13,—15.

(2.) They who deny to others those natural, civil, or religious liberties, which, by God's appointment, they have a right to, or envy them the possession thereof, may be said to neglect this golden rule.

2. We are farther to enquire, how this rule, of doing to others what we would have them do to us, may be of use, in order to our right observing the Commandments of the second table?

*Ans.* The fifth Commandment, which requires the performance of all relative duties, would be better observed, did superiors put themselves in the place of inferiors, and consider what they would then expect from them; and the same they ought to do to them. Again, the sixth, seventh, and eight

Commandments, that respect the life, honour, or wealth of others; if these are dear to us, ought we not to consider, that they are so to others; and if we would not be deprived of them ourselves, how unreasonable is it for us to do any thing that may tend to deprive others of them? Again, if, according to the ninth Commandment, our good name be so valuable, that we ought to maintain it, should not this rule be observed by defamers, slanderers, and backbiters, who do that to others which they would not have done to themselves? And the tenth Commandment, which forbids our uneasiness at, or being discontented with, the good of others, or endeavouring to supplant, or divest them of the possession of what God has given them in this world. This cannot be done by any one who duly considers, how unwilling they would be to have what they possess taken away, to satisfy the covetousness, or lust, of others. ❧

**QUEST. CXXIII.** *Which is the fifth Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The fifth Commandment is, *Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

**QUEST. CXXIV.** *Who are meant by father, and mother, in the fifth Commandment?*

**ANSW.** By father and mother, in the fifth Commandment, are meant not only natural parents; but all the superiors in age, and gifts, and especially such as by GOD's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or common-wealth.

**QUEST. CXXV.** *Why are superiors styled, father and mother?*

**ANSW.** Superiors are styled father and mother, both to teach them in all duties towards their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations, and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.

**QUEST. CXXVI.** *What is the general scope of the fifth Commandment?*

**ANSW.** The general scope of the fifth Commandment, is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.

QUEST. CXXVII. *What is the honour that inferiors owe to their superiors?*

ANSW. The honour which inferiors owe to their superiors, is, all due reverence, in heart, word, and behaviour; prayer, and thanksgiving for them, imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands, and counsels, due submission to their corrections, fidelity to, defence, and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honour to them and their government.

QUEST. CXXVIII. *What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?*

ANSW. The sins of inferiors against their superiors, are, all neglect of the duties required towards them, envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against their persons, and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections, cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonour to them and their government.

**I**N the fifth Commandment, no other relations are mentioned, but father and mother; yet it may be observed,

I. That, hereby, all superiors in general are intended; as many others are called *fathers* in scripture, besides our natural parents, viz.

1. Superiors in age. Thus it is said, *Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity*, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2.

2. They, are also called *fathers*, who are superior in gifts; and accordingly have been the first inventors of arts, which have been useful to the world. Thus Jabal is said to be *the father of such as dwell in tents, and have cattle*, Gen. iv. 20. that is, the first that made considerable improvements in the art of husbandry; and Jubal is said to be *the father*, that is, the instructor of all such as handle the harp and organ, ver. 21. or the first that made improvements in the art of music.

3. Persons to whom we owe, under God, our outward prosperity and happiness. In this sense Joseph, though a subject, a young man, and a little before, a prisoner, is called *a father to Pharaoh*, chap. xlv. 8. as he was an instrument to support his greatness, and preserve him from the inconveniences of a seven years famine.

4. Princes, great men, and heads of families, are called *fathers*. Thus Naaman was by his servants, 2 Kings v. 13.

5. Men of honour and usefulness in the church are so called. Thus when Elisha saw Elijah ascend into heaven, he cries out, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*, chap. ii. 12. And Joash, the king of Israel, used the same expression to Elisha, *when fallen sick*, chap. xiii. 14. And this is implied in the apostle's styling those whom he had been of use to, for their conviction, and enlightening in the doctrines of the gospel, *My little children*, Gal. iv. 19.

6. Good kings and governors are called *fathers*. Thus it is said, *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers*, Isa. xlix. 23.

II. We have an account, in one of the answers we are explaining, of the reason why superiors are styled father and mother; namely, to denote, that they should behave towards their inferiors, with that love and tenderness, as though they were natural parents. Authority is not only consistent herewith, but it ought to be exercised, by superiors towards inferiors, in such a way. Thus Job, when in his prosperity, was, as it were, a common father to all that were under him; accordingly he says, *I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him*, Job xxix. 12. upon which occasion he says, *I was a father to the poor*, ver. 16. And ministers, who, in some respects, are superior in office to others; when their reproofs are mixed with tenderness and compassion towards the souls of men under their care, are compared to the *nurse that cherished her children*; as being *affectionately desirous, and willing to impart to them, not the gospel of God only, but also their own souls, as being dear to them*, 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8.

III. We have, another of the answers under our consideration, an account of the general scope of the fifth Commandment; and, as it requires the duties to be performed by every one in their several relations; these are considered either as superiors, inferiors, or equals. There are several sorts of relations wherein persons are styled superior or inferior to one another.

1. Such as are founded in nature; as that of parents and children.

2. There are such relations as are political, designed for the good of mankind, living together as members of the same common-wealth, in which every one has a right to his civil liberties, which are to be enjoyed by one, and defended by the other; of this sort is the relation of magistrates and subjects.

3. There is a relation founded in mutual compact and agree-

ment, respecting things to be done, on the one side, and gratifications to be allowed, on the other; of this kind is the relation between master and servant. The only difficulty that arises from the account we have of the obligation of persons to give honour to others, respects superiors honouring inferiors. For the understanding of which, let it be considered,

(1.) That superiors are not obliged to shew the same marks of honour to their inferiors, as inferiors are bound, by the laws of God and nature, to express to them. Nevertheless,

(2.) There is a duty which the greatest owe to the least; and there is also a degree of honour, which the lowest of men, as reasonable creatures, or Christians, have put upon them by God; and this is to be regarded by those who are, as to their condition in the world; superior to them.

(3.) The meanest and lowest part of mankind, are, in many respects, necessary and useful to those who are much their superiors; and are to be regarded by them in proportion thereto. And the performing the duties which such owe to them, is called as honouring them.

IV. We have, in another of the answers we are explaining, an account of the honour which inferiors owe to their superiors. Here it will be necessary for us to premise some things concerning the measure of submission and obedience which inferiors owe to superiors, of what kind soever the relation be. As,

1. When the authority God has invested superiors with, is abused, and the highest end of all sort of government, to wit, the glory of God, and the good of mankind, can never be attained, nor is, indeed, designed; or when the commands of superiors contradict the commands of God, we are to obey him rather than men, Acts iv. 19.

2. If we cannot obey the commands of superiors, as being unjust, we must pray that God would interpose, direct, and over-rule their authority, that it may not be abused by them; or become a snare, or an occasion of sin, to us.

3. Though we cannot yield obedience to them, in those things that are contrary to the laws of God, this does not discharge us from our obligation to obey their commands, in other things, agreeable thereto; since we are not to suppose that the abuse of their authority in some instances, divests them of it in all respects.

V. We shall now proceed to consider the duties which inferiors owe to their superiors. And,

1. That of children to parents. This is founded on the law of nature, as under God, they derive their being from them; and they are obliged thereunto, from a sense of gratitude for that love, tenderness, and compassion which they have shewn



to them. Therefore the apostle says, that *this is right*, Eph. vi. 1. that is, equitable, and highly reasonable; and elsewhere, that it is *well-pleasing unto the Lord*, Col. iii. 20. This duty includes in it several things.

(1.) They are sometimes to shew the regard they have to them by outward tokens of respect. Thus Solomon, though his character, as a king, rendered him superior to all his subjects; yet he expressed a great deal of honour by outward gestures to his mother; when she went to him to speak in the behalf of Adonijah: it is said, that 'the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand,' 1 Kings ii. 19.

(2.) They ought to be ready to do them any acts of service, which are not unlawful or impossible, when commanded by them. Thus Joseph obeyed Jacob, when he sent him to see where his brethren were, and what they were engaged in, Gen. xxxvii. 13. and David obeyed Jesse, when he sent him to his brethren to the camp of Israel, 1 Sam. xvii. 17, 20. This service is required more especially of them, while they live with their parents, are maintained by them, and not, by mutual compact, become servants to others.

