

§ I *Cornelia Hey

S E R M O N S

U P O N

F A I T H.

BY THE REVEREND MR.

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WILLIAM SMEATON

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M, D C C, X C.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Discourses, having been submitted by the Author to our Perusal before Publication, we heartily agreed in declaring our Approbation of them, and are of Opinion, that they contain a very distinct and accurate View of the great Subject, of which they profess to treat, and, particularly, that as the strictest Attention is paid to the Order and Connection of systematic Truth, so the Influence of that Truth, upon vital and practical Religion, is still kept in View, as it's great Object, and constituting it's principal Excellence. We therefore cheerfully recommend them to the perusal of serious Persons of every Class and Age, with whom our Opinion may have any Weight.

JOHN WITHERSPOON.

JOHN RODGERS.

SIX SERMONS UPON
F A I T H.

H E B. xi. 6.

BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM.

FAITH sustains an eminent place amongst the christian graces, and the doctrine respecting it constitutes an important article in the christian creed.—“To please God” is the end of all religion: but “without Faith” we are assured in my text, “it is impossible to please him.” Yet neither is it every kind of faith, nor every thing that is designed by this term, that will be effectual for the purpose. There is not, perhaps, a word in scripture, which has so many different acceptations, or is used in a greater variety of senses. Faith finds a place in most authors who have writ-

ten upon divinity; and it is a subject frequently discussed in the pulpit. Nor is there one upon which there is a greater variety, not to say opposition of sentiment, amongst those who have undertaken to treat of it. Indeed, as far as I have been able to observe, the seeming, or real opposition of sentiment, which has taken place amongst those who have undertaken to discuss this subject, has arisen from one general source, namely, the want of skill, or care to distinguish the different acceptations of this term. If I am not much mistaken it will require a great deal of attention, application, and care, fully to adjust the various views which are given of it in the word of God. It is a copious theme. Some have considered it in one respect, and some in another. Different things may be said upon it; and yet, taken in a proper light, or, with respect to the different branches of it, they may all be right.

This is a subject, my brethren, upon which I have thought much: and, I can truly say, there is not another in divinity of which I have found greater difficulty in attaining to clear and satisfactory views. All the treatises upon faith, which I have seen, have been carefully consulted; and although, with respect to particular branches of the subject, or particular views in which

it is exhibited in the word of God, some of the authors have done it considerable justice, yet, I must say, neither of them have considered it either in that extent, or with that accuracy and precision which, in my opinion, was necessary. These considerations have induced me to attempt a full discussion of it; for which several discourses will be requisite, and the passage of scripture I have read to you will be a suitable foundation for the whole.

The subject is, in itself, of the greatest importance. Each of you have an immediate, an infinite concern in it. I hope, therefore, that a thorough investigation of it will not prove unprofitable, tedious, or unsatisfactory: and that, in the prosecution of it, I may promise myself your diligent attention, and conscientious application.

The great business, then, which lies before us, upon this subject, is, To shew you what that faith is without which it is impossible to please God: without which we shall neither find acceptance with him, nor obtain salvation from him.

In my present discourse, which is wholly designed as introductory to, and preparatory for, what is principally intended, I shall lead you to a general view of the use which is made of the terms faith, or believing in the word of God; or of the

different kinds of faith mentioned in it: so far only, however, as may be necessary to my purpose, and may not interfere with what will naturally fall in our way in the further prosecution of the subject.

Faith then, is sometimes taken for that fidelity which is manifested in fulfilling a compact, or performing a promise. In this sense it is applied unto God. Rom. iii. 3. "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect." Shall, as if he had said, the unbelief of some, or even of a considerable number of those to whom "were committed the oracles of God," disannul or frustrate the accomplishment of his word? shall it either destroy the faithfulness of God to his promises, or prevent our receiving them, and owning their accomplishment with a becoming regard? And that this is the sense in which faith is to be taken here is, I think, manifest from what the Apostle adds in the next verse. "God forbid;" says he, "yea, let God be true but every man a liar." Far be it from us, as if he had said, that we should entertain a thought so dishonourable of God; much less, insinuate any thing of the kind. Yea, although every man should prove faithless and unworthy of having any confidence reposed in him, yet, let it ever be main-

tained as a most certain, and inviolable truth, that God is, and must necessarily be, faithful to his word, and to the accomplishment of all his promises.—It is sometimes taken for a persuasion of the lawfulness of things indifferent. As in Rom. xiv. 22. 23. “Hast thou faith? have it
 “to thyself before God. Happy is he
 “that condemneth not himself in that
 “thing which he alloweth. And he that
 “doubteth is damned if he eat, because
 “he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever
 “is not of faith, is sin,” Hast thou faith? dost thou know, and art thou verily persuaded, that there is nothing, of itself, unclean? have this persuasion to thyself, let it be betwixt God and thine own conscience, without making any unseasonable discovery of it to the offence of others who are weak. But if he, who really in his conscience, makes a difference betwixt one kind of food and another, eat what he thinketh to be unclean, he is damned: doth what is offensive to God, and wounding to his own conscience.—The reason follows, “because he eateth
 “not of faith,” or from a persuasion of the lawfulness of the action, and of the approbation of God in the performance of it: and “whatsoever is not faith, is sin,” It is sometimes taken for the gospel which exhibits the objects of faith, and is gene-

rally the mean of begetting it in those who hear it. In this sense is it used.— Acts xxiv. 24. where we are told, that Felix heard Paul “concerning the faith in Christ.” In this sense also is it used, Gal. i. 23. “But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.” It is sometimes taken for a profession of the gospel, Gal. vi. 10. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.” And in the 8th verse of the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle tells them, “I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the world.” It is sometimes taken both for a belief of the divine declarations, and the performance of our own obligations and promises. In this sense is it used, Duet. xxxii. 20. “And he said I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” That is, they neither believe what I say, nor perform what they themselves promise. It is frequently taken for Jesus Christ and his righteousness, which are special objects of faith, and are apprehended and applied by the soul in the

exercise of it. In this sense is it taken in all those passages in which we are said to be justified by faith, and to be saved by faith. For we are justified and saved by faith, not as though it were our righteousness, or the meritorious cause of our justification and salvation: but relatively and instrumentally; as it has respect to Jesus Christ, who is the Lord our righteousness: as it unites us to him, and gives us an interest in all the benefits of his purchase. It is sometimes taken for an assent to the truth of a proposition, whether the evidence of it be that of testimony, reason, or sense. John xx. 8. "Then went
 " in also that other disciple, which came
 " first to the sepulchre, and he saw and
 " believed." This is believing upon the evidence of sense and of reason. The same also was the faith of Thomas, if not built entirely upon the evidence of sense, as will appear by comparing the 25th and 29th verses of the same 20th chapter of John, "The other disciples
 " therefore said unto him, we have seen
 " the Lord. But he said unto them, except
 " I shall see in his hands the print of the
 " nails, and put my finger into the print
 " of the nails, and thrust my hand into his
 " side, I will not believe—Jesus said unto
 " him, Thomas, because thou hast seen
 " me thou hast believed: blessed are they

“ that have not seen, and yet have believ-
 “ ed.” Of faith, built upon the evidence
 of testimony, we have an account, Heb.
 xi. 3. “ Through faith we understand that
 “ the worlds were framed by the word of
 “ God, so that things which are seen were
 “ not made of things which do appear.”
 It is sometimes taken for that parti-
 cular persuasion by which persons were
 enabled to perform miracles, or qualified
 to be the subjects of them. That there
 was a faith which had a particular respect
 to, and was solely exercised about the
 working of miracles. is manifest from ma-
 ny passages of scripture, particularly Matt.
 xvii. 20. where a case was brought to the
 disciples, namely, to cast out a devil,
 which they being unable to do, it was
 brought to our Lord: when the miracle
 was wrought his disciples enquired, why
 they could not cast him out? “ And Jesus
 “ said unto them, because of your unbe-
 “ lief, for verily I say unto you, if ye have
 “ faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall
 “ say to this mountain, remove hence to
 “ yonder place, and it shall remove, and
 “ nothing shall be impossible unto you.”
 Matt. xxi. 21. “ Jesus answered and
 “ said unto them, verily I say unto you,
 “ if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall
 “ not only do this which is done to the
 “ fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto

"this mountain, be thou removed, and
 "be thou cast into the sea; it shall be
 "done." This is the faith also which was
 required of Peter, to enable him to walk
 upon the sea, and for the weakness of
 which he was upbraided by our Saviour,
 when he was sinking, in these words:—
 Matt. xiv. 31. "O thou of little faith,
 "wherefore didst thou doubt?" From
 these passages of scripture it evidently ap-
 pears, that this faith was required in the
 person by whom a miracle was to be per-
 formed, and that without it he could not
 work it. But, besides this we find, that
 there was a faith frequently required of,
 and exercised by the persons upon whom,
 or, at whose solicitation, the miracle was
 wrought. Thus our Lord told the woman,
 who, by touching the hem of his garment,
 had been cured of an issue of blood, of
 which she had been diseased twelve years.
 "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy
 "faith hath made thee whole." When
 certain persons told Jairus, the ruler of
 the synagogue, "Thy daughter is dead,
 "why troublest thou the master any fur-
 "ther? Jesus saith unto him, be not afraid,
 "only believe." "If," saith he, to the
 man who brought his son to him that was
 possessed of a devil, "If thou canst believe,
 "all things are possible to him that be-
 "lieveth. Said I not unto thee," that is

unto Martha, respecting the resurrection of Lazarus, “that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” And it is said of the lame man, at Lystra, that, “Paul, stedfastly beholding him, perceived that he had faith to be healed.” What this faith was, how it operated, or upon what particular objects it fixed, or was exercised about, may be impossible for us precisely to determine. It appears to me most probable, that it was a firm persuasion, wrought in the mind, of the purpose and power of God respecting the miracle to be wrought. This faith is to be ranked amongst the extraordinary gifts of the holy spirit, which have all long since ceased, being designed for the first propagation and establishment of the gospel. It was frequently to be found in those who were truly the children of God. Thus the Apostles, and many others who were partakers of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, had a power of working miracles. But it was not restricted to them. This faith was such as persons might have, who were, notwithstanding, strangers to the faith of God’s elect, and might never be saved. This is evident from the declaration of our Lord, Matt. vii. 21, 22, 23. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my father, which

“ is in heaven. Many will say unto me in
 “ that day, Lord, Lord, have we not pro-
 “ phesied in thy name? and in thy name
 “ have cast out devils? and in thy name
 “ have done many wonderful works? And
 “ then will I profess unto them, I never
 “ knew you: depart from me, ye that
 “ work iniquity.” Judas is expressly men-
 tioned as one of the twelve whom our
 Lord ordained to be Apostles, and to
 whom “ he gave power against unclean
 “ spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all
 “ manner of sickness, and all manner of
 “ disease.” And the Apostle Paul sup-
 poses, that a person might have all faith,
 or the faith of miracles in the greatest per-
 fection, so that he could remove moun-
 tains, and yet be destitute of charity, or
 love to God and his neighbour, and so a
 stranger to saving faith, and fail of eternal
 salvation. “ Though” says he, “ I have all
 “ faith, so that I could remove mountains,
 “ and have not charity, I am nothing.”

Faith is also frequently taken for a spe-
 culative knowledge of, and bare assent to
 the truths of religion. This is generally
 termed an historical faith. It is so called,
 not from it's object, as though the histori-
 cal parts of scripture were the only things
 about which it is exercised; it may
 equally respect the whole word of God;
 but it is so called from the nature of the

assent, being such as we give to historical relations which are credibly made to us. This is the faith which Simon the forcerer had, who is said (Acts viii. 13,) to have believed; whilst, at the same time, his heart was not right in the sight of God, and he was still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. This was the faith of those, who, in the parable of the sower, are said to receive seed by the way side: who, hearing the word of the kingdom and understanding it not, the wicked one cometh, and catcheth away that which was sown in their hearts. And of these who received seed among the thorns, in whom the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and they become unfruitful. Such was the faith of those mentioned, John ii. 23—
 “ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the
 “ passover, in the feast day, many believed
 “ in his name, when they saw the mira-
 “ cles which he did.” Concerning whom
 it is immediately added, “ But Jesus did
 “ not commit himself unto them, because
 “ he knew all men, and needed not that
 “ any should testify of man: for he
 “ knew what was in man.” This is the
 faith, also, spoken of at large, by the
 Apostle James, ii. 14.—20. “ What doth
 “ it profit, my brethren, though a man
 “ say he hath faith, and have not works?

“ can faith save him? If a brother or sis-
 “ ter be naked, and destitute of daily food;
 “ and one of you say unto them, depart in
 “ peace, be you warmed, and filled: not-
 “ withstanding ye give them not those
 “ things which are needful to the body,
 “ what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it
 “ hath not works, is dead, being alone.
 “ Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and
 “ I have works: shew me thy faith with-
 “ out thy works, and I will shew thee my
 “ faith by my works. Thou believest that
 “ there is one God; thou dost well: the
 “ devils also believe and tremble. But
 “ wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith
 “ without works is dead.” This faith is
 sometimes in an higher and sometimes in
 a lower degree, according to the nature
 and strength of the evidence, and the ap-
 plication of the mind to it. It sometimes
 produces considerable effects; and some-
 times few, or none at all: according to
 the nature of it's object, and the interest
 which the subject of it feels he has in it. In
 some, it is a mere speculative knowledge
 of, and bare assent to the truths of reli-
 gion, which has little or no influence up-
 on the mind or practice. In others, be-
 sides the knowledge of, and assent to re-
 vealed truths, there may be an approba-
 tion of them, and a joy in hearing and re-
 ceiving them: but the approbation not

being entire, nor the joy properly founded, it fails of producing the peaceable fruits of righteousness in them which are the subjects of it. When it arises to this height, and produces these effects, it is generally distinguished by the name of a temporary faith. This name is taken from an expression used by our Lord respecting the stony ground hearers. Matt. xiii. 20, 21. “ But
 “ he that received the seed into stony pla-
 “ ces, the same is he that heareth the
 “ word, and anon with joy receiveth it:
 “ yet hath he not root in himself, but du-
 “ reth for awhile; [literally, is tempora-
 ry:] it will not stand the test, but in the
 time of trial proves, like the goodness of
 Ephraim and Judah, as the morning cloud,
 and as the early dew it goeth away: “ for
 “ when tribulation or persecution ariseth
 “ because of the word, by and by he is
 “ offended.” Such was the faith of Herod,
 who “ feared John, knowing that he was
 “ a just man, and an holy, and observed
 “ him, and when he heard him he did
 “ many things, and heard him gladly.”
 Such was the faith of those to whom the
 prophet received the commission. Isaiah,
 lviii. 1. “ Cry aloud, spare not; lift up
 “ thy voice like a trumpet, and show my
 “ people their transgression, and the house
 “ of Jacob their sins.” Concerning whom
 it is notwithstanding declared in the very

next verse. " Yet, they seek me daily,
 " and delight to know my ways, as a na-
 " tion that did righteousness, and forsook
 " not the ordinance of their God: they
 " ask of me the ordinances of justice: they
 " take delight in approaching to God."—
 Such also was the faith of those mention-
 ed, Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31, 32. " Also thou
 " son of man, the children of thy people
 " still are talking against thee by the walls,
 " and in the doors of the houses, and speak
 " one to another, every one to his brother,
 " saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what
 " is the word that cometh forth from the
 " Lord. And 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 shew much love, but their
 " heart goeth after their covetousness. And
 " lo, thou art unto them, as a very lovely
 " song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and
 " can play well on an instrument: for they
 " hear thy words, but they do them not."

Besides those, which I have already ta-
 ken notice of, there is another, and very
 particular sense in which the terms faith,
 or believing, are used in scripture, name-
 ly—As designed to point out that act, or
 those exercises of soul which give the per-
 son, who is the subject of them, an interest
 in the blessings of salvation; and through

which, all who are possessed of it, shall, undoubtedly, be saved. In this sense, there are various expressions made use of, in the word of God, to point it out. As returning, and coming. Jer. iii. 22. "Return, ye back-sliding children, and I will heal your back-slidings: behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." Mat. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Receiving. John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."—Looking. Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."—Flying to, and laying hold of. Heb. vi. 18. "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."—Turning. Zech. ix. 12. "Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope, even to day do I declare, that I will render double unto thee."—Trusting and staying. Isa. l. 10. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and

“ stay upon his God.” Eph. i. 12, 13.
 “ That we should be to the praise of his
 “ glory, who first trusted in Christ. In
 “ whom also ye trusted, after that ye heard
 “ the word of truth, the gospel of your
 “ salvation. In whom also, after that ye
 “ believed, ye were sealed with that holy
 “ spirit of promise.”—Waiting. Ps. cxxx.
 5, 6. “ I wait for the Lord, my soul doth
 “ wait, and in his word is my hope. My
 “ soul waiteth for the Lord, more than
 “ they that watch for the morning: I say,
 “ more than they that watch for the morn-
 “ ing.” By these and many other figura-
 tive expressions, drawn from natural acti-
 ons, is the spiritual act of believing repre-
 sented to us, in the word of God. Faith is
 sometimes said to fix on, or terminate in
 God. 2 Chron. xx. 20. “ Believe in the
 “ Lord your God, so shall ye be establish-
 “ ed.” Mark xi. 28. “ And Jesus an-
 “ swering, saith unto them, have faith in
 “ God.” John xi. 44. “ Jesus cried and
 “ said, he that believeth on me, believeth
 “ not on me, but on him that sent me.”
 Heb. vi. 1. “ Therefore, leaving the prin-
 “ ciples of the doctrine of Christ, let us
 “ go on unto perfection; not laying again
 “ the foundation of repentance from dead
 “ works, and of faith towards God.” It
 is sometimes said to fix upon some one of
 the perfections of God, as his mercy, his

truth, or his faithfulness. Sometimes on Jesus Christ. John vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that ye believe in whom he hath sent." Acts. xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Sometimes in God, in or through Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. i. 25. "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."—Sometimes on the declarations and promises of the gospel. 1 John v. 10, 11. "He that believeth on the son of God, hath the witness in himself, he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his son." Ps. cxix. 42. "So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word." Heb. xi. 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."—Sometimes the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are spoken of as the objects of faith.—1 Thes. iv. 14. "For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them

“also which sleep in Jesus, will God
 “bring with him.”—And sometimes sal-
 vation through Christ. Acts xv. 11. “But
 “we believe, that through the grace of
 “our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved
 “even as they.”

Are you not now, my brethren, in some measure persuaded of the truth and weight of what I observed to you near the beginning of this discourse? If you have not known it before, are you not now sensible of the difficulty of attaining to clear, precise, and satisfactory views of the various objects of faith, and of the corresponding exercises of the soul in believing?

From the general view, which we have taken, of the application of the terms faith or believing, in scripture, I think it is evident, that the whole, which is any where designed by it, may be reduced to two particular things. In the 1st place, a crediting the truth of what is reported. 2d. Relying upon, or confiding in a person to make good his engagements or promises to us. The first of those is founded upon, and will be in proportion to the opinion which we have of the understanding and veracity of the person by whom the report is made. If we count him so intelligent that he cannot be mistaken, and so honest that he will not deceive, we yield an unreserved assent to what he relates :

and in proportion to the confidence which we have in him, in these respects, will our belief be of what he reports? The other is founded upon, and will be in proportion to, the opinion which we have of the ability and disposition of the person, who has brought himself under obligation to us, to make good his engagements. If we count him so wise that he is able to take into the account every possible contingency, and to provide effectually against it; so powerful that nothing can counteract his pleasure, or lay any restraint upon him; and so faithful and true, that of all which he has promised one iota or tittle shall not fail of its full accomplishment; we place an unshaken confidence in him. When any person then, according to this general definition of faith, so credits the declarations, and so relies upon the faithfulness of God to accomplish the promises contained in his word, as to be suitably influenced by them, he is, no doubt, the subject of saving faith.

Here a question arises which has been considerably agitated, and respecting which I find a direct opposition of sentiment amongst divines of the first note. The question is, Whether saving faith be, in its nature, different from, or only an higher degree of historical faith? some suppose them different in their natures; whilst

others are of opinion, that saving faith is only historical faith carried to an higher degree, so as to have the ascendancy, and become operative and effectual.

Without declaring myself, absolutely, upon one side or the other, in this controversy ; or detaining you so much as to mention the arguments alledged, by each party, in support of its different opinion, I shall, briefly, lay before you a few considerations, by which, I think, those kinds of faith may be clearly distinguished ; which, perhaps, is all that is necessary.— Things are, in some measure, known to us by their operations and effects : of their natures, we are, in general, entirely ignorant. “ As thou knowest not the way of
 “ the spirit, nor how the bones do grow
 “ in the womb of her that is with child :
 “ even so thou knowest not the works of
 “ God who maketh all. The wind blow-
 “ eth where it listeth, and thou hearest
 “ the sound thereof, but canst not tell
 “ whence it cometh, and whether it goeth :
 “ so is every one that is born of the
 “ spirit.”

In the 1st place then, there is something common to both these, and, indeed, to all kinds of faith. They are an assent founded on testimony : they are a dependance upon the veracity or faithfulness of another.

2d. Saving faith doth not exclude historical faith. It presupposes it—It is built upon it—And it implies in it what is good, both in historical and temporary faith.—
But,

3d. Historical and temporary faith may be found in those who are still in their natural, sinful state; who are strangers to a work of regeneration, and consequently cannot, whilst in this state, see the kingdom of God. Saving faith flows from the new nature. It is only to be found in those who have been born again. It is an exertion of the spiritual life in those who are made alive unto God through Jesus Christ. The one is the product of nature, or of the common operations of the spirit: the other is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. It is given us, on the behalf of Christ, to believe on his name, with that faith which will be effectual to the saving of the soul. All such as are possessed of this faith are subjects of the kingdom of grace, and heirs of the glory which shall be revealed: and shall be
“ kept, by the power of God, through
“ faith, unto salvation, ready to be reveal-
“ ed in the last time.”

4th. Historical and temporary faith have their seat in the understanding and affections: saving faith in the heart. In the one the understanding assents to the de-

clarations of the gospel as true, which may be accompanied also with considerable commotions of the affections: in the other the will consents to them, and approves of them: the soul is brought under their practical influence: it is brought into a cheerful submission to the divine will: yea, every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. “For
 “with the heart man believeth unto
 “righteousness. But that on the good
 “ground are they, which in an honest
 “and good heart, having heard the word,
 “keep it, and bring forth fruit with pa-
 “tience.”

5th. Historical and temporary faith may consist with the prevailing love and practice of sin: saving faith purifies the heart; and sin shall not have dominion over those who are the subjects of it: for they are not under the law, but under grace.

6th. Although each of these kinds of faith may be productive of joy, yet, even here there will be found to be a wide difference betwixt them. The one may produce a transport of the affections: the natural result of the other is gladness of heart. The joys of the one are all tumultuous, disorderly, and wild: those of the other placid, serene, and pure. The joys of the one all terminate in something finis- ter and selfish: either in the favors and

blessings of which the subject of it is, or apprehends that he is possessed: or in those which he hopes to enjoy, in his present supposed good condition, or the expectations which he has of future happiness: but whilst the subjects of the other are by no means excluded from a rational and well founded joy in each of those accounts, yet the Lord is the principal object of their rejoicing. They rejoice in God, and in hope of the glory of God.