(3.) Another duty which they owe, is, patient submission to their just reproofs, design for their good. Thus the apostle says, "We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us; and we gave them reverence," Heb. xii. 9.

(4.) They are to attend to, and comply with, their wholesome advice and instruction. Thus it is said, *A wise son heareth his father's instruction*, Prov. xiii. 1. and, on the other hand, he is branded with the character of a *fool who despiseth it*, chap. xv. 5. and it is farther added, *He that regardeth reproof is prudent*.

(5.) Children are to express their duty to their parents, by a thankful acknowledgment of past favours; and accordingly ought to relieve them, if they are able, when their indigent circumstances call for it; and endeavour to be a staff, comfort, and support to them, in their old age. This is contained in the message which Joseph sent to Jacob, when he invited him to come down to him into Egypt, Gen. xlv. 9,—11. So when Ruth bare a son to Boaz, her mother Naomi's companions blessed her, and said, *He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age*, Ruth iv. 15.

(6.) Children are to pay deference to, and, so far as it concerns the glory of God, and their own future good, be advised, by their parents, in disposing of themselves in marriage, or any other important change of their condition and circumstances in the world. Herein they acknowledge their authority

as superiors, and the care and concern which it is supposed they naturally have for their welfare, as a part of themselves. Moreover, by this they pay a deference to their wisdom and judgment, as being superior in age, and probably, in wisdom, as well as relation. And this ought to be done out of a sense of gratitude for past favours received; and prudence will, for the most part, dictate as much, especially when they depend on them for present, or expect future advantages from them. This is also an expedient to maintain love and peace in families, which is oftentimes broken by the contrary practice. And it may be farther recommended, from the laudable examples hereof in good men; as Isaac, who submitted to the direction of his father Abraham herein; and Jacob, Gen. xxiv. who was determined by the consent of Laban, chap. xxix. Many more instances might be given to the same purpose. And, on the other hand, Esau's contrary practice hereunto is recorded in scripture, as a vile instance of disobedience; *which was a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah*, chap. xxvi. 35. And it was, doubtless, an argument that he had no regard to God or religion.

Nevertheless, this obligation is not without some exceptions; for,

[1.] We do not speak of parents that are so far deprived of judgment, that they are not fit to determine this matter; nor,

[2.] Such as have divested themselves of the natural affection of parents, and entertaining an ungrounded prejudice against some of their children, are endeavouring to expose them to ruin, that they may shew more kindness to others. These forfeit that right, which is otherwise founded in nature.

[3.] If parents, by refusing to comply with the desire of their children, plainly, in the judgment of the wisest of men, obstruct their happiness, and the glory of God herein. Or, if they have no reason for their not complying, or the reason given is contrary to the laws of God, or the common sense of all impartial judges; especially if the affair took its first rise from them, and afterwards they changed their mind, without sufficient ground. This, without doubt, lessens, or it may be so circumstanced, that it wholly takes away the charge of sin in the child, in acting contrary to the will of his parents, and fastens the guilt on them.

[4.] The case is vastly different, when applied to children who are so far from being dependent on their parents, that they depend on them. Nevertheless, in this case, some deference and respect ought to be paid to them; and as it is the children's duty, it may be their interest so to do; since we can hardly suppose, that parents, who depend on their children,

would oppose their happiness, in an affair that is apparently contrary to their own interest, if they did not think that they had sufficient reason for it; which ought to be duly weighed, that it may be known, whether their advice is expedient to be complied with, or no. And if in this, or any other instance, children are obliged to act contrary to the will of their parents; they ought to satisfy them, that it is not out of contempt to their authority, but a conscientious regard to the glory of God; and that it is conducive to their happiness, in the opinion of the wisest and best of men.

2. We shall now consider the duty of servants to their masters. This depends upon, and is limited by the contract, which first brought them into that relation, the not fulfilling whereof, renders them guilty of unfaithfulness. And it is no less an instance of immorality, for them to rob them of that time, which they have engaged to serve, than it is to take away any part of their estate. But more particularly,

(1.) Servants ought to behave themselves, in their calling, with industry, being as much concerned for their masters interest as their own. Thus Joseph, though a foreigner, and one who does not appear to have expected any reward for his service, but a maintenance, served Potiphar. In the like manner Jacob served Laban, though an unjust, severe and unrighteous master. This may lead us to enquire concerning the duty of servants, when their masters are froward, passionate, and unreasonable in their demands, which renders their service very irksome and unpleasant; but let it be considered in this case,

[1.] That, the master's passion, which is his sin, ought not to draw forth the corruption of his servant; for, sin indulged by one, is no excuse for its being committed by another. The apostle Peter supposes the case under our present consideration, and gives this advice; *Servants be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*, 1 Pet. ii. 18.

[2.] If the master's demands are unreasonable, the servant must know the extent of his contract and obligation, which he must, in justice, fulfil *as unto Christ*, Eph. vi. 5,—8. And, as for those services that are reckoned unreasonable, and not agreeable to the contract. These, if demanded, are rather to be referred to the determination of others, since persons are apt to be partial in judging in their own cause.

There seems, indeed, to be an exception to this, in some instances, which we find in scripture, of the unlimited obedience of servants under the ceremonial law, which was not founded in, nor the result of any contract between their masters and them; accordingly we read, that persons became servants,

1st, Through poverty; by reason of which, they sold themselves for the payment of debts. In this case there was a kind of contract, indeed; and the service to be performed ought, (pursuant to the law of God and nature,) to have been agreeable to, and adjusted by the value of the debt contracted.

2d, Prisoners taken in war, were treated as servants, and, as such, sold to others. In this case, all the children that were born to them, during their servitude, were the property of the master; and these are called home-born servants, who, had not so much liberty allowed them as when they were servants by mutual compact, as is most common among us; in which case both parties are bound by this agreement.

3. We proceed to consider the duty of the members of a common-wealth, or body-politic, to their lawful magistrates, as the apostle says, *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers*, Rom. xiii. 1. Here we may observe,

(1.) The necessity and the end of civil government. This will appear, if we consider mankind in general, as prone to be influenced by those passions, which are not entirely under the conduct of reason, and, if no check were given to them, would prove injurious to societies. We may also observe, that God has, in his law, ordained certain punishments to be inflicted, with a design to restrain those corruptions, and to keep the world in order. And that this end may more effectually be answered, it is necessary, that some should be set over others, to administer justice, in chastising the guilty, and defending the innocent; otherwise the world would be filled with confusion, and men would commit sin with impunity; and more resemble brute creatures than those that are endowed with reason, and as such, capable of moral government; as it is said when *there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes*, Judges xxi. 25.

We proceed now to consider the advantage of civil government. It is in itself a blessing to mankind, when it does not degenerate into tyranny. So that good magistrates are a great instance of divine favour to a nation; as the queen of Sheba said to Solomon, *Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God. Because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice*, 2 Chron. ix, 7. 8. And it is included among the blessings of the gospel-state, that *kings should be their nursing fathers, and their queens their nursing mothers*, Isa. xlix. 23. Such are said, as David was, to be *raised up, to fulfil the will of God*, Acts xiii. 22.

Nevertheless, civil government may be so administered, that it may cease to be a blessing to the subjects. Thus Samuel describes the miserable estate of a people, whose kings endeavour to establish their own greatness by enslaving and plundering their subjects *taking their sons and daughters by force, to be their servants; seizing their fields, their vineyards and olive-yards, and the tenth of their increase; which would oblige them to cry unto the Lord, because of their oppression,* 1 Sam. viii. 11,—18. And we have an instance of this in Rehoboam, who was herein as remarkable for his want of conduct, as his father was for his excelling wisdom. His rough and ill-timed answer to his subjects, in which he gave them to expect nothing else but oppression and slavery, issued in the revolt of the ten tribes from his government, 1 Kings xii. 13, 14.

From this different method of the administration of civil government, whereby it rendered either a blessing or an affliction to the subjects; we may infer,

[1.] That when that which is in itself a blessing, is turned into a curse, this may be looked upon as a punishment inflicted by God, for the iniquity of a people. Thus he says, *I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in wrath,* Hosea xiii. 11.

[2.] We have great reason to be well-pleased with, and to bless God for the government we are under, as not being exposed to the slavery that some other nations are; who have no laws, but what result from the arbitrary will of their prince; and who can call nothing they have their own. This should make us prize the liberties we enjoy; and be a strong motive to us to give due and cheerful obedience to our rightful and lawful sovereign, and all magistrates under him, who rule in righteousness, and are a terror to evil doers, but a praise to them that do well.