-7th. Once more. The effects of historical and temporary faith are all partial and transitory: they do not extend to the whole man: they do not produce an approbation of, or respect to the whole of the divine law: they do not bring the soul to an universal compliance with the gospel: the subjects of them only do many things, and continue but for a while.— The hypocrite will not always call upon God. The formalist makes a righteousness of his duties: and although he has the carcass of religion, he is destitute of the life and spirit of it; he is an entire stranger to the power of godliness. And the enthusiast, who kindles a fire and incompasses himself about with sparks; whose devotion is the effect of his own exertions, or of Satan transforming himself into an Angel of light and deceiving him, as he generally ends in an apostate, so his re-

ward, at the hand of God, will be, that he shall lie down in sorrow. On the other hand, the effects of saving faith are universal, prevailing, effectual, and permanent. It extends to the whole man. It purifies the heart from the love of sin, and reforms the lip from the practice of it. It determines and engages the heart to God and his ways. It is an abiding principle. It is never totally eradicated from that heart where it is once implanted. It is the instrument of uniting the soul to God, and of engaging it to cleave to him. It brings it under the habitual prevailing influence of spiritual and divine things. And its influence, instead of ceasing or being diminished, shall increase, until grace is made perfect in glory, and the subjects of it receive the end of their faith in the salvation of their souls. "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Let us now make some improvement of what has been said, and so conclude the present discourse.

And in the first place, from what has been said we learn, the necessity of a thorough acquaintance with the word of God. Scripture is to be interpreted by scripture. The more difficult and obscure parts of it

will receive light from, and be explained by those which are more plain and clear. This is evidently the case with respect to faith, the subject which we now have under consideration. It is equally so with respect to many other of the doctrines of religion. All the errors and heresies which have obtained in the christian church, in the different ages of it, or which still exist in it, have arisen from, and are continued by either a general inattention to, and disrespect for the scriptures; or making particular detached parts of them the foundation of faith, without having a due regard to the whole. What is essential to salvation is, indeed, revealed in them with the greatest possible clearness. The way of life and salvation through a redeemer is so fully made known, that way-faring-men, though fools, shall not, through the teachings of the holy spirit, err therein. He that runs may read them. Yet they contain also the deep things of God, and the great mysteries of godliness. Hence some have compared them to an ocean in which a lamb may wade and an elephant swim. The things which are essential may readily be learned from them: a knowledge of the things which are useful, require a thorough acquaintance with them, which will, by no means, result from a superficial study of them. The scriptures

make known the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. They reveal his judgments which are unsearchable, and his ways which are past finding out. They reveal the love of God which passeth knowledge, and the unsearchable riches of Christ. He then, who would understand the scriptures, must apply himself with all diligence to the study of them, and withal, he must have much of the teachings of that spirit by whom they were indited. It was the command of God to the Israelites, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates." If the ministration of condemnation and death was glorious; much more doth the ministration of the spirit and of righteousness exceed in glory. If the legal dispensation which was so obscure and imperfect, and, at best, but a shadow of good things to come, was justly entitled to such regard; much more are the full and glorious dis-

plays made in the gospel worthy of all attention. Let the testimonies of God, then, be your delight, and your counsellors. Read them by day, and meditate upon them by night. As an essential mean of your growing in grace, be careful to grow in the knowledge of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and of the doctrines, the precepts, and the promises contained in his holy word. The scriptures will afford exercise to the greatest genius, and the most improved capacity.

2d. From what has been said we learn, to what it is owing, that so many, who in words profess Christ, nevertheless, in works deny him. They are only the subjects of an historical or temporary faith. They believe the scriptures as they do any common history or relation which is credibly made to them : they have never been brought to feel themselves much interested or concerned in them : they have never had a practical or saving influence upon them. Their faith is seated in the understanding and affections, but has never reached their hearts : and its effects are all partial and transitory. Such persons know not how they came by their faith. They will tell you that they always believed. God forbid that they should be unbelievers, or call in question the truth of his word. This is a faith which abounds in the world.

In those parts where the gospel is embraced there are but a few hardy, daring souls, who are unbelievers in this respect. This is the faith of all those who believe the gospel, and yet live the servants of sin. And it is owing to their resting in this faith that so many hold the truth in unrighteousness. You may never, perhaps, have called in question the divine original or authority of the scriptures; you may never have been exercised with the strong temptations to infidelity which many of the people of God have been exercised with; having been born in a christian country, and of parents professing the christian religion; having from your infancy been accustomed to regard the scriptures as the word of God, you may never have called the truth of them in question: yea, you may have been enlightened, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come; and yet be entire strangers to the faith of God's elect.

Let us then, in the third place, improve what has been said by way of self-examination. Notwithstanding, we have not yet entered, particularly, upon the consideration of that faith without which it is impossible to please God; yet, I fear, we have proceeded far enough for the judgment and condemnation of many of you who now hear me. It concerns you, my

brethren, to pay all possible attention to this very point. Upon your faith, your all depends. He that believeth, with that faith without which it is impossible to please God, shall be saved : but he who is not the subject of this particular kind of faith, notwithstanding he may have every other kind of it, shall be damned. You may believe, that there is one God, and from an apprehension of his greatness and majesty, you may be made to tremble before him ; and yet never have returned to him as the Lord your God, chosen him as your portion, and delighted yourselves in him as your happiness. The Devils also believe and tremble. You may believe, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ; and yet never have laid hold on the mercy of God, as revealed through him ; never have made a particular, personal, application of Christ, and the benefit of his purchase to your own souls. You may believe, that the scriptures are the word of God ; and yet, never have embraced them as the gospel of your salvation. From a presumptuous confidence, and sinister motives, you may even delight in approaching to God, hear his word gladly, receive it with joy, and with Herod do many things ; and yet be entire strangers to that delight in God, that joy and peace in believing, which is the pecu-

liar privilege of the true believer; and to that universal respect to the commandments of God, which is a distinguishing characteristic of his children. You may have experienced great extacies, raptures, and transports in religion; whilst a heated imagination and disordered affections are the only source from whence they have flowed. Are there not some of you then, who know no other faith, or religion, than what we have been now considering? Are there not many of you who have never come thus far? Let not, I pray you, a heart, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, impose upon you to your eternal ruin. Let not the God of this world blind your eyes, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine into them? Awake from your sleep of security: arise from your death of sin: come off your foundation of sand, and out of your refuges of lies. Rest not until you have good grounds to believe, that you are the subjects of that faith which is the gift of God; and is produced in the soul through the divine operation. And take this one certain criterion by which you may know that your faith is genuine; it will induce you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly. It will engage you to do justly, to

to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. " Faith without works is dead, " being alone. And, by the fruits which " they produce, you may judge of the pro- " fession and faith, both of yourselves and " others."

II. S E R M O N.

H E B. xi. 6.

BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM.

HAVING, in the preceding discourse, given you a general view of the different acceptations of the term faith or believing in the word of God, or of the different kinds of faith spoken of in it; as far as was necessary to my purpose, and might not interfere with what would naturally fall in our way in the farther prosecution of the subject; we come now to enter upon what was principally intended.

In shewing you, then, what that faith is, without which it is impossible to please God, we will consider faith in the three following respects.

1st. As it is the principle, and lies at the foundation of all religion.

2d. As it is particularly concerned with respect to our deliverance from the ruins of our apostacy, and our recovery to life and happiness, by the dispensation of divine mercy and grace, to our world, through a Redeemer.

3d. As it is a ruling and governing principle in the christian life.

Under these three, I apprehend, will be comprehended all that is said, in scripture, respecting that faith, without which it is impossible to please God; and, unless we consider it in this extent, I am persuaded we shall not have a just view of it, as it is there exhibited.

When I speak of faith, in these three respects, I do not mean three different kinds of faith; but the same faith as it has respect to, and is exercised upon its different objects. Nor is faith, in these views, separable with respect to its subject. In each of them it is common to all who are in a capacity to please God. It is an exertion of the divine life in the soul, and is peculiar to such as are born again.

It is, you will observe, the faith which is necessary for man, in his present state, in order to please God, that we are enquiring after. Other kinds of it may be matter of curious speculation, or we may search into the knowledge of them, that we may be able to distinguish them from what is genuine,

but in this faith we are nearly interested, the life of our souls is concerned in it.

I would only observe farther here, that although, in the order of nature, there may be a priority with regard to the objects of faith, in these several respects: yet, in the order of time, or in the actings of the soul towards them, there is no such precedency always maintained. It may be first in exercise, or, at least, the actings of it may be, and I am persuaded often are, first discerned, as it is concerned with respect to the method of salvation through a Redeemer.

I. Let us then proceed, in the first place, to consider faith, as it is the principle, and lies at the foundation of all religion. There are two things necessary to be particularly attended to here. 1st. The objects of this faith. 2d. The actings of it, or the way in which the subjects of it are exercised respecting these objects.

1. Then, faith, as it is the principle and lies at the foundation of all religion, has for its object, the being of a God. This is the foundation upon which all faith and all religion ultimately rest. Destroy a belief of the Divine existence, and with it you destroy all respect to and worship of him. Fully establish this belief, and all the love and obedience of religion will naturally flow from it. "For," as the Apostle tells us, in the same verse out of which I have taken my text, "he that cometh to God," in the performance of

any act of religious worship towards him, or in expectation of any favour or blessing from him, "must believe that he is." That there is a God, all nature proclaims aloud throughout all her works. The evidences of the divine existence are numerous as the objects of our senses with which we are continually versant. If we trace our own existence, it will naturally lead us to God, the former of our bodies, and the father of our spirits.— The admirable structure of the human body, and the unknown powers of the immortal mind, declare that there is an almighty, al-wise, great first cause, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things. The streams of the divine benignity, of which we daily and hourly partake, will, if traced to their source, terminate in the father of lights, the author of every good and perfect gift.— The spacious firmament; the wide expanded ether; the rolling flood; the lofty mountain; and the hoary deep, in dumb, though powerful eloquence, proclaim their great original. The unwearied "Sun, which is as a bride-groom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race;" the Moon, which rules the solemn night, and the innumerable twinkling Stars which adorn the Heavens, display their creator's power, and publish, to every intelligent creature, that they are the work of an Almighty hand. And the more extensive and accurate our researches into the works of nature are, the more numer-

ous and convincing will be the evidences of the existence of the God of nature. There is no idea so natural to man, or that takes such universal and powerful hold of the human mind, as the being of a God. Hence there is not, nor ever has been any nation so barbarous and rude as not to know and acknowledge a deity. The sentiment is common to the polished and the rude, to the learned and the illiterate, to the philosopher and the peasant. He who has impressed himself upon all the works of his hand, has, in a peculiar and indelible manner, impressed himself upon the human heart. "What nation is there," saith Cicero, "or what branch of the human race, which has not certain apprehensions of the Gods, antecedent to any instruction." "If," says Plutarch, "you should traverse the whole earth, you will, perhaps, observe cities without walls, without literature, and buried in the grossest ignorance; but, you will find none who do not worship a deity."

The idea is an essential principle of our nature. Hence the Apostle, in the 19th and 20th verses of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, assigns this as the reason why "the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness—Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For

“ the invisible things of him, from the creati-
 “ on of the world, are clearly seen, being un-
 “ derstood by the things that are made, even
 “ his eternal power and God-head ; so that
 “ they are without excuse.” And notwith-
 standing the evidences and impressions of
 this great and fundamental truth are greatly
 obscured and weakened by that universal
 wreck of human nature occasioned by the
 fall, yet they are not wholly effaced. The
 principle, however, is become too weak to
 produce the proper and necessary effects.
 The glimmering apprehensions which fallen
 man, in his natural state, has of a God,
 through the corruption and depravity of his
 nature, tend only, like an *ignis fatuus*, to
 lead him astray. And hence originate idola-
 try, and all the corruptions of religion which
 have so greatly prevailed in the world. Hence,
 “ when they knew God,” had some general
 apprehensions of him, “ they glorified him
 “ not as God, neither were thankful, but be-
 “ came vain in their imaginations, and their
 “ foolish heart was deluded. Professing
 “ themselves to be wise, they became fools ;
 “ and changed the glory of the uncorrupti-
 “ ble God, into an image made like to cor-
 “ ruptible men, and to birds, and four foot-
 “ ed beasts, and creeping things.” The lan-
 guage of every sinful action, is a denial of
 the being of a God. So we are told, “ the
 “ fool,” that is the sinner who is indeed charg-
 able with the greatest folly, “ hath said in his

“heart, there is no God.” In order, then, to our pleasing God, and as an essential foundation of every religious sentiment and action, this faith of the being of a God, must be revived, strengthened, and confirmed.

No man, it is true, hath seen God at any time, nor can see him and live. Being a pure spirit, he is by no means cognizable by our natural senses. Yet faith, as the eye of the soul, gives certain intelligence of his existence, and, notwithstanding the seeming contradiction in the expression, sees him who is invisible.

2. The perfections of God are another object, about which faith, as it is the principle, and lies at the foundation of all religion, is exercised. From a belief of the being of a God, we are naturally led to a belief of his perfections. If we believe that he exists, we shall reasonably, and necessarily ascribe to him all possible perfection. The idea which we have of the perfection of God is formed by removing from him, in our minds, all imperfection; and ascribing to him, in an infinite degree, every perfection and excellence of which we have any knowledge. There may, indeed, for any thing we certainly know, be perfections in God, of which there are no traces in any of the creatures with which we are acquainted. These cannot be particular objects of our faith. It is impossible, in our present situation, that we should have any knowledge of them. Those perfections,

which we know, are the objects of our faith. The perfections of God, which faith, in this respect, particularly fixes upon, are his wisdom and power, his holiness and justice, his goodness, mercy, and truth. These are the perfections which are more especially concerned in rewarding those who diligently seek him, and in punishing the refractory and disobedient.

Of the perfections of deity, as well as of his existence, our ideas must be very imperfect. "For we are of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days on earth are a shadow. Behold God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it. How little a portion is heard of him." But there is a wide difference between being entirely ignorant of God, and being able fully to comprehend his existence, perfection, and glory: between knowing him fully, and conceiving him to be such an one as ourselves. Our ideas of him, although imperfect, may be real, just, and true.

From the nature and perfections of God we deduce the worship and service which he requires, and which will be acceptable unto him. And according to the knowledge, belief, and impressions which we have, of the divine perfections, upon our mind, shall our worship and obedience be. If we believe

him to be a spirit, we shall make it our study to worship him in spirit and in truth. If we believe him to be infinitely pure and holy, righteous, and just, we shall be solicitous to lift up, unto him, clean hands from a pure heart, and to worship him in the beauties of holiness. And if we believe him to be good, compassionate, and merciful, we shall approach him with cheerfulness, confidence, and affection. His excellency and greatness will awe us into veneration: and his amiableness and glory shall excite our confidence and love.

3. The essential difference which there is, in the nature of things, between virtue and vice, sin and holiness, is another object about which faith, as it is the principle and lies at the foundation of all religion, is exercised. That there is a difference, the sentiments of mankind universally declare. Neither is this merely arbitrary, depending upon the will or command of a superior. It has its foundation in the reason and nature of things.—There is an intrinsic beauty and fitness in virtue and holiness, and an intrinsic turpitude and baseness in sin and vice. Virtue and vice, sin and holiness, are not indifferent to God himself. He is not equally free to the practice or indulgence of them. He is infinitely and necessarily pure and holy, and infinitely removed from, and opposed to all moral imperfection and sin. “The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his counte-

“ nance doth behold the upright. Thou art
 “ of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst
 “ not look on iniquity.” Holiness is a per-
 fection in which much of the glory of God
 consists. Hence, he is said to be “ glorious in
 “ holiness.” “ If,” said one, “ there be a God,
 “ he must delight in virtue, and that which
 “ he delights in must be happy.” An Hea-
 then spoke of virtue, as possessed of such at-
 tractive charms as would not fail, could it be
 seen with the bodily sight, to command the ad-
 miration and love of all, what the natural sight
 is not calculated for, what it never can discern,
 the eyes of the mind can clearly discover.

The precepts of the moral law, summed
 up in the ten commandments, were impres-
 sed upon the heart of man, at his first crea-
 tion, in the most plain and legible charac-
 ters. This moral sense was to him a com-
 petent guide, being fully sufficient, in every
 instance, to point out his duty to him. By
 the fall this impression is become imperfect
 and obscure. The out lines or leading pre-
 cepts of it, it is true, are still legible. Hence
 the Apostle tells us, that, “ when the Gen-
 “ tles, which have not the law, do by na-
 “ ture the things contained in the law, these,
 “ having not the law, are a law unto them-
 “ selves: which shew the work of the law
 “ written in their hearts, their consciences
 “ also bearing witness, and their thoughts
 “ the mean while accusing, or else excusing
 “ one another.” But this impression of the

divine law upon the heart, having been greatly effaced by sin, can no longer serve as a present rule of conduct to man, whose obedience should, in every instance, be perfect.

Faith, as a principle of religion, revives this impression of the moral law upon the human heart, and renders it operative and effectual. Accordingly it is promised, as a special blessing of the new covenant, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." Faith recognizes the authority of the law-giver, and shews the equity and reasonableness of the law. It extends the knowledge of right and wrong, and strengthens the sense of obligation to duty and obedience. It convinces of transgression, and binds the sanction of disobedience fast upon the conscience. Thus, through its influence, the law is made a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. And thus, as a principle of natural religion, it becomes subservient to, and prepares the way for the reception of the gospel.

4. The creation, preservation, and government of the world, and all things in it, are also objects about which faith, as it is the principle and lies at the foundation of all religion, is exercised. It realises God as the great parent of the universe; the great first cause, who, by the word of his almighty power, brought all things into being at first. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God,

“ so that things which are seen were not made
 “ of things which do appear.” It particular-
 ly realises him as the former of the bodies,
 and the father of the spirits of all flesh, and
 brings the subject of it under a sense of the
 absolute property which God has in him, his
 indisputable claim to all his obedience and
 service, and the right which he has to dispose
 of him, in his providence, as seemeth good
 in his sight. It contemplates him as the
 gracious preserver, and bountiful Benefac-
 tor, by whom all things consist, who opens
 his liberal hand, and from the stores of his
 undiminished fullness, satisfies the desires of
 every living thing. It knows and acknow-
 ledges him as the universal law-giver and
 sovereign Lord, the wise governor, and so-
 vereign disposer of all things, whose king-
 dom is over all, and of whose dominion there
 is no end; who is wise in heart and migh-
 ty in council; who is infinite in wisdom and
 goodness, as well as in power; who endures
 all things well. It realises him as every
 where present and every where active, in-
 fluencing and directing, though invisible,
 not only the affairs of states and kingdoms,
 but also of individuals; not only the most
 important and interelling, but also the most
 minute and apparently trivial concerns; op-
 perating, not only externally, but also inter-
 nally, having the hearts of all flesh in his hand,
 and turning them whithersoever he will, as
 the rivers of water are turned.

5. The immortality of the soul is another object about which this faith is exercised. His spiritual nature, his extensive capacity and growing powers, his pleasing hopes, his fond desires, his earnest longings after immortality, together with his secret dread and inward horror of falling into naught, all point out an existence hereafter, and intimate eternity to man. Yet so dim is the eye of faith respecting this important and interesting truth ; so deeply are mankind immersed in sense ; so strong is the hold which sensible objects have taken of them ; and so inattentive are they to the convincing evidences of their immortality, that they generally conduct themselves as if all their enjoyments and hopes depended entirely upon sensible objects, and were to end with time. But, the causes of its imperfect sight being removed from this visual faculty of the soul, the person views his present state as the beginning of his existence. When he looks back, he finds himself a being of but yesterday. When he looks forward, he can see no end to his existence. Superior to the difficulties which sense raises from the dissolution of his frame, he looks over the boundaries of time, and, while he fondly contemplates, with eager wishes of desire, he grasps eternity.

6. Another object of faith, as it is the principle, and lies at the foundation of all religion, is a state of retribution, a state of rewards for the righteous, and of punishment for

the wicked. These objects of faith all naturally flow from, they mutually depend upon, and tend to support and establish each other. This, which I have last mentioned, is the natural, and necessary result of all the rest. If there be a God, possessed of all possible perfection: If there be an essential difference in the nature of things, between virtue and vice, sin and holiness: If God has given a law to his rational creatures, plainly and clearly pointing out this difference as the rule of their conduct: If his providence continually extends to, and is universally operative with respect to all the works of his hand: If he has made man intelligent, rational, and immortal: Then it evidently follows, that there is a reward for the righteous, and that the wicked shall not go unpunished. It is evident, that this is not the case in this world. However far, in general, the comforts and rewards of religion and virtue may be superior to the pleasures which are to be found in the ways of sin; and yet, it is incontestably certain, that rewards and punishments are by no means equally distributed here according to the characters and conduct of men. The wicked often prosper in their way, whilst numerous and complicated afflictions are frequently the lot of the righteous. The presumption then is strong, the conclusion is abundantly supported, and certain, that there will be another state in

which God will bring light out of this darkness, and order out of that confusion which now, so generally, prevail: and in which, each one shall be rewarded according to his works. Else whence should spring that peace of mind, that joy which flows from an approving conscience, upon the practice of what is commendable and praise-worthy; or, whence the anguish and torture arising from the rebukes and remonstrances of a guilty conscience upon the violation of the eternal rule of righteousness. Conscience, the vicegerent of God, and the monitor which every man carries in his breast, whispers peace, and promises a reward for the support and encouragement of the good; but, it proclaims war, and sounds the alarm of misery and wrath as the portion of the wicked. Tell me, then, whence these hopes and fears, whence this comfort or this distress, if not from the certain presage that, hereafter, every one shall reap the fruit of his doings in life.

These six particulars, which I have mentioned as the objects of faith, as it is the principle and lies at the foundation of all religion, may be called the principles of natural religion. They contain, indeed, a more perfect system of religion than all the wisdom and philosophy of man ever produced to the world, or than any of the advocates of natural religion, in opposition to revelation, have ever compiled. They were the objects of faith, and the principles of reli-

gion to man in his primitive state of rectitude and glory. Hence, amidst all the present blindness and depravity of human nature, the outlines of them are still, in some measure, discernable by the eye of reason. These contain all that seem necessary as objects of faith, or principles of obedience, to man, in that state in which he was created; and, had he continued in that state, these are, probably, all that he would have had. But the entrance of sin into our world hath rendered an addition to the objects of faith necessary. Therefore I add in the

7th place. That faith, as it is the principle and lies at the foundation of the christian religion, has for its object the divine original and authority of the sacred scriptures.— These contain the dispensation of divine mercy and grace to our guilty degenerate world. And a general persuasion that they are a revelation from God, must lie at the foundation of our crediting, or being suitably influenced by any of their particular contents.— Considering the general goodness of God, there appears some reason to expect a revelation from him, when our situation or particular circumstances should render it necessary. So deplorable, then, was the situation into which the fall had reduced our race, so imperfect was our knowledge, and so weak the influence, of the principles of natural religion, upon us, and so necessary the knowledge of things which come not within the

reach of natural understanding and reason, that had not God interposed by providing a supernatural remedy for us, and giving us a revelation of it, we must, inevitably, have perished. That the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are such a revelation, can be evinced in the most satisfactory and convincing manner. They are confirmed by prophecy and miracles—They are confirmed by the life and death of the author of them—They have been confirmed by the blood of thousands—They make known a dispensation of mercy and grace worthy of all acceptance, but which the world otherwise could never have been acquainted with. The majesty and purity; the harmony and tendency of the scriptures; their influence upon the minds of men, to convince and convert sinners, and to edify and comfort believers, all manifest that they are a revelation from God. And the spirit of God, through whose inspiration the scriptures were given, bearing witness by and with them, in the heart of man, is able fully to persuade him, that they are the very word of God. Having considered the objects of this faith, let us now, in the second place, consider the actings of it, or in what manner the subjects of it are exercised respecting these objects. In general, then, faith is exercised about these objects in a manner suitable to the nature of them. In some it is stronger, in others weaker. It is sometimes in a higher and sometimes in a

lower degree, even in the same person. More particularly, to constitute this faith genuine, it must have the two following properties. 1st. It must, at least, have the ascendancy—and, 2d. It must have a practical influence. A dead faith will never secure the life of the soul. But a faith which is not productive of works, is dead. Nor will faith be productive of works until it have the ascendancy of every opposite principle. To apply these properties of the actings of faith, particularly, to those things which have been mentioned as the objects of it.