[3.] This affords matter of reproof to the restless tempers of those, who are under the mildest government; which is administered beyond all reasonable exception, our enemies themselves being judges, who would confess the same, were they not blinded with prejudice; which puts them upon betaking themselves to railery, instead of better arguments. These are reproved by the apostle, who speaks of some *that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil, even of dignities,* 2 Pet. ii. 10. This leads us

To consider the honour that subjects owe to their lawful magistrates. Accordingly,

1st, They are highly to resent, and endeavour, in their several stations and capacities, to check the insolence of those who

make bold with the character, and take the liberty to reproach their magistrates in common conversation; which is directly contrary to the law of God; that says, *Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought, and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber. For a bird of the air shall carry the voice; and that which hath wings shall tell the matter, Eccles. x. 20.*

2dly, We are to support the honour of government, by paying those tributes which are lawfully exacted. Thus the apostle says, *Render to all their due; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour, Rom. xiii. 7.*

3dly, We are to pray for a blessing from God, on the administration of our civil governors, that it may be under the divine direction, and tend to answer the great ends of government, viz. the glory of God, and the welfare of the subject. And here I cannot but observe, that no one on earth has a power of discharging subjects from their obedience to their lawful governors, who endeavour to rule them according to the laws of God and nature, and those fundamental constitutions that are agreeable thereto. Therefore it is a most detestable position advanced by the Papists, that the pope has a power to excommunicate and depose sovereign princes; though it does not appear that he has received any such authority from Christ, but herein intermeddles with a province that does not belong to him. For princes do not receive their crowns from him; and therefore are not to be deposed by him. In opposition hereunto, it may be alleged,

1st, That this is directly contrary to the temper of the blessed Jesus, and of the apostles, and primitive Christians; who did not encourage their followers to depose Heathen kings and emperors; but on the other hand, exhorted them to *submit to them in all things*, consistent with the glory of God, and the good of mankind; *not only for wrath, but for conscience sake, ver. 5.*

2dly, The church has no temporal sword committed to her, all its censures being spiritual. Temporal punishments are left in the hands of the civil magistrate; concerning whom, the apostle says, that *he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil, ver. 4.* On the other hand, when speaking concerning those, who have the government of ecclesiastical matters committed to them, he says, *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, 2 Cor. x. 24.*

The arguments generally used by the Papists, to support the cause of rebellion, and their usurped power to depose

magistrates, who are not of their communion, are very weak, and most of them, such as may easily be answered; as,

1. When they allege the commission given by Christ, to Peter, *Feed my sheep*, John xxi. 17. They pretend, that to feed, is the same as to govern; and that this implies a power of punishing; which they suppose to be so far extended, as that the bishop of Rome may depose sovereign princes, as occasion offers; and that this power was given to Peter and his successors, which the popes of Rome pretend to be.

But to this it may be replied; that this commission given by Christ to Peter, to *feed his sheep*, imports his feeding them with knowledge and understanding, and not lording it over God's heritage. Thus our Saviour says, *The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority over them, are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve*, Luke xxii. 25, 26. Moreover, their pretence that the bishops of Rome are Peter's successors, contains a claim of what they have not the least shadow of right to; and is, indeed, to place them in Peter's chair, who are the greatest opposers of his doctrine.

2. Another argument they bring, tending to overthrow the power of the civil magistrate, is, that, as the soul is more excellent than the body, and its welfare to be preferred in proportion thereunto; so the church is to take care of the spiritual concerns of mankind, to which all temporal concerns are to give place; therefore its power is greater than that of the civil magistrate.

*Answ.* To this it may be replied; that this similitude does not prove the thing for which it is brought; and though it be allowed, that the soul is more excellent than the body; yet its welfare is not to be secured by inflicting corporal punishments, such as persecutions and massacres; which, to abate and encourage, is to cast a reproach on religion; and it will tend very much to weaken the interest of Christ in the world.

Moreover, the magistrate is ordained by God, to defend the religious as well as civil liberties of his subjects; which is included in the apostle's exhortation; let prayers be made *for kings and for all in authority; that we may lead a peaceable and quiet life in all godliness and honesty*, 1 Tim. ii. 2. and elsewhere we are exhorted, to *submit to governors, as unto them who are sent by the Lord, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well*, 1 Pet. ii. 14.

3. There is another argument which they make use of, taken from Azariah the priest's opposing king Uzziah, for intruding himself into the priest's office, in burning incense in the temple. Thus it is said, in 1 Chron. xxvi. 16—18. that 'when

‘ he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction. For  
 ‘ he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the  
 ‘ temple of the Lord, to burn incense upon the altar of incense.  
 ‘ And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him four-  
 ‘ score priests of the Lord, that were valiant men. And they  
 ‘ withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth  
 ‘ not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but  
 ‘ to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn  
 ‘ incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed,  
 ‘ neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God.’ To  
 support their argument, taken from this scripture, they ob-  
 serve, that the priests, who went in with Azariah, are said to  
 be *valiant men*, and so ready to commit any hostilities against  
 the king. Azariah also threatens him, when he tells him, *It  
 should not be for his honour*; and peremptorily commands him,  
 to be gone out of the temple. This they suppose, is a flagrant  
 instance of the power of the church over the civil magistrate,  
 in all those things that interfere with what is sacred.

But to this it may be replied ;

(1st,) That Uzziah’s sin, according to the law of that dis-  
 pensation, was very great, and against an express command of  
 God, who had ordered, that none should officiate in the priest’s  
 office, but those who were of the family of Aaron.

(2dly,) Azariah, and the rest of the priests, did not attempt  
 to depose him, but to prevent his going on in his sin ; which  
 would not be for his honour, as the high-priest tells him. And  
 this he says, not in a menacing way, as signifying that he  
 would inflict some punishment on him ; but as declaring what  
 God would do against him, that would tend to his dishonour  
 for this sin.

(3dly,) Though the high-priest, in God’s name, command-  
 ed him to go out of the sanctuary ; yet he did not lay violent  
 hands on him, at least, till the leprosy was seen upon him.  
 Ver. 27. ‘ And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests  
 ‘ looked upon him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead,  
 ‘ and they thrust him out from thence ; yea, himself hasted  
 ‘ also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him.’ This  
 they did, because a leper was not, according to the law of  
 God, to enter into the congregation, inasmuch as he would de-  
 file it.

(4thly,) He was not properly deposed ; but, by this plague  
 of leprosy, rendered incapable of reigning ; and therefore ‘ he  
 ‘ lived alone,’ ver. 21. ‘ in a several house, being a leper ; for  
 ‘ he was cut off from the house of the Lord : and Jotham his  
 ‘ son was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land.’  
 This was agreeable to the law of God, touching the leper, in  
 which it is said, that ‘ all the days wherein the plague shall be



‘in him, he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone, without the camp shall his habitation be,’ Lev. xiii. 46. It may farther be observed, that his son managed the affairs of the kingdom for him; so that the use which is made by the Papists of this scripture, to give countenance to their doctrine of deposing princes, is foreign to the true sense thereof.

4. There is one more scripture-example which the Papists bring, whereby they defend their practice, not only of deposing, but murdering princes; and that is in 2 Kings xi. 15. *But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, have her forth without the ranges; and him that followeth her, kill with the sword. For the priest had said, let her not be slain in the house of the Lord.* But to this it may be replied,

[1st,] That Athaliah was plainly an usurper, not only by reason of her sex, since a woman was not to reign over Israel, or Judah: But she killed all the seed royal, to establish herself in the throne, except Joash, who escaped, being hid from her fury, in an apartment belonging to the temple, 2 Chron. xxii. 11.

[2dly,] What Jehoiada did in deposing her; was not only with a good design to set up the lawful heir; but it was done by an express command of the Lord, chap. xxiii. 3.

[3dly,] Joash was proclaimed, and anointed, and universally owned as king by the people, before Athaliah was slain, 2 Kings xi. 12,—14.

VI. We are now to consider the sins of inferiors against their superiors. These are expressed in general terms, in one of the answers we are explaining; namely, neglecting the duties we owe to them, envying at, and contempt of their persons, places, and lawful counsels and commands, and all refractory carriage, that may prove a shame and dishonour to their government; but, more particularly, inferiors sin against their superiors.