If we believe that there is one God, possessed of all possible perfection, we shall worship and glorify him as God, and as our God. His holiness shall induce us to hate sin. His righteousness and justice shall make us dread the punishment of the disobedient, and expect the reward of the righteous. His omnipresence and omniscience shall make us as circumspect and guarded in our conduct, in our most private retirements, as in open day. We shall revere his Majesty, dread his power, and fear his goodness. We shall love him supremely, count it our glory to be like him, and place our happiness only in his favor and love. If we believe that there is, in the nature of things, an essential difference between virtue and vice, sin and holiness; that the one is intrinsically amiable, and the other intrinsically deformed; that the one deserves punishment, and that

the other ensures the well founded hope of a reward ; we shall make it our study to purify ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. If we believe that God has created, and preserves, upholds, and governs all things, we shall make it our study, in all our ways, to acknowledge him : we shall pray to him for the blessings which we need, and praise him for those which we have already received, being persuaded that he alone has a claim to all our services, and a right to dispose of us, in his providence, as seemeth good in his sight : we shall make it our business to glorify him in our souls, and in our bodies, which are his : we shall resign ourselves to his conduct, and acquiesce in his dispensations towards us. If we believe that we are immortal, and that there is a state of rewards and punishments beyond the grave : we shall not look upon this world as our home, nor make provision for the flesh, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof ; considering Heaven as our desired and intended home, we shall look upon ourselves as but pilgrims and strangers in this world ; and instead of suffering the world, or any of the possessions and enjoyments of it, to engross the whole of our attention and pursuit, we shall be careful to set our affections on things above : we shall not lay up, for ourselves, treasures on earth, but we shall lay up, for ourselves, treasures in Heaven : we shall not labor, so

much, for the meat which perishes, as for that which will endure : studying to be rich in faith and in good works, that, in due time, we may lay hold on eternal life. And, if we believe the divine original, and authority of the scriptures, then we shall receive them, with all due deference and gratitude, as a revelation from God, for the important purpose of glorifying his name in the salvation of sinners : and we shall, at least, in some good measure, be suitably influenced, and act according to the several things contained in them. Particularly to consider what these several things are, and how faith is exercised respecting them, will be our proper business under the remaining branches of the subject, which I shall not now enter upon. Let us then draw a few inferences from what has been said, and so conclude the present discourse.

1. From what has been said upon this subject, we learn what gave occasion for the revelation of the gospel. It took its rise from the apostacy of our race. If man had never fallen, he would have stood in no need of a Savior, nor would there have been any occasion for the particular displays of the divine mercy and love to our world. Hence you will find, that the whole of the divine revelation, both in the Old Testament and the New, proceeds upon the supposition, that man is a sinner : that he has forfeited the favor, and lost the image, incurred the dis-

pleasure, and rendered himself incapable of the service or enjoyment of God. Take away this one principle, and the whole scriptures fall with it. Take away this one article, and the whole of them will be unintelligible and unmeaning. It was when we had destroyed ourselves that our help was found in God. It was upon the prospect of our apostacy, that, in the eternal councils of Heaven, help was laid for us upon one that is mighty, a chosen one. It was when we were in a lost and perishing condition, that God sent his son unto the world, that we might have life through him. It was when we were upon the very brink of ruin and despair, that God said, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom."

2. From what has been said we learn the foundation upon which the gospel is built. It is built upon the principles of natural religion. It by no means supercedes or destroys these. It pre-supposes them. It is founded upon them. It strengthens and confirms the belief of them, and renders them operative and effectual. The gospel takes the principles of natural religion for granted. It was never intended as a revelation of them, but of what was infinitely beyond them. It makes known what it was absolutely necessary to the happiness of man that he should know; but, to the knowledge of which he could never have attained by the use of his natural understanding and reason.

3. From what has been said we learn the gross mistake of those who, out of their great zeal for the gospel, endeavor to destroy, or to bring into disrepute the principles of natural religion. The zeal of such may be well meant, but, I am persuaded, it is mistaken. The zeal of such may be great, but, I am certain, it is not according to knowledge. Such are not aware, that in endeavoring to bring the principles of natural religion into disrepute, they are sapping the very foundation of the gospel. The principles of natural religion, and the glorious discoveries of the gospel, are at no variance amongst themselves. Keep each of them in its proper place, and allow it its proper office and influence, and they not only perfectly agree, but mutually assist and support each other. The gospel invades none of the rights of natural religion. It is concerned, for its own sake, to establish and secure them all. And, whilst the gospel acknowledges the principles of natural religion, as the foundation upon which it is built; natural religion owns itself indebted to the gospel for the knowledge of things which were absolutely necessary to the happiness of man, but which were infinitely beyond its reach. So that the principles of natural religions, if duly attended to and fully understood, will naturally lead to the reception of the gospel.

4. From what has been said we learn the great mistake of those who, embracing the

principles of natural religion, reject the gospel as superfluous and unnecessary. Were man in his primitive state of innocence and rectitude, such would be perfectly right. For, what need does he stand in of pardon who has never transgressed? what need has he of a Savior who is in no danger of perishing, and whose situation is, in every respect, perfectly secure and comfortable. But, once admit that man has fallen; and, to admit it you cannot refuse; from the light of nature, and upon the principles of natural religion, it can be incontestibly established; the evidences of it, alas! are too many and striking; then, upon the very principles of natural religion, it is clear, that unless God interpose, by supernatural means, man must eternally perish. God, you will say, is good and merciful. True, he is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his other works. But he is also a God of invariable righteousness, of strict and inflexible justice. He pardons iniquity, transgression, and sin; but he will, by no means, clear the guilty. The seemingly opposite and jarring attributes of holiness and justice, of righteousness, mercy, and truth, can never be reconciled, in the forgiveness of sin, upon the principles of natural religion. The utmost that can be attained to, according to these is, that there may, possibly, be forgiveness with God. How it should be, they can never discover. More, much more than this is necessary to

heal the wounded spirit, and give peace to the troubled conscience. The mind, conscious of guilt, and alternately agitated by hopes and fears, is like the troubled sea when it cannot be at rest. It is not enough to know, that God may exercise mercy. A particular knowledge that he will, and of the way in which he can, is absolutely necessary, if not to safety, at least to comfort.

How deplorable, then, must the case of such be, who have never embraced the gospel. They have forfeited the hopes of nature, and they have no claim to those hopes which the gospel affords. They are under the condemnation of a broken law, awfully aggravated and increased by the rejection of the gospel. They have destroyed themselves, and they reject the only remedy, the remedy which infinite wisdom and love has provided for them. Happy would it have been for such, as die in this situation, that they had never been born. Let them turn their eyes which way they will, there is not only no relief for them, but just cause of amazement, horror, and despair, unless they will look to the hope set before them in the gospel. Blessed be God, who has declared that he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner. Blessed be God, who is slow to anger and of great mercy. Blessed be God, who has given us the assurance—"Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

In the third and last place, permit me to improve what has been said, by a little anticipating my subject, in congratulating you upon the glorious discoveries of the gospel. Life and immortality are brought to light by it. "For what the law could not do, in that
 " it was weak through the flesh, God sending
 " his own son, in the likeness of sinful flesh,
 " and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
 " that the righteousness of the law might be
 " fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh,
 " but after the spirit." Do the principles of natural religion give some faint hopes of pardon? Look into the gospel and behold these hopes confirmed. Behold the love of God in providing a remedy! Behold the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in becoming a propitiation for the sins of the world! And, in the precious blood of Immanuel, behold the price of your redemption! See a way made known in which God can pardon sin, and assurance given that he will do it. See justice satisfied, and righteousness declared in the remission of sin. Contemplate the manifestation of the riches of divine mercy and grace, and the displays of the divine perfection and glory in the cross of Christ.

View, on the one hand, the depths of misery and distress from which the sinner is raised, and, on the other, the heights of glory and happiness to which he is advanced. What sources of strong and everlasting consolation are here opened? What cause of

adoration and praise. " O the depth of the
 " riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge
 " of God ! How unsearchable are his judg-
 " ments, and his ways past finding out ! Un-
 " to-him that loved us, and washed us from
 " our sins in his own blood, and hath made
 " us Kings and Priests unto God and his fa-
 " ther ; to him be glory and dominion for-
 " ever and ever." Amen.

III. S E R M O N.

H E B. xi. 6.

**BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
 TO PLEASE HIM.**

II. **W**E come now to the second thing
 proposed in the distribution of the
 subject, which is, to consider faith as it is
 particularly concerned with respect to our
 deliverance from the ruins of our apostacy,
 and our recovery to life and happiness by
 the dispensation of divine mercy and grace,
 to our world, through a Redeemer. This
 brings an extensive subject under our confi-
 deration, of which I will endeavor to give
 you a comprehensive view, studying, at the
 same time, as much conciseness as the nature
 of the case will admit. There are four things,

then, I apprehend, necessary to be taken under particular consideration here. 1st. The subject of this faith. 2d. The objects of it. 3d. Its actings. And 4th. Its effects.

In the first place, let us consider the subject of this faith, or, the capacity, disposition, or circumstances of the person who believes. This is no other than the convinced sinner. The sinner has, in the very nature of things, to deal with the law previous to the gospel; and it is a sense of his inability to answer the demands of the law, with an alarming apprehension of the dreadful consequences of failing in it, that induces him to turn his attention to the gospel. Accordingly Jesus Christ is proposed as a Savior from sin and wrath, a city of refuge, a physician, and a resting place; and the invitations to come to him are particularly addressed to such as are sensible of their misery and danger, and solicitous to obtain deliverance from it; who are enquiring, what they shall do to be saved. "For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. I came not," says he, "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

I do not say, that it is not the duty of any others to believe. The call of the gospel is universal and unlimited, and the duty is as extensive as the call. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is bap-

“tized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth
 “not shall be damned.” But, I say, it is
 only the convinced sinner who will comply
 with this call. You offer pardon, in vain,
 to a person who has no consciousness that he
 has transgressed ; in vain you solicit his ac-
 ceptance of it. Mankind, asleep in security,
 and dead in trespasses and in sins, slight the
 offered mercy, and “reject the counsel of
 “God against themselves.” Nature is a
 stranger to its disease, and equally a stran-
 ger to the remedy. The secure sinner bles-
 seth “himself in his heart, saying, I shall
 “have peace, though I walk in the imagi-
 “nation of my heart, to add drunkenness to
 “thirst.” Even when awakened, in some
 measure, to a sense of his sin and danger he
 still seeks his resources from himself, and
 vainly dreams of some latent power, which,
 when aroused, will perform great things.

This conviction has a particular respect to
 the following things, namely, guilt, polluti-
 on, depravity, and inability. The convin-
 ced sinner is made to see, to feel, and to con-
 fess that he is guilty, and that both original-
 ly and actually ; that he has broken the law
 of God, is liable to its penalty, and under
 the curse ; that in many, in innumerable
 instances he has transgressed, and incurred
 the displeasure of a holy and just God ; that
 he is altogether as an unclean thing ; that he
 is corrupted and depraved in every power
 and faculty, both of soul and body ; prone

to that which is evil, as the sparks are prone to fly upwards, and wholly averse from that which is good ; that he has no power to fulfill the law, and that to endure the penalty is terrible ; that his own righteousness are but as filthy rags ; and that there is no soundness nor help in him.