1. In divulging their secrets; and that either as to what respects the affairs of their families, or their secular callings in the world.

2. In mocking, reproaching, or exposing their infirmities. Thus it is said, *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it,* Prov. xxx. 17.

3. In endeavouring to make disturbance or disorders in families, or the common-wealth, through discontent with their station as inferiors, or a desire to rule over those to whom they ought to be in subjection.

4. Servants sin, in neglecting to fulfil their contract, or do the service which they engaged to perform, when they first en-

tered into that relation. Or when they are only disposed to perform the duties incumbent on them, when they are under their master's eye, having no sense of common justice, or their obligation to approve themselves to God, in performing the duties they owe to man. Thus the apostle exhorts servants, to be obedient to them which are their masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ. Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, Eph, vi. 5, 6.

5. Children sin, by being unnatural to their parents, who refuse or neglect to maintain them if they need it, especially when they are aged; whereby they will appear to have no sense of gratitude, for past favours, nor regard to that duty which nature obliges them to perform.

**QUEST. CXXIX.** *What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?*

**ANSW.** It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; discountenancing, reproofing, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul, and body; and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honour to themselves, and so to preserve the authority which God hath put upon them.

**QUEST. CXXX.** *What are the sins of superiors?*

**ANSW.** The sins of superiors are, beside the neglect of the duties required of them, and inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counselling, encouraging, or favouring them in that which is evil, dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly, careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonouring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behaviour.

**QUEST. CXXXI.** *What are the duties of equals?*

**ANSW.** The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and

worth of each other, in giving honour to go one before another, and to rejoice in each others gifts and advancement, as in their own.

**QUEST. CXXXII.** *What are the sins of equals ?*

**ANSW.** The sins of equals are, beside the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement or prosperity one of another, and usurping pre-eminence one over another.

**QUEST. CXXXIII.** *What is the reason annexed to the fifth Commandment the more to enforce it ?*

**ANSW.** The reason annexed to the fifth Commandment, in these words, [*That thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee*] is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good, to all such as keep this Commandment.

I. **WE** are to consider the duties which superiors owe to their inferiors. Whatever circumstance of advancement one has above another in the world, this is a peculiar gift of God, and should not give occasion to that pride of heart which is natural to fallen man, which puts him upon casting contempt on those who are below him ; much less should they oppress others, who are in a lower station of life than themselves ; but should endeavour to do good to them, and thereby glorify God. And, indeed, as every relation is mutual, and calls for its respective duties, so that superiors expect the duty which belongs to them, from inferiors ; it is equally just and reasonable that they should not neglect those duties which they are obliged to perform to them ; though they be of another nature, different from those which they demand from them. Here we shall consider,

2. The duty of parents to children. This not only includes in it the using their utmost endeavours to promote their worldly advantage, as to what respects their present or future condition in life ; but they ought to have a just concern for their spiritual welfare, which is a duty very much neglected, though it be incumbent on all parents, and will be performed by those who have a sense of God and religion upon their spirits ; this the apostle calls *bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, Eph. vi. 4. When children are first capable of being instructed ; or when they first take in the knowledge of common things ; then it is the parent's duty to instil into

them those things that are spiritual. It is, indeed, a difficult matter to speak to them about divine things, so as to lead them into the knowledge thereof; and it requires a great measure of wisdom and faithfulness in them. One of the first duties that they owe to them, is acknowledging God's right to them, putting them under his care, giving them up to him, hoping and trusting in Christ, that he will bestow on them the saving blessings of the covenant of grace, and that in their early age of life. Moreover, since children soon discover themselves to have a corrupt nature: This ought to be checked and fenced against, as much as it is in our power: Since all habits of sin are of an increasing nature, and though it be difficult to prevent them; yet we shall find it much more so to root them out.

Now that we may instil into the minds of children, the principles of religion, as soon as they are capable of receiving instruction, let it be observed,

(1.) That parents must take great care that they neither speak nor act any thing before their children, which may tend to corrupt their minds, or afford a bad example, which it would be of pernicious consequence to them to follow; nor ought they to suffer those passions to break forth, which may render them mean and contemptible in the eyes of their children; or give them occasion, by their example, to indulge the same passions.

(2.) They must take heed that they do not exercise severity for trifles, or those inadvertencies which children are chargeable with, on the one hand; nor too much indulge them in that incorrigibleness and profaneness which they sometimes see in them, on the other.

(3.) They must separate from them all companions, or servants, from whom they may imbibe the principles of sin, and oblige those who have the immediate care of their education, to instil into them the principles of religion, and, at the same time, to recommend to them, the pleasure, beauty, and advantage of holiness in all, but especially in young ones.

(4.) The examples which we have, either in scripture, or our own observation in the world, of those who have devoted themselves to God, and been religious betimes, is to be frequently inculcated, for their imitation, with all the affecting and moving expressions that it is possible for them to use, and with a particular application thereof to their case; and, on the other hand, the miserable consequences which have attended persons neglecting to embrace the ways of God in the days of their youth, and the sore judgments which often ensue hereupon; as it is said, *His bones are full of the sin of youth*, Job xx. 11.

(5.) Reproofs for sin are to be given, with a zeal and concern for the glory of God ; and yet with that affection as may convince children, that in those things, in which they are ready to think their parents their enemies, they appear to be their greatest friends.

(6.) They, who have the care of children, ought to take heed, that they do not lead them into, or give them occasion, to rest in, a formal, or external appearance of religion, on the one hand ; nor, on the other hand, are they to use any methods which may induce them to think, that, a burden, or a reproach, which they ought to esteem their delight and honour.

(7.) Those opportunities are more especially to be embraced, when instructions are most likely to be regarded by them ; as when they are inquisitive about divine things. This should give the parent occasion to be particular in explaining them to them. Thus God commands Israel, *when thy son asketh thee in time to come, what mean the testimonies and the statutes, and the judgments ; which the Lord thy God commanded you ? to say unto him, we were Pharaoh's bondsmen*, Deut. vi. 20, 21. and so they were to relate to them those dispensations of providence towards them, that gave occasion to these statutes which he had appointed.

(8.) Parents should let their children know, that their obedience to God's commands, will always entitle them to the greatest share in their affection, that this may be a motive and inducement thereunto ;

2. We are now to consider the duty which masters owe to their servants. And,

(1.) They ought to recommend the good ways of God to them, endeavouring to persuade them to be religious ; and, by their exemplary conversation in their families, whereby they adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in all things, afford them an additional motive hereunto.

(2.) They should encourage religion in their servants, as well as diligence and industry. For, as the one tends to their advantage, to whom their service is due ; the other tends to the glory of God, and the good of their souls, who are found in the practice of it.

(3.) Masters should endeavour to instruct their servants in the principles of religion, especially if ignorant. And,

(4.) They should allow them sufficient time for religious duties ; which, if needful, ought to be taken out of that time, wherein they would otherwise be employed in their service : And this they ought to do, as considering, that the best Christians are like to make the most faithful servants.

3. We are now to consider the duty of magistrates towards their subjects. This consists,

(1.) In their endeavouring to promote their liberty, safety, and happiness, by the justice and clemency of their administration. Thus it is said, *He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. By this means they will lay their subjects under the highest obligation to duty and obedience; and the respect which they have from them, will render the station, in which they are, more agreeable.

(2.) They ought to defend the rights of subjects, when injured, against their oppressors; that they may appear to be, as it were, their common fathers, to whom they have recourse in all difficulties, and find redress.

(3.) They ought to encourage and support the common design of Christianity, by suppressing irreligion and profaneness, and every thing which is a scandal to the Christian name, or a reproach to a well-ordered government. This leads us,

II. To consider the sins of superiors. These sin in their behaviour towards their inferiors,

1. By pride and haughtiness; when they treat those who are below them, with contempt and disdain; as though, because they are not, in many respects, their equals, they are not their fellow-creatures. This discovers itself either in reproachful words or actions. Thus the Pharisees treated those whom they apprehended inferior to them, in gifts or station, in the church, with contempt; so that they often made use of that aphorism; *This people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed*, John vii. 49.

2. Another sin of superiors is, when masters exact severe and unmerciful labour, beyond what is reasonable, of their servants, which is little better than the oppression of the Egyptian task-masters; who commanded them to make brick without straw, Exod. v. 15, 16. and beat, and dealt severely with them, because they could not fulfil their unreasonable exactions.

3. Sin is committed by those who, being princes, or generals, exercise inhuman cruelty, contrary to the law of nature and nations, towards their conquered enemies, when they have them in their power. This David seems to have been charged with, as a blemish in his reign; when he *put* the men of Rabbah, after he had conquered them, *under saws, and under harrows of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kilns. Thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon*; which seems hardly justifiable by marshal law; and therefore it must be reckoned a failing in him; especially unless the Ammonites had done something extraordinary, to deserve such treatment, or had used Israel in the like manner, so that this might be reckoned a just reprisal upon them, 2 Sam. xii. 31.

And to this we may add, that magistrates do not behave to their subjects, as they ought, and therefore commit sin, when

they inflict punishment beyond what the law directs, or the crime deserves. Thus small offences are not to be punished with death, as capital crimes are, since the punishment must be greater or less, in proportion to the crime. Thus God enjoined a certain number of stripes for some crimes committed, which they were not to exceed; *whereby their brother would seem vile unto them*, Deut. xxv. 2, 3. that is, they would treat him with a greater severity than the nature of the crime demanded.

4. Superiors sin, when they take advantage on the necessities of the poor; in buying or selling, which is called, a *grinding the faces of the poor*, Isa. iii. 14, 15.

5. Masters, or parents sin, in giving undue correction to their servants or children, for small faults as when they neglect to perform some punctilio's, of respect, which are due to them, with greater severity than they do, open sins against God, or when they are transported with unreasonable passion for trifles; whereby they render themselves hated by them, and provoke them to wrath, rather than answer the end of chastisement, which is the glory of God and their good. This the apostle forbids parents to do, Eph. vi. 4. And elsewhere, he speaks of the *fathers of our flesh chastizing us after their own pleasure*, Heb. xii. 10. as being disagreeable to the divine dispensations, and consequently not to be justified in them that practise it.

6. Superiors sin, when they command those things, of their inferiors, which are in themselves sinful, which they cannot, in their consciences, comply with. And to this we may add, their demanding those things which are impossible, and being enraged against them for not doing them.

7. Superiors sin, when they surmise their inferiors have committed a fault, which they resent, and punish, without suffering them to vindicate themselves, though they request this favour in the most submissive way. This is to extend their authority beyond the bounds of reason. We shall now consider,

III. The duty of equals. And,

1. They ought to encourage and strengthen the hands of one another in the ways of God, which is the great end and design of Christian societies.

2. They ought to sympathize with one another in their weakness, warning and helping each other, when exposed to temptations, or overcome by them.

3. They ought to defend one another when reproached by the enemies of God and religion.

4. To love one another, and rejoice in each others welfare.

And,

5. To withdraw from the society of those who are a reproach to, or endeavour to turn them aside from the good ways of God.

IV. We shall now consider the sins of equals ; which they are guilty of,

1. When they entertain unjust and unfriendly quarrels, contrary to that love, which ought to be amongst brethren.

2. When they affect, or usurp pre-eminence over one another ; as Diotrephes did, whom the apostle speaks of, who *loved to have the pre-eminence amongst them*, 3 John, ver. 9. Christ's disciples themselves were sometimes liable to this charge ; especially when *there was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted greatest*, Luke xxii. 24. which our Saviour is so far from commending in them, that he reproves them for it.

3. It is a great sin, when equals endeavour to make breaches amongst those, who are otherwise inclined to live peaceably with one another. This is the wretched employment of tale-bearers, busy-bodies, make-bates, and slanderers, who delight to raise and propagate false reports ; as the Psalmist supposes some inclined to do, who are distinguished from those who do not *backbite with their tongue*, nor *take up a reproach against their neighbour*, &c. Psal. xv. 3. and it is reckoned one of those things which the Lord hates, Prov. vi. 19.

4. They are guilty of sin, when they insult, and take occasion, to expose their brethren, for those weaknesses and infirmities which they see in them, not considering that they are also liable to the same themselves.

5. When they endeavour to ensnare and entice others to sin. This vile practice Solomon takes notice of, chap. i. 10, 15. and cautions those who are thus tempted against consenting to, or complying with them. We are now to consider,

V. The reasons annexed to the fifth Commandment, which are included in that promise of long life, to such as keep it. It is enquired by some, whether this promise is to be applied to none but the Israelites ; since there is mention of the land which the Lord gave them, to wit, Canaan ? To which it may be replied ; that though they might make a particular application of it to themselves ; yet it extends to men in all ages and places. Accordingly the apostle Paul mentioning this Commandment, and the promise annexed to it, instead of those words, *That thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee*, alters the mode of expression, that it may be applicable to us as well as them, when he says, *That thou mayest live long on the earth*, Eph. vi. 2, 3. This may give us occasion to enquire,

1. Whether this promise be made good as to the letter of it,



to all that keep this Commandment ; especially since we find, that, according to the common methods of providence, some good men live but a short time in this world, when the wicked oftentimes live to a great age. That the lives of some good men have been short, needs not be proved. Abijah, the best of Jeroboam's family, in whom some good thing was found, towards the Lord God of Israel, died when a child, 1 Kings xiv. 12, 13. And Josiah, who was one of the best of the kings that reigned over Judah, lived but thirty nine years ; for it is said, that *he was eight years old when he began to reign ; and he reigned thirty and one years*, 2 Kings xxii. 1. And Enoch excelled all the patriarchs who lived before the flood, and was more honoured in that he was translated to heaven, without dying ; yet he continued but a little while in this world, if we compare the time he lived here, with the time which men generally lived before the deluge ; which was but *three hundred and sixty five years* ; whereas, several others are said to have lived above nine hundred years. And Joseph, who was the most remarkable, for shewing honour to parents, and performing the duties belonging to other relations, of any we read of in scripture ; he lived but an *hundred and ten years*, Gen. i. 26. Whereas Levi, who had been a reproach to his father, and a dishonour to the family in general, lived an *hundred thirty and seven years*, Exod. vi. 16.

2. We shall now consider, how such dispensations of providence may be accounted for, consistently with the promise annexed to this Commandment. Accordingly it may be observed,

(1.) That, when God takes his saints out of the world when young, it is sometimes a peculiar instance of compassion to them, in taking them from the evil to come. Thus Josiah died, as was but now hinted, when young ; but this was in mercy to him, that he might not see the evil which God would bring on Judah for their sins, 2 Kings xxii. 20.

(2.) They are, at their death, possessed of a better world, which is the best exchange : So that were the matter referred to their own choice, they would choose heaven before the longest life, and the best advantages they can enjoy in this world.

(3.) Old age is not a blessing, unless it be adorned with grace. *The hoary head is, indeed, a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness*, Prov. xvi. 13. but not otherwise. Good men are not destroyed by the blast of God's wrath, but gathered, like a shock of corn, when fully ripe ; they are meet for, and then received into a better world. Therefore *the child dying in Christ, is said to die an hundred years old*, Isa. lxx. 20.

3. We shall now enquire, how far, or in what respects, we are to hope for, and desire the accomplishment of the promises of temporal good things.

(1.) Temporal good things are not to be desired ultimately for themselves, but as subservient to the glory of God. And long life in particular is a blessing, so far as it affords more space to do service to the interest of Christ in the world.

(2.) They are to be desired, with an entire submission to the will of God, and a resolution to acknowledge, that he is righteous, and to magnify his name, though he deny them to us, as considering that he knows what is best for us, and may do what he will with his own.

(3.) We are to desire that God would give us temporal good things in mercy, as pledges of eternal happiness, and not in wrath. Thus the Psalmist says; *There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us,* Psal. iv. 6.

4. We shall now enquire with what frame of spirit we ought to bear the loss of temporal good things, which we have been encouraged by God's promise, to hope for. In answer to this, let it be considered, that if God does not fulfil his promise in the way and manner which we expect, in granting us temporal good things; yet,

(1.) We must justify him, and condemn ourselves; none can say, that he does not forfeit all blessings daily. Therefore we are to say; let God be true, and every man a liar. He is a God of infinite faithfulness; but we are unfaithful, and not stedfast in his covenant.

(2.) We are not to conclude, that our being deprived of temporal good things, which we expect, is a certain sign that we have no right to, or interest in those better things that accompany salvation; as the wise man says, *No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before him,* Eccles. ix. 1.