The necessity of this conviction is evident from various considerations, particularly, from the nature of justifying faith, the natural attachment of the sinner to a covenant of works, and his partial fondness for his own righteousness. Justifying faith may be defined to be the application of the sinner to the mercy of God in Christ for pardon, life, and salvation. But this application none will make until they are brought to a sense of the absolute necessity of it. Obedience to the law was the condition of life, according to the first covenant ; and notwithstanding, this covenant has been broken, and it is utterly impossible that a justifying righteousness should now come by the law, yet the natural man still has his expectations and hopes from it. Hence, under the alarms of a guilty conscience, he cries out, " Have patience with me, " and I will pay thee all." Accordingly, he betakes himself to his good purposes, his reformations, and his duties, instead of coming to Jesus Christ who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own righte-

ousness, he will not submit himself to the righteousness of God. Whatever notions or apprehensions he may have of a Savior, and of pardon, life, and salvation, by the mercy of God through him, in truth and in reality he knows nothing about them. These are "things of the spirit of God," which "the natural man receiveth not, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are particularly discerned." Nor will he entertain one serious thought of betaking himself to them, until, through the law, he become dead to the law. The mercy of God in Christ, is the last refuge of the awakened sinner, and to which he never resorts until he finds, that there is no other way of escape for him, and he is, as the Apostle terms it, shut up to the faith.

This conviction arises from a spiritual discovery of the purity and perfection of the divine nature, and from an application of the law of God, to the conscience, in its holiness, spirituality, extent, and condemning power: and in proportion to the degree of this discovery and application will the conviction be.

This conviction may be more extensive, thorough, and clear, or less so: it may be produced instantaneously, or by a longer process; it may be preceded, and accompanied with a great degree of legal terror, or, perhaps, little, or none at all: sometimes one mean, and sometimes another, may be made conducive to it.

These are circumstances which are varied according to the pleasure of a sovereign God. But I lay it down as a certain principle, that no soul ever did, nor, indeed, ever will come to Jesus Christ, for pardon, life, and salvation through him, until it is brought to a rational, clear conviction, that it has destroyed itself, and that its help is to be found only in God. For "every mouth" must "be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." And let me add here, that this conviction is not temporary, or transient, but abiding, and increasing. It is not only necessary to bring the person into a state of grace; but also for his improvement in it. And in proportion to the proficiency which any one makes in the divine life, will be his sense of the extent and aggravation of his guilt, of his meanness and vileness, of the plagues of his own heart, and his utter insufficiency, of himself, for any good word or work.

Let us now, in the second place, consider the objects of this faith.—

1. Then, I say, God is the ultimate object of this faith. All the actings of it terminate in Deity. It is God who is offended by sin. It is God that justifieth. It is God who is, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. It is God who, in mercy, pitied our low estate; in wisdom, devised a plan for our salvation; in love, provided a Savior;

in justice, demands satisfaction ; and, in grace, accepts of the substitute. And it is, of him, that Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. In this high transaction, God, in the person of the father, is to be considered as possessing the perfections, and maintaining the rights of deity. Hence we read, in scripture, of faith towards God, of believing in God, and of having our faith and hope in God. Hence, also, our Savior tells us, “ He that receiveth me, receiveth
 “ him that sent me. He that heareth my
 “ word, and believeth on him that sent me,
 “ hath everlasting life, and shall not come
 “ into condemnation ; but is passed from
 “ death unto life.” And, “ he that believeth
 “ on me, believeth not on me, but on him
 “ that sent me.”

2. The immediate object of this faith is Jesus Christ. Thus is he exhibited in scripture. “ This is the work of God, that ye
 “ believe on him whom he hath sent. ~~Ye~~
 “ lieve on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou
 “ shalt be saved. And this is his command-
 “ ment, that we should believe on the name
 “ of his son Jesus Christ. “ Who,” saith the
 Apostle, “ by him, do believe in God.”—
 Respect is here had to Jesus Christ as constituted and appointed, by God, to this work, as given for this purpose, and as every way qualified and furnished for this end ; as made, doing, and suffering all that was necessary

for the full accomplishment of the great work which was assigned him ; as having cheerfully undertaken it, and fully executed it : he is viewed as the only, and as an all-sufficient Savior ; as “able to save them, to the uttermost, that come unto God by him ;” and who “will, in no wise, cast out” any that come to him. He is viewed, as a prophet, to enlighten and instruct ; as a priest, to atone and intercede ; and as a King, to subdue, to rule, and to defend ; as justifying righteousness, and as sanctifying grace ; a Savior both by price and by power. He is seen in the glories of his person and character ; as Immanuel, God with us, the brightness of his father’s glory, and the express image of his person ; as white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand ; yea, as altogether lovely. So that the adherence of the soul to Jesus Christ shall not only be of necessity, to find relief from its burdens and complaints, its misery and danger ; but of choice also, being powerfully, irresistably, and sweetly drawn to him, by a discovery of his incomparable glory and loveliness.

3. The invitations, declarations, and tenders of the gospel, are also to be taken into the account in considering the objects of faith. These are to be the rule of our faith. “So,” says the Apostle, “we preached, and so ye believed.” It is what God reveals, we are to believe. It is what he offers, we are to receive. The objects of faith are not

to be new-modeled, or qualified according to our fancy or inclination; but our hearts are to be formed to a conformity with them. The declarations of God are the foundation of our faith, his invitations our warrant to come to him, and the tenders which he makes to us, it is our privilege and our duty to accept. If the revelations of God are not believed, if the invitations are not complied with, and the offers accepted according to the very terms upon which they are given, they are not, in the account of God, believed, complied with, or accepted at all. There is nothing, in this case, left to the will or pleasure of man. God has revealed nothing, in his word, to be the objects of our faith, as matter of idle or curious speculation; nothing but what it was absolutely necessary for the purposes of his glory and our own happiness, that we should know and believe. He offers nothing for us to receive which is not conducive to our comfort. Jesus Christ, and all the blessings of salvation, grace here, and eternal glory hereafter, are contained in the invitations, declarations, and tenders of the gospel, for our belief and acceptance; and we are to believe and accept of them as they are there proposed and offered. Accordingly faith is termed, the belief of a report, and a believing the record which God has given of his son.

4. The security and manifestation of the divine perfection and glory, in the way of

salvation, by a Redeemer, is another object of this faith. The security and manifestation of his own glory is, no doubt, the ultimate and highest object which God proposes to himself in all his works and ways; and he requires, that this should be first and highest in the view of every intelligent creature. "The Lord hath made all things for himself." The awakened sinner, in some measure, conscious of this, upon the proposal of a way of salvation, immediately enquires—Is this consistent with the perfections of God? Can his perfections, in this way, be preserved inviolate? Is there provision made for their joint exertion and manifestation? Yes. The wisdom and power, the holiness and purity, the righteousness and justice, the love, truth, mercy, and grace of God, are all conspicuous, and provision is made for their harmonious and combined exercise in the redemption of a lost world by Jesus Christ. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. For the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!—How unsearchable are his judgments, and

" his ways past finding. For God so
 " loved the world, that he gave his only be-
 " gotten son, that whosoever believeth in
 " him should not perish, but have everlast-
 " ing life. That Christ may dwell in your
 " hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and
 " grounded in love, may be able to com-
 " prehend, with all saints, what is the breadth,
 " and length, and depth, and height; and to
 " know the love of Christ, which passeth
 " knowledge, that ye might be filled with all
 " the fulness of God. In this was manifest-
 " ed the love of God towards us, because
 " that God sent his only begotten son into
 " the world, that we might live through him.
 " Herein is love, not that we loved God,
 " but that he loved us, and sent his son to be
 " the propitiation for our sins. Mercy and
 " truth are met together; righteousness and
 " peace have kissed each other. Truth
 " springs out of the earth, and righteousness
 " shall look down from heaven. Righte-
 " ousness and judgment are the habitation
 " of his throne. Whom God hath set forth
 " to be a propitiation, through faith in his
 " blood, to declare his righteousness for the
 " remission of sins that are past, through the
 " forbearance of God—To declare, I say,
 " at this time his righteousness, that he might
 " be just, and the justifier of him which be-
 " lieveth in Jesus. Moreover, the law en-
 " tered that the offence might abound; but
 " where sin abounded grace did much more

“ abound ; that as sin hath reigned unto
 “ death, even so might grace reign, through
 “ righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus
 “ Christ our Lord.”

Such then is the exhibition ; so full, satisf-
 factory, and clear, are the views which are
 given, of this object of faith in the word of
 God. So that the discoveries which the be-
 lieving soul hath of it, are termed, by the
 Apostle, a “ beholding the glory of the Lord,
 “ with open face, as in a glass,” and having
 “ the light of the knowledge of the glory of
 “ God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we
 “ all, with open face, behold as in a glass the
 “ glory of the Lord, are changed into the
 “ same image, from glory to glory, when as
 “ by the spirit of the Lord. For God, who
 “ commanded the light to shine out of dark-
 “ ness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the
 “ light of the knowledge of the glory of God
 “ in the face of Jesus Christ.

5. Once more here. The effectual provision
 made in the gospel, through Jesus Christ, for the
 welfare and happiness of man, is another ob-
 ject of this faith. Consciousness of guilt, and
 alarming apprehensions of the wrath to come,
 are what set the soul first in motion towards
 Jesus Christ. “ What,” saith the awakened
 sinner, “ shall I do to be saved” ? And next
 to the security and illustration of his own glo-
 ry, which was the primary object in the de-
 vice of salvation by a Redeemer, no doubt,
 God had in view, that Israel might be saved,

and that with an everlasting salvation. In the gospel, then, through the glorious Mediator, the believing soul is led to behold a remedy provided for him, in all respects adequate to his disease. Here is pardon for his guilt, exemption from that condemnation and wrath to which he is liable as a transgressor, reconciliation to, and peace with an offended God, admission into his family, restoration to a conformity to the moral image and law of God, grace to support him in every trial, and to furnish him for the discharge of every duty, deliverance from all evil, and a title to all good, security from all danger, and a title to all happiness, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and those consolations of his spirit which are neither few nor small here, and fulness of joy and pleasures for ever more hereafter, glory and blessedness, not only beyond his expectations, but also infinitely above his comprehension, a great everlasting salvation.

It merits your particular attention here, that, in the œconomy of mans redemption, it is the proper office of the Holy Spirit to make application of that salvation which infinite wisdom hath devised, and infinite love purchased. The work is his in its first commencement, and in all the different stages of it until it arrive unto perfection. It is he that convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. It is he that unites

us to Christ in our effectual calling. He enlightens the mind, and renews the will, and persuades and enables us to accept of Jesus Christ, and salvation through him, as they are freely offered to us in the gospel. He seals believers to the day of redemption. The resistance of the sinner to the influences of divine grace upon his mind, is termed rebellion against him, and a grieving of him. Hence the exhortation of the Apostle, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed to the day of Redemption." Hence also the prayer of the Psalmist. "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

These five particulars, which I have mentioned, will, I think, comprehend all that is proposed, in scripture, as objects of faith in the particular view in which we are now considering it; nor will any thing less be the adequate object of it, as it is there exhibited. The believing soul, I am persuaded, takes them all into the account.

We come now, in the third place, to consider the actings of this faith, or the manner in which the subjects of it are exercised respecting these objects.

The objects of faith, in this respect, being exceedingly extensive, numerous, various, and complicated, it is evident that the actings of the soul towards them must be equally so.

Add to this, that the actings of the soul, being of a spiritual nature, are better felt than expressed; so that it will be no easy matter to give you a satisfactory and clear view of them in a few words. I shall endeavor to treat this branch of the subject with the greatest possible perspicuity and plainness.

As the understanding, the will, and the affections, are the leading faculties of the soul, or particular ways in which it exerts itself, and to which all its actings and exercises may be referred, it is evident that each of these must be particularly concerned in the actings of faith. The definition, then, which I would give of the actings of this faith is, that it implies the assent of the understanding, the consent or approbation of the will, and the concurrence of the affections to those truths or things which are the objects of it. Or, in other words, it is these three faculties united in perceiving, approving of, relishing, and embracing, the truths proposed, and the objects exhibited to them in the gospel. It implies, I say, the assent of the understanding. This is the directive faculty of the soul. It serves as the pilot in a vessel, to give direction to all the rest. And in a rational creature must always lead the way. Accordingly we are told, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Hence the exhibition or manifestation of the gospel to the soul is termed "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ." Hence faith

is often designated by knowledge. Hence believers are termed children of the light, and of the day. Hence Heaven is stiled "the inheritance of the saints in light." And hence, also, "the new man is said to be renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

With the assent of the understanding, there must also be the consent or approbation of the will. This is not an hasty, inconsiderate act. It is done with knowledge and deliberation. Never was the person engaged in so solemn a transaction before. Never was he more serious and deliberate, than in transacting with God, the important concerns of his soul's salvation. This consent, or approbation of the will, is founded upon principles and motives, the most rational, and the soul is determined, in its choice, by an infinitely greater good——Consequently, there is the concurrence of the affections. For although the consent or approbation of the will doth not always follow the assent of the understanding, yet the affections always, and necessarily follow the consent of the will, so that whatever the will makes choice of as good, the tendency of the affections is immediately towards that object——Agreeably to this representation, faith is said, in scripture, to be seated in the heart; which, as one entire principle, comprehends all the faculties of the soul in it. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

In believing, then, these three faculties of the soul as one entire principle possessing each of these faculties, or exerting itself in these several ways, unite, in returning to God, choosing him as a portion, and delighting in him as an all-sufficient good.—The foundation of all sin and misery lies in our having departed from God, and placed that love on, and given that seat in the heart to the creature which is due only to the Creator. The believing soul is brought to a sense of this. It is made to see, and to feel, that created enjoyments cannot be a portion for it, or render it happy; and it is brought to God as its centre and rest, under the influence of a clear discovery, and thorough persuasion, that he, and he only, is possessed of enjoyments suited to its nature, extensive as its capacity, and adequate to its desires and wishes.

It is to be particularly attended to here, that the soul, which thus returns to God, as its portion, doth it in the way of his own appointment, that is through the Mediator and by the effectual operations of the Holy Spirit. It accepts of Jesus Christ as the Savior. It cheerfully consents to, it is well pleased with, and it heartily acquiesces in the way of life and salvation made known in the gospel through him. In this there is an explicit renunciation of all other saviors and methods of salvation; and an universal approbation of, acquiescence in, acceptance of,

and reliance upon Jesus Christ, and the mercy of God through him, for all the blessings both of grace and salvation. The Holy Spirit finds admission into the heart, and makes it a temple in which he takes up his residence.

In the exercises of the soul towards Jesus Christ, and the mercy of God through him, there is a particular respect had to the declarations and tenders, the invitations and promises of the gospel, in which they are exhibited. In believing, the soul is cast into the mould of the gospel. It is formed to an universal approbation of it, and compliance with it. And whilst, on the one hand, the person, in believing, hath respect to, and is well pleased with, the device of salvation through a Redeemer, as containing all his salvation; making effectual provision for his complete and everlasting happiness: he is no less pleased that this is done in a way consistent with the divine perfections. He rejoices in the consideration, that righteousness and peace are met together, and mercy and truth have embraced each other in the cross of our gloriously exalted Immanuel. He rejoices in the glorious manifestation which is made of the riches and freeness of divine mercy and grace, and in the illustrious displays which are given of the divine perfections and glory, by his recovery from the depths of misery and distress, and his advancement to the greatest glory and

happiness of which his nature is capable. Indeed, I am persuaded, that the believing soul is oftentimes so taken up in the rapturous contemplation of the stupendous displays of the divine perfections and glory which are given in the way of salvation through a Redeemer, as, for some time, in a great measure, to loose sight of its own safety and happiness.

These things are plain, and must, I apprehend, be easily understood by every attentive and intelligent mind. But the genuineness of our faith, particularly in this respect, being of the utmost consequence to us, permit me, out of respect to weaker minds, who are as much concerned in this matter as the most intelligent, and, if possible, to prevent all mistake in a matter of such infinite moment, to endeavor to lead you to a still more particular and familiar view of the exercises of the soul, in believing, towards the different objects of this faith.

“ My people,” saith God, “ have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me!” I am thine all-sufficient, and I will be thine only portion. “ O Lord our God,” saith the believing soul, “ other Lords besides thee have had the dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. Behold, we come

" unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.
 " The Lord is my portion, saith my soul,
 " therefore will I hope in him. Thou art
 " my refuge, and my portion, in the land of
 " the living. Whom have I in Heaven but
 " thee, and there is none upon earth that I
 " desire besides thee.—Thou hast," saith God,
 " destroyed thyself. Of the rock that begot
 " thee, thou art unmindful, and hast forgot-
 " ten God that formed thee. The God, in
 " whose hand thy breath is, and whose are
 " all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. En-
 " ter not," saith the believing soul, " into
 " judgment with thy servant; for in thy
 " sight shall no man living be justified. If
 " thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O
 " Lord, who shall stand! I acknowledge
 " my transgressions, and my sin is ever before
 " me. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity,
 " and in sin did my mother conceive me. I
 " have been estranged from the womb, going
 " astray as soon as I was born, speaking lies.—
 " But," saith God, " thou saidst there is no
 " hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and
 " after them I will go. What," saith the
 " believing soul, " have I to do any more with
 " idols."—Thou hast, saith God, broken my
 " just and righteous laws; thou hast rebelled
 " against thy rightful Lord and Sovereign; thou
 " hast trampled upon my authority, and cast
 " indignity upon all my glorious attributes;
 " thou hast incurred the curse, and art under
 " condemnation; what hast thou to offer, in

vindication of thy conduct, or in arrest of just deserved judgment. "Against thee," saith the believing soul, "thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest. Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further. We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.—" I am," saith God, "a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity. But," saith the believing soul, "there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be saved."

If, saith God, thou wilt be saved, it must be in the way which infinite wisdom and love have provided and appointed. I have let forth my only begotten son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; neither is there salvation in any other—"This," saith the believing soul, "is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure, that thou art

" that Christ, the son of the living God.
 " Ashur shall not save us ; we will not ride
 " upon horses ; neither will we say any more
 " to the work of our hands, ye are our Gods ;
 " for in thee, the fatherless findeth mercy.
 " Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I
 " righteousness and strength. In the Lord
 " shall the seed of Israel be justified and shall
 " glory."

And, according to the particular terms and conditions upon which Jesus Christ, and the blessings of salvation through him, are proposed to the soul, doth it, in the exercise of this faith, accept of them ? Doth God offer Christ as a whole Saviour ?—The soul echoes the gospel offer, and replies, I take him without exception, as my Prophet, my Priest, and my King, as justifying righteousness, and as sanctifying grace, in his cross, and in his crown, yea, as all, and in all.—Doth God offer salvation as a free gift ?—Content, replies the believing soul, I accept it as a reward, not of debt, but of grace—Doth God offer salvation as an unmerited gift ?—" Who" saith the believing soul, " am I, O Lord God, " and what is my house ? I am no more worthy " to be called thy son, make me as one of thy " hired servants." I am less than the least of all thy mercies. I have forfeited all claim to thy favor, and merit nothing at thine hand but wrath and displeasure—Doth God claim all the glory of salvation to himself ?—Then the reply of faith is, " Not unto us, O Lord,

" not unto us, but unto thy name give glo-
 " ry, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake. I
 " am willing to be nothing, that God may be
 " all ; yea, to be less than nothing, that the
 " perfections of God, and the riches and
 " freeness of Divine mercy and grace, may
 " be manifested and exalted." Doth God,
 in and with Jesus Christ, freely offer pardon,
 life, and salvation ; grace here and eternal
 felicity, and glory hereafter, and enrich the
 believing soul with all the Divine fullness ?
 —Then faith will vent itself in sentiments
 and expressions similar to these—" Bless the
 " Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within
 " me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord,
 " O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.
 " Who forgiveth all thine iniquities—who
 " healeth all thy diseases—who redeemeth
 " thy life from destruction—who crowneth
 " thee with loving kindness and tender mer-
 " cies—who satisfieth thy mouth with good
 " things, so that thy youth is renewed like the
 " eagle's."—Doth God offer his Spirit to
 quicken and sanctify, to enlighten and direct,
 to assist, support, and comfort, to be in us,
 and to abide with us ?—Lord, saith the be-
 lieving soul, evermore give me of this water.
 Let thy good spirit be in me as a spirit of
 all grace, nor let him ever depart from me.
 And, in return for all this, doth God re-
 quire that we should devote ourselves to him,
 to be for him, and not for another ?—" O
 " Lord," saith the believing soul, " I am

“thy servant, truly I am thy servant, and
 “the son of thine hand maid.” I received
 my existence from thee. I am continually
 upheld by thy power, and fed at the expence
 of thy bounty. In thee I live, and move,
 and have my being. My obligations to
 serve thee are the strongest, and most indis-
 pensible. But, more especially, would I be
 thine by a voluntary and entire dedication
 of myself unto thee. I am not mine own—
 I have been bought with a price, even at the
 inestimable price of the precious blood of
 the son of God, therefore it shall be my stu-
 dy, and the business of my life, to glorify
 God in my soul and in my body which are
 his. Take a summary account of the whole
 in the following passage of scripture. “But
 “this shall be the covenant that I will make
 “with the house of Israel after those days,”
 saith the Lord, “I will put my law in their
 “inward parts, and write it in their hearts,
 “and I will be their God, and they shall be
 “my people.”

Thus, then, you see that faith, in this par-
 ticular respect, is the assent of the soul to,
 its approbation of, its acquiescence in, and
 its reliance upon that way of glorifying his
 name in the redemption of a lost world which
 God hath made known, in the gospel.

The general plan which I have proposed,
 and to which I have hitherto strictly adhered,
 hath been, to endeavor to give you a clear
 scriptural view of this subject, without turning

aside to the right hand, or the left, to take notice of any contrary opinions.

I cannot, however, satisfy myself, in dismissing this branch, without animadverting a little upon one opinion which hath been maintained by some, and which stands directly opposed to what I have now been endeavoring to inculcate.

The opinion is this, that assurance is the essence of justifying faith; or that it consists in a personal persuasion that Christ died for me in particular.—I would bespeak your special attention to this point, because I look upon it to be exceedingly dangerous, and as laying a foundation for the grossest delusion. If this sentiment be true, then the view which I have been given you of the faith of the gospel is altogether wrong.—Certainly, then, it concerns you much to ascertain the truth in this matter.

Perhaps, the best method of establishing truth, or of detecting error, is, carefully to examine the principles and sources from which they have originated, and upon which they ultimately rest. If, then, I am able clearly to point out to you the occasion of this error, and to shew the fallacies which lie at the very foundation of it, it will, I trust, be sufficient entirely to overthrow it.

One or the other of the following things have, I am persuaded, given occasion for this delusive sentiment:—

H

First. A fear of giving countenance to a self righteous principle. I grant, indeed, that we are in the utmost danger from this quarter, and cannot be too much on our guard against it. But, surely, it is not necessary, in avoiding one extreme, we should run into another. In avoiding legalism, there is no necessity that we should embrace antinomianism. The truth lies in the middle between these two extremes. It does not necessarily follow, that, in order that salvation may be wholly of free grace, we should make faith a superstructure, without a foundation. What greater merit can there be in the compliance of the soul with the proposals of the gospel, or its acceptance of the offered mercy, than in a beggar's stretching forth his hand to receive the alms which is offered to him? Or what merit can be supposed to be in this consent of the soul to, or its compliance with, the calls of the gospel, more than in confidently believing that Christ and salvation are ours; more especially when it is maintained, that this consent, or compliance, is the gift of God, and can be produced in the soul only through the operations of his Holy Spirit? If you attempt to exalt Divine grace upon the ruins of reason, and even of common sense, you mistake the matter altogether.