(3.) We are to reckon the loss of temporal good things as a trial of our faith and patience; and endeavour, under such disappointments, to make it appear, that the world was not the main thing we had in view; but Christ and spiritual blessings in him, were the spring of all our religion.

5. It may farther be enquired; what are those things that tend to make a long life happy, for which alone it is to be desired? It may be observed, that life is sometimes attended with those miseries, which induce a believer to desire to depart, and be with Christ, as the weary traveller desires rest. And it may be observed, that though, in the promise annexed to the fifth Commandment, we have no mention of any thing but long life; yet the apostle, when explaining it, adds, that

they shall have a prosperous life ; without which, long life would not be so great a blessing. Thus he says, *That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth,* Eph. vi. 3. Now there are three things which tend to make, a long life, happy.

(1.) Experience of growth in grace, in proportion to our advances in age, according to that promise, *They shall bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing,* Psal. xcii. 14.

(2.) When we retain our natural abilities, and that strength and vigour of mind, which we have formerly had. This some are deprived of, through the infirmities of old age ; whereby they may be said to out-live themselves. It was a peculiar blessing, which God granted to Moses ; concerning whom it is said, that *he was an hundred and twenty years old when he died ; and yet his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated,* Deut. xxxiv. 7.

(3.) Old age is a blessing, when our usefulness to others, in our day and generation, is continued. Thus Joshua died an old man ; but it was a peculiar blessing that he was useful to the end ; for in the very close of his life he *made a covenant with the people in Shechem,* Josh. xxiv. 25. compared with 29. and laid strict commands on them, to behave themselves towards God, as they ought to do.

QUEST. CXXXIV. *What is the sixth Commandment ?*

ANSW. The sixth Commandment is, [*Thou shalt not kill.*]

QUEST. CXXXV. *What are the duties required in the sixth Commandment ?*

ANSW. The duties required in the sixth Commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavours to preserve the life of ourselves, and others, by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any ; by just defence thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit, a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labour, and recreations, by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness, peaceable, mild, and courteous speeches and behaviour, forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil, comforting and succouring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.

**QUEST. CXXXVI.** *What are the sins forbidden in the sixth Commandment ?*

**ANSW.** The sins forbidden in the sixth Commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defence ; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life, sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge, all excessive passions, distracting cares, immoderate use of meat, drink, labour, and recreations ; provoking words, oppressing, quarrelling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.

**I**N explaining this Commandment, we are,  
**I.** To consider the positive part thereof, or the duties required in it, namely, that we should use all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others ; and consequently we should avoid all those passions, and other things, which may afford an occasion to take it away, and live in the constant exercise of the duties of temperance and sobriety, as to what respects ourselves ; meekness, gentleness, and forgiving injuries, as to what concerns others.

In this Commandment it is supposed, that life is the most valuable blessing of nature ; and therefore to take it away, is to do the utmost injury that can be attempted against us. The valuableness of the life of man appears in four things.

1. It is the result of the union of the soul with the body, which is the principle of those actions that are put forth by us as intelligent creatures ; and therefore life is to be esteemed in proportion to the excellency thereof ; which, is the noblest part of the creation, angels excepted.

2. Nothing can compensate or satisfy for the taking away the life of man, how much satisfaction soever may be given for the loss of other things.

3. We may observe, that man, in this respect, is the subject of the divine image ; which supposes us to have a more excellent life than any other creatures in this lower world ; and it is assigned as a reason of our obligation to preserve it, Gen. ix. 6.

4. Life is given and continued to us, that hereby the most valuable ends may be attained, conducive to the glory of God, the advancement of religion in the world, and promoting our everlasting happiness. From whence we may take an estimate of its excellency ; and it contains the highest motive to us, to yield obedience to this Commandment.

This leads us to consider the means which we are to use, to preserve our own lives, and the lives of others. As to

what respects the preservation of our own life; we are not to rush presumptuously into danger of death, without a divine warrant, for that is to be prodigal of life. We are also to exercise sobriety and temperance, avoiding gluttony, drunkenness, lust, and all exorbitant passions, which tend to impair the health, as well as defile the conscience. Moreover, when occasion requires it, we are to have recourse to the skill of physicians, and make use of those proper medicines, that may conduce to repair the weakness and decays of nature.

As to what concerns our endeavours to preserve the lives of others; we are to caution them against those things, which would tend to destroy their health, and, by degrees, their lives. And we must also discover and detect all secret plots and contrivances which may be directed against them; and we are to support and relieve those who are ready to perish by extreme poverty; yea, though they were our enemies, Rom. xii. 20. Job xxxi. 19, 20, 22. We are also to defend them who are in imminent danger of death, Psal. lxxxii. 3, 4. Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.

Nevertheless, we must not use unwarrantable means, though it were to save our own lives. As, in times of persecution, we are not to renounce the truths of God, or give occasion to the common enemy, to revile, or speak evil of them, to avoid suffering for the cause thereof. This was that noble principle by which the martyrs, whom the apostle speaks of, were acted; *They were tortured, not accepting deliverance*, Heb. xi. 35. that is, when they were exposed to the most exquisite torments, and their lives offered them, in case they would deny Christ, they would not accept deliverance on so dishonourable terms. Neither are we, at any time, to tell a lye, or act that which is contrary to truth, though it were to save our lives. This leads us,

II. To consider the sins forbidden in this Commandment; and these are either the taking away of life, or doing that which has a tendency thereunto.

1. It is unlawful to take away the life of another. But this is to be considered with some exceptions, or limitations.

(1.) This may be done in lawful wars. Thus we read of many wars begun and carried on, and much blood shed therein, by God's direction, and with his approbation and blessing; upon which occasion it is said, that *the war was of God*, 1 Chron. v. 22. Nevertheless, when wars are proclaimed, merely to satisfy the pride and avarice of princes, as in Benhadad's war against Ahab, 1 Kings xx. 1. & seq. or the Romans, who made war on the countries round about them, merely to enlarge their own dominions, by ruining others; or, like those which the Devil excites, and Antichrist carries on

against the church, for their faithfulness to the truth, Rev. xii. 17. chap. xiii. 7. these wars are unlawful; and all the blood shed therein, is a breach of this Commandment.

(2.) It is no violation of this Commandment, to take away the life of offenders, guilty of capital crimes, by the hand of the civil magistrate; for this is elsewhere commanded, and magistrates are appointed for that end, Deut. xvii. 8,—10.

(3.) It is no breach of this Commandment, when a person kills another without design, or the least degree of premeditated malice. Nevertheless, the utmost caution ought to be used, that persons might not lose their lives through the carelessness and inadvertency of others.

(4.) In some instances, a person may kill another in his own defence, without being guilty of the breach of this Commandment. But this is to be considered with certain limitations; as,

[1.] If there be only a design, or conspiracy against our lives, but no immediate attempt made, to take them away; we are to defend ourselves, by endeavouring to put him that designed the execrable fact, out of a capacity of hurting us, by having recourse to the protection of the law; whereby he may be restrained from doing it, or we secured. This was the method which Paul took, when the Jews had bound themselves with an oath, to slay him; he informed the chief captain of this conspiracy, and had recourse to the law for his safety, Acts xxiii. 21.

[2.] If there be a present attempt made against our lives, we should rather chuse to disarm, or fly from the enemy, than take away his life; but if this cannot be done, so that we must either lose our own lives, or take away his, we do not incur the least guilt, or break this Commandment, if we take away his life, to preserve our own, especially if we were not first in the quarrel; nor give occasion to it by any injurious or unlawful practices.

Here it may be enquired, whether it be lawful for two persons to fight a duel, upon a set challenge, or provocation given? In answer to which, let it be considered,

1st, That, when a war, between two armies, may be issued, and the shedding of much blood prevented hereby, it is not unlawful, provided it be by mutual consent, and with the approbation of those on both sides, who have a right of making war and peace; and if the matter in controversy may be thus decided, without tempting providence. We have a remarkable instance of this, in the duel fought between David and Goliath, in 1 Sam. xvii. Nevertheless,

2dly, It is unlawful for two persons, each seeming too prodigal of his life, to challenge, accept of, and, pursuant thereto, to endeavour to put an end to each others life, merely to

gratify their own passion, or pride. This, though falsely called honour, will, in reality, render them vile in the eyes of God, and notoriously guilty of the breach of this Commandment.

Here we may consider the wicked practice of those who have obliged poor wretches, who were under their command, to murder one another for their diversion. This Joab and Abner did, when they said, *Let the young men arise and play before us; and every one thrust his sword in his fellows side*, 2 Sam. ii. 14,—16. There is also an unlawful diversion, which, though not altogether so barbarous and cruel, is, in some respects, a breach of this Commandment, viz. when persons fight with, and wound one another, without design of killing, merely to get a little money, while entertaining a number of unthinking persons with their folly; in which case they that fight, and they that look on, are equally guilty, Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. Thus concerning the sin of killing another; we shall now account for two or three difficulties that occur in scripture, relating to the actions of some good men, who seem to have been guilty of the breach of this Commandment; but were not really so.

1st, It is enquired, whether Elijah was chargeable with the breach of it in destroying Baal's prophets, which we read of in 1 Kings xviii. 40. wherein it is said, that *he ordered that none of them should escape; and he brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there*.

In answer to which, it may be observed, that it was not a small inoffensive error that these prophets of Baal were punished for; but apostasy from God. And that the persons who were thus punished, deserve it, will appear, if we consider,

[1.] That, they were the advisers and ring-leaders of all Israel's idolatry, and the abettors and principal occasion of that violent persecution, which then raged against the Lord's prophets, and true worshippers.

[2.] Had they only been false prophets, and not persecutors, they were according to the law of God to be put to death, Deut. xiii. 6,—9.

[3.] This was done after a solemn appeal to God, and an answer from heaven, by fire, which determined, not only who was the true God, but who were his prophets, and consequently whether Elijah deserved death, as an impostor, or Baal's prophets.

[4.] Ahab himself was present, and all his ministers of state, who had a right to execute justice on false prophets; and, it is highly probable, that they consented to, and many of them had an immediate hand in their death, which might be occasioned by a sudden conviction in their consciences, proceeding from the miracle which they had just before observed, or

from the universal cry of the people against them; so that the thing was plainly of the Lord, to whom Elijah brought a great deal of honour, and was far from being chargeable with the breach of this Commandment.

*2dly*, It is farther enquired, whether Abraham's offering Isaac was a breach of this Commandment? This is proposed as a difficulty by those who do not pay that deference to divine revelation, as they ought, nor consider, that God cannot command any thing which is contrary to his perfections; nor do his people sin in obeying any command that is given by him. However, that this matter may be set in a just light, let it be considered,

[1.] That God, who is the sovereign Lord of life, may take it away, when, and by whom he pleases. Therefore Isaac had no more reason to complain of any wrong or injury done him, by God, in ordering his father to sacrifice him, than any one else has, who dies by his immediate hand, in the common course of providence.

[2.] Abraham could not be said to do this with the temper and disposition of a murderer, which such have, who are guilty of the breach of this Commandment, who kill persons in a passion, or out of envy or malice, being void of all natural affection or brotherly love; but he acted plainly in obedience to God's command. His hand was lifted up against one whom he loved equally to, or, it may be, more than his own life, and, doubtless, he would rather have been, had God so ordered it, the sacrifice, than the offerer.

[3.] This was done, as is more than probable, with Isaac's full consent. Hence some think, that his faith was no less remarkable herein than that of Abraham. His willingness to be offered, evidently appears, in that Abraham was in his feeble and declining age, and Isaac in his full strength; for it was not a little strength which was sufficient to carry wood enough to answer this occasion, which we read he did, Gen. xxii. 6. Besides, if Isaac had resisted, none was at hand to assist Abraham against him, and, doubtless, he would have strove in this matter as one who desired to be overcome. Therefore we must suppose, that it is so far from being a breach of this Commandment, that it was one of the most remarkable instances of faith in scripture; and God's design in ordering him to do this, was, that it might be a type whereby he would lead him into the glorious mystery of his' not sparing his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his willingness to lay down his life a ransom for his people.

*3dly*, Some charge Moses with being guilty of the breach of this Commandment, in killing the Egyptian, which we read



of in Exod. ii. 11, 12. But, to vindicate him from this charge, let it be considered,

[1.] That the Egyptian, whom he slew, not only *smote at Hebrew*, as it is in this chapter, but he did it wrongfully, as it is observed in Acts vii. 24. there was no offence given, nor just reason for this injurious treatment, and to oppress or abuse one that is in a miserable condition, as the Hebrews were at that time, is an heinous crime in God's account. Moreover, to *smite*, in scripture, is often taken, for to *slay*; so that it is not improbable, that the Egyptian slew the Hebrew; or if he did not, it might be such an injury as deserved death; which would have been inflicted in another manner, had not Israel been denied, at that time, the protection of the law.

[2.] Moses was, at this time, raised up, and called by God, to be a ruler and a judge, to defend the cause of his oppressed people; and in this action he first began to fulfil his commission; though the people refused to own him, and seemed to join with those that designed him evil for it; for which reason their deliverance was put off forty years longer, while he was an exile in the land of Midian, Acts vii. 24, 26. compared with 30. Now to slay a public enemy and oppressor, and, as it is probable, one who had forfeited his life, and that with a commission from God, to act as a ruler and a judge over his people, cannot be reckoned a breach of this Commandment. Thus concerning the violation of this Commandment, as including in it the murdering of our neighbour.

2. This Commandment is notoriously broken by those who lay violent hands on themselves, which we have no instance of any good man, in scripture, that was ever suffered to do, but only such who were, like Saul, Ahitophel, Judas, and others, of the most infamous character. This is a sin which is attended with many aggravations; For,

(1.) It is to act as though our lives were at our own disposal; which are to be considered as a talent which we are entrusted with by God, to improve for his glory; and he alone has a right to dispose thereof at his pleasure.

(2.) This argues, and arises from, the highest discontent and impatience under the hand of God, which is contrary to that temper, which we ought to exercise as Christians, who profess subjection to him.

(3.) It is contrary to nature, and that principle of self-preservation which God has implanted in us; and, indeed, he that does this, not only acts below the reason of a man, but does that which even brutes themselves are not inclined to.

(4.) It is a giving place to, and gratifying the Devil, who acts agreeably to his character, as a murderer from the begin-

ning, when he tempts men to destroy both soul and body at once.

(5.) It is presumptuous and bold to resolve, that whatever measure of duty God has prescribed for us to fill up in this world, we will serve him no longer. If marshal law punishes deserters with death, is there not a severe punishment due unto those who do, as it were, desert the service of God by self-murder? Nothing is more certain than this, that if duty be enjoined by God, the time in which it is to be performed, is also fixed by him, and not left to our determination.

(6.) It is a rushing hastily into eternity, not considering the consequence thereof, nor the awful tribunal of Christ, before which they must immediately appear, and give an account of this, as well as other sinful actions of life.

(7.) It is done with such a frame of spirit, that a person cannot, by faith, commit his soul into the hands of Jesus Christ; for that requires a better temper of mind than any one can be supposed to have, who murders himself.

Here it may be enquired, since, as was before observed, no good man was ever guilty of this crime, whether Samson did not break this Commandment in pulling down the house upon his own head, as well as the Philistines?

To this it may be answered,

[1.] That Samson's life, at this time, was a burden to himself, useless to his brethren, a scorn to the open enemy, and an occasion of their ascribing their deliverance to their idol; and probably, it would have been soon taken away by them; which circumstances, though they would not, in themselves, have been sufficient to justify this action; yet they might justify his desire, that God would put an end, to his life, and release him out of this miserable world; especially if this would redound more to his glory than any thing he could do for the future, or had done in the former part of his life.

[2.] It plainly appears, that God, in answer to his prayer, not only gave him leave to take away his own life, together with the lives of his enemies, but he wrought a miracle to enable him to do it; and therefore it was a justifiable action, and no breach of this Commandment, Judges xvi. 28,—30.

3. We shall now consider the heinous aggravation of this sin, of taking away the life of another unjustly, and the terrible judgments that such have ground to expect, who are guilty hereof.

(1.) According to the divine law, this sin is to be punished with death, by the hand of the civil magistrate, Deut. xix. 11, 12. Thus Joab, who had deserved to die for murders formerly committed, was slain, by David's order, by his son Solomon; though he sought protection by taking hold of the

horns of the altar, 1 Kings ii. 28, 29. Many other crimes might be expiated by sacrifices, which God ordained should be offered for that end; whereas, no satisfaction was to be accepted for this sin but the blood of the murderer, Numb. xxxv. 31. And it is a matter of dispute with some, whether kings, who may pardon many crimes, by virtue of their prerogative, can, according to the laws of God, pardon murder, without being supposed to extend their clemency beyond its due bounds?