Secondly. Notdistinguishing between personal application, and actual interest, hath, I am satisfied, been another cause of this

mistake. These two, it is true, are closely, and inseparably connected; but the one is, in the very nature of things, previous to, and lays the foundation for the other. What is it that makes an indigent person a possessor of the alms which is offered to him? His confident persuasion that it is his? Or his acceptance of it? Or what ground hath he to believe that it is his until he hath actually accepted of it? There is, indeed, in justifying faith, a particular personal application of Jesus Christ, and of the benefits of his purchase to the soul. This is the very thing in which it consists. But this is widely different from a general historical faith, on the one hand; and, on the other, from a confident persuasion, that they are ours. Jesus Christ, and the blessings of salvation through him, are, as they are exhibited in the call and offer of the gospel, equally the property of all; that is to say, none have an actual interest in them whilst they are only exhibited in this general offer. It is the actual compliance with this call; it is the actual acceptance of these blessings that makes any difference in this case. Let me illustrate this by a familiar simile—A Prince offers pardon and indemnity to a number of his subjects, who have been in a state of hostility and rebellion against him, upon condition of their making personal application to him, confessing their fault, and coming under engagements to be true and faithful subjects

in future. Should now one of these persons sit still at home, possessed of the fullest confidence, that this pardon and indemnity were his ; let me ask, Would this confidence make them so ? No, certainly. But when he hath actually complied with the terms upon which this pardon and indemnity are proposed, this gives him an actual interest in them. Then hath he just grounds to believe, that they are his, and to take the comfort of them. If faith consisted in this confident persuasion, then all a person would have to do, would be, by every possible means, to work himself up to, and confirm himself in it, whatever evidence he might have of the contrary. This would be, against hope, to believe in hope, with a witness, and is a faith which may do well enough for fools and madmen, but which, I am sure, no wise man can be satisfied with. As soon shall a person, whose understanding is deranged, and who, in the extravagance of his folly, imagines himself a King, be advanced, by virtue of this persuasion, to the throne, and to all the ensigns and prerogatives of royalty, as a person shall become an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ, who founds his claim to these blessings and privileges upon this presumptuous confident persuasion.

Thirdly. Mistaking the precedents, the concomitants, or the consequences of faith, for faith itself, hath been another cause of this erroneous tenet. The dark understand-

ing of the believing soul is made light in the Lord. It sees something of the beauty of holiness, and of the glory of uncreated perfection. Jesus Christ is revealed in such a soul, the hope of glory ; and it is unlightened in the glorious mysteries of redeeming love through him. Peace and comfort naturally flow from the subjection of the soul to God, its rightful sovereign, from its choice of him, and its acquiescence in him as its portion, and from a discovery of him as a reconciled Father, instead of an angry Judge. Such is the glory of those objects exhibited to the view of the believing soul, and so pleasing the exercises in which it is engaged, as to produce a proportionate degree of comfort. I am satisfied, also, that the exercises of the soul, in believing, are always accompanied, or rather immediately followed by a well founded persuasion of an interest in the Saviour, and in the blessings of salvation through him. This persuasion is sometimes in an higher, and sometimes in a lower degree. There are degrees of it from the first dawnings, to the full assurance of hope. Still, however, the acceptance of the Savior, and the compliance of the soul with the proposals of salvation made through him, in the gospel, are the only rational or scriptural foundation upon which an assurance, or hope of our interest in them, can be built. That the christian may know in whom he hath believed, and may be enabled,

with Thomas, to say, in the language of assurance and triumph, "My Lord, and my God," is not to be doubted. Blessed be God, it is a most glorious and comfortable truth. But this is not faith, but assurance. It enters not into the consideration of the nature of faith, but is an evidence of its strength and perfection.

In the fourth place. According to the opinion which I am now opposing the gospel is wholly a revelation of the grace and good will of God towards us, or, as some have termed it, a bundle of promises, and all that we have to do is confidently to believe, that the blessings contained in them are ours; that faith and repentance are not required of us in order that we may be pardoned and saved; but only that this pardon and salvation, which were ours from eternity, may be manifested to our souls, and that we may have the comfort of them; and that to suppose any thing necessary to be wrought in us, or performed by us, in order to interest us in these blessings, would be injurious to the riches and freeness of divine mercy and grace. This is truly a specious fine-spun speculation. But let us see how far it is consistent with truth. The scriptures, then, no where call upon the sinner to believe, that Christ died for him, in particular, or that the blessings of salvation are his; nor is faith ever exhibited in this view. The words of the Apostle, "who loved me, and gave him-

“self for me,” and similar expressions in the word of God, are wholly misapplied when they are adduced to prove that faith consists in this personal persuasion. They are the language of assurance and not of faith. The constant uniform tenor of sacred writ is, that Christ died for sinners, and that there is pardon, life, and salvation by the mercy of God through him, for all who will break off their sins by repentance, accept of him as their savior, and of the offered mercy through him. And on this account is faith so frequently pointed out to us, by coming to Christ, receiving of Christ, flying to him, trusting in him, and the like. You may call these terms, or conditions, or what you please. It is he who actually repents and believes, and he only, who is actually pardoned, and interested in the blessings of salvation. And I will add here, that the power of divine and sovereign grace are absolutely necessary to enable us to perform these conditions.

It is utterly trilling and absurd to suppose, that all the elect of God were justified, and actually interested in all the blessings of salvation, from eternity, because it was the purpose of God from that period, that they should be so in time. They are, whilst in their natural state, children of wrath, even as others. As well might you alledge, that the world existed from eternity, because it was the purpose of God to create it in time ; or that all the people of God on earth are

now actually glorified Saints in Heaven, because it is the purpose and promise of God that they shall be so.

There are various marks and characters laid down in the word of God for us to examine and prove ourselves by. But to what purpose are those marks and characters, if our satisfaction or assurance respecting our gracious state were a mere confident persuasion, and not the result of a rational and scriptural enquiry.

Add to this—That it is required of us that we “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.”—Supposing faith, then, to consist in this confident persuasion, let me ask, how we could give a reason of the hope that is in us to him that asketh it of us?—What satisfaction, with respect to the genuineness of our hope, could our confidence afford to another? Or how would this high confidence agree with that “meekness and fear,” with which the answer should be given?

To what hath been said upon this point, I would only add farther, that this notion of justifying faith carries in it a gross absurdity and contradiction. According to it the thing to be believed is, that Christ died for me, that I am justified, and shall be saved through him; and yet this persuasion is supposed to be the very thing which gives me an interest in the Savior, and in the blessings

of salvation through him ; for, let this faith be what it will, nothing is more certain from scripture, than, that he who believeth, shall be saved, but he who doth not believe, shall be damned. Must I not then be interested in the Savior before I can know or believe that I am so ?—How, then, can this persuasion be the mean of giving me this interest ? Is not this to make the effect exist before the cause ?—Is it not to give existence to that which had no existence before, by confidently believing that it doth already exist ? But I shall urge the matter no further. I trust it is sufficiently evident from what hath been already said, that the tenet which I have been opposing is neither rational nor scriptural.

IV. S E R M O N.

H E B. xi. 6.

BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO PLEASE HIM.

WE come now to the fourth thing proposed under this branch of the subject, namely, to consider the consequences of this faith, or those effects which, when genuine, it will produce. It is, you will observe, those consequences or effects of faith

which are sensible, which take place with respect to our disposition, character, and conduct, and the consideration of which may be a mean of assisting us in judging of the genuineness of our faith, and not those which have respect to our state, that I mean to dwell upon. This branch of the subject deserves a particular discussion, and requires your most serious attention and application. The effects of faith are, perhaps, the surest foundation upon which to build a judgment of its genuineness. Only an experimental acquaintance with it can enable us to form any just conceptions of it. The smallest experimental teaching, by the holy spirit of God, will give an infinitely better understanding of this Divine mystery than the most elaborate treatise upon it could ever communicate, or could ever be attained by the most vigorous efforts of the most penetrating genius. And whilst the heaven born soul will inwardly relish a just description of faith, and may read the characters engraven upon his own heart, a possibility of communicating one clear intelligible idea of it to the mind that is only doctrinally taught, may be entirely dispaired. How liable then must we be to mistakes in this important matter? Our ignorance in this case, however, might not be so fatally dangerous, were it not for that proneness which is in us to form to ourselves refuges of lies. But these two, the blindness and ignorance of the na-

tural mind, with respect to the nature of saving faith, and the proneness of the natural heart to self-flattery and self-deception, taken together, give the adversary of their souls a great advantage against us. Hence, transforming himself into an Angel of light, and counterfeiting the various graces and operations of the Holy Spirit, so as, if it were possible, to deceive the very elect, it becomes comparatively easy for him to impose those actings of the mind upon us, for saving faith, which are nothing but counterfeit. But no one who will be conscientious and faithful to his own soul can be so readily deceived in those effects which it produces. Let us proceed, then, to take these under particular consideration.

1. This faith, if it be genuine, will purify the heart. It hath its seat in the heart, and it operates there as a purifying principle. To restore man to a conformity to the moral image and law of God, was no less an object of the divine counsels than to free him from the guilt which he had contracted, and the punishment to which he was liable as a transgressor. And faith is made the great principle of the one, as it is the instrument of the other. In the exercise of it, divine truths, in their sanctifying influence, are brought home to the heart; and the divine perfections, in their transforming glory, are exhibited to the soul. Thus our Savior prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth;

“thy word is truth.” Thus, in the conference which was held by the Apostles and Elders, at Jerusalem, respecting the obligations which the Gentiles, who embraced Christianity, were under to submit to circumcision, and the various ceremonies of the Jewish institution, the Apostle Peter tells them, “That God had put no difference “between them,” and the Gentiles, “purifying their hearts by faith. Seeing,” says he, in one of his Epistles, “ye have purified “your souls in obeying the truth through “the spirit.” It is in the exercise of faith, that “the glory of the Lord” is beheld by “all” true believers, “with open face as in “a glass,” so as to change them “into the “same image from glory to glory, even as “by the spirit of the Lord.” Holiness is no less essential to the happiness of man than pardon. Without it he is neither capable of the service nor enjoyment of God. Justification and sanctification, then, are inseparably connected in that salvation which is wrought out, and which is conferred upon the believing soul ; nor is the latter less the object of its desire than the former. As one boldly, though justly, expresses it, “The “believer,” says he, “would not thank “God for the pardon of his sins, unless he “would also destroy the power of it in him.” The prayer of the Psalmist expresses the desire of every one who is the subject of this faith. “Create in me a clean heart, O God;

“and renew a right spirit within me.” Accordingly the scriptures always join these two together. “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people. Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.”

2. This faith, if it be genuine, will empty the soul of self, and deeply humble it before God. Seest thou a man whose faith lifts him up, makes him full of himself, and of his high attainments, gives him an high opinion of human merit, and of the virtue and efficacy of human endeavors; such an one's religion is vain. You may safely determine respecting him, that he is a stranger to the faith of God's elect. Self-confidence and self-conceit are very unpromising symptoms in any case; but, they are particularly so in religion. “Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.” The faith of the gospel is a self-emptying and self-humbling grace. “It casts down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

In "that day," when Jesus Christ makes his triumphant entrance into the soul, "the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be brought low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted."—The discoveries which the believing soul has of the perfection and glory of God, and the manifestation of the divine favor and love which are afforded unto it, have a direct and powerful tendency to bring it to an humbling sense of its meanness and vileness, and the great obligations which it is under to the riches and sovereignty of redeeming mercy and love. "I have heard of thee," saith Job, "by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Wo is me," saith the Prophet Isaiah, "for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Faith is made a particular instrument of destroying that pride and self-sufficiency which are so natural to man, and which stand in the most direct