(2.) God often gives up those who are guilty of the sin of murder, to the terrors of a guilty conscience, which is a kind of hell upon earth; as in the instances of Cain, Lamech, and others, Gen. iv. 13,—15. and 23, 24.

(3.) Such are followed with many remarkable instances of divine vengeance; so that the blast of providence attends all their undertakings. Thus David, after he had killed Uriah, was followed with such rebukes of providence, that the latter part of his life was rendered very uneasy thereby; and what the prophet foretold was fulfilled, that *the sword should never depart from his house*; that is, as long as he lived, 2 Sam. xii. 9, 10.

(4.) The judgments of God for his sin, are oftentimes transmitted to posterity. Thus Simeon and Levi's murder of the Shechemites, was punished in the tribes that descended from them; who, according to the patriarch's prediction, were *divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel*, Gen. xlix. 7. And Saul's slaying the Gibeonites, was punished in David's time, by a famine occasioned thereby, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. And the murders which the Jews had committed on the prophets in former ages, were punished in the destruction of their state and nation; when *all the righteous blood that had been shed upon the earth, came upon them*, Matt. xxiii. 35.

(5.) Their lives are often shortened, and they brought to the grave with blood. Thus Absalom perished by the just judgment of God, for the murder of his brother, as well as his other crimes; and in this the Psalmist's observation holds true, that *bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days*, Psal. lv. 23. We are now to consider,

4. That this Commandment may be broken otherwise than by the taking away the life of our neighbour. It may be committed by a person in his heart, when he has not an opportunity to execute his malicious designs; or is afraid to do it, because of the punishment from men, which will ensue. Thus the apostle says, *Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer*, 1 John iii. 15. Of this we have an instance in wicked Ahab; who *hated Micajah*, because he *prophesied not good concerning him, but evil*, 1 Kings xxii. 9. And, it is more

than probable, that this hatred would have broke forth into murder, could he have laid hold on the least shadow or pretence that might have put a colour on so vile an action. And Jezebel was guilty of this sin, who threatened to murder the prophet Elijah, chap. xix. 2. and the Jews, who were filled with malice against our Saviour; for which reason they would have put him to death at that time; but they feared the people, Mark xi. 18. And as this is a sin that reigns in wicked men, there are some instances hereof even in good men. Thus David carried his resentment too far against Nabal, though a churlish and ungrateful man, when he resolved, in his passion, not only to take away his life, which was an unjustifiable action, but to destroy the whole family, the innocent with the guilty, 1 Sam. xxv. 21, 22. and he was sensible of his sin in this passionate resolution, which occasioned his blessing God for his preventing it, by Abigail's prudent management.

There is another instance of sinful and unaccountable passion, that cannot be excused from a degree of heart-murder in Jonah; who was very angry because God was gracious, and spared Nineveh, on their repentance; and in this fit of passion, he desires that God would take away his life, justifies his anger, and, as it were, dares him to cut him off; which was as bad a frame as ever any good man was in. And all this took its rise from pride, lest some should think him a false prophet, who did not rightly distinguish between what God might do, and would have done, had they not repented, and what he determined to do, namely, to give them repentance, and so to spare them. I say, rather than be counted a false prophet, which, it may be, was a groundless surmise, he was angry with God for sparing it, Jonah iv. 1—4.

Here it will be enquired, whether all anger is sinful, or a breach of this Commandment? To which it may be answered, That since the apostle says, *Be angry and sin not*, Eph. iv. 26. it implies, that there may be anger which is not sinful; but, on the other hand, may rather be styled, a zeal for God. Of this kind was that anger which our Saviour expressed against the Scribes and Pharisees, when he calls them *serpents, a generation of vipers*, Matt. xxliii. 33. and when he whipped the buyers and sellers out of the temple; on which occasion it is said, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*, John ii. 15, 17. And the apostle reprov'd Elymas the *sorcerer*, who endeavoured to *turn away the deputy from the faith*, with words that seemed full of anger; when he addressed himself to him in this manner; *O full of all subtilty, and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness; Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* Acts xliii. 10. And Peter could not reprove that vile hypocrite Simon

Magus, when he offered to purchase the conferring the Holy Ghost, without expressing some anger and resentment, as the cause required, when he says, *Thy money perish with thee*, &c. chap. viii. 20, 21. yet that he might let him know that it was only zeal to God that provoked his anger, he gives him friendly advice to repent of this his wickedness, ver. 22. From whence we may take occasion to enquire,

(1.) What is the difference between sinful anger or passion, and an holy zeal for God?

[1.] An holy zeal for God, leads us rightly to distinguish between the person reprov'd, and his actions, that give us occasion for it; so that we hate the sin, but not the person that commits it. Thus the Psalmist says, *I hate the work of them that turn aside*, Psal. ci. 3. But sinful anger is principally directed against the person with whom we are offended.

[2.] The honour of God is the only motive that excites holy zeal; but pride or evil surmise, is generally the occasion of sinful anger. Thus Jehu's executing the vengeance of God, in cutting off Ahab's wicked family, was right, as to the matter of it; yet it had a great mixture of ambition, pride, and private hatred of them, as those whom he thought would stand in competition with him for the crown; and for this action he also desires the applause and esteem of the people; and therefore says to Jonadab, *Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord*, 2 Kings x. 16. so that the one is attended with many other graces, the other with many sins.

[3.] Holy zeal for God inclines us to express anger against his enemies, with sorrow and reluctancy, as being grieved for their sin, and at the same time desiring their reformation and salvation; but sinful anger meditates revenge, is restless till it has accomplished it, Prov. iv. 16. and pleased with having opportunities of executing it.

[4.] Holy zeal sets aside, or is not much concerned about injuries, as directed against ourselves; but as they reflect dishonour on the name of God, or are prejudicial to his interest in the world. With this view it was that David says concerning Edom, *Happy shall he be that dasheth thy little ones against the stones*, Psal. cxxxvii. 9. when at the same time, he professes, that it was for Jerusalem's sake that he desired the ruin of his enemies, and not his own; for he says, that he *preferred Jerusalem above his chief joy*, ver. 6. Whereas, on the other hand, sinful anger designs or wishes evil to others, to promote our own interest and advantage.

(2.) We shall now consider the aggravations of sinful passion.

[1.] It unfits a soul for holy duties. Accordingly our Saviour advises his people, first to *be reconciled to their brethren*, and then *come and offer their gift*, Matt. v. 23, 24.

[2.] If attempt to reprove sin, or persuade to duty, in passion, it will tend to take away the force, and hinder the success of the arguments we use.

[3.] It will occasion sorrow and shame, when reflected on in our most serious thoughts.

[4.] It will expose us to Satan's temptations, and occasion a multitude of sins; therefore the apostle calls it, a *giving place to the Devil*, Eph. iv. 27.

[5.] The smallest injuries are hereby magnified, and our resentments exceed their due bounds. We do not consider, as we ought to do, that the injuries done against us, are very small when compared with the sins we commit, whereby we dishonour God.

[6.] It is opposite to a Christian temper, and very much unlike that frame of spirit, which our Saviour has recommended concerning loving our enemies, Matt. v. 44. and is also contrary to his example, *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again*, 1 Pet. ii. 23.

[7.] As it is a stirring up our own corruptions, so it tends to stir up the corruption of others, and provoke them to sin, as one flame kindleth another, and hereby increaseth itself, Prov. xxvii. 17.

(3.) We shall farther enquire, how we are to deal with those whom we converse with, who are addicted to passion or anger?

[1.] We are to exercise a calm, meek, and humble disposition, bearing reflections with patience, and replying to them with gentleness; especially when it is more immediately our own cause, and not the cause of God which is concerned herein. *A soft answer turneth away wrath*, chap. xv. 1. *He that is slow to wrath, is of great understanding*, chap. xiv. 29.

[2.] Let us take heed that we do nothing that tends to stir up the passions of any. If a superior is disposed hereunto, let us prudently withdraw from him; if it be an inferior, let us reprove him with faithfulness; if it be in an equal, let us take away the edge of it, by meekness, love, and tenderness towards him, having compassion on his weakness; let us bear injuries without revenging them, and *overcome evil with good*, Rom. xi. 19,—12.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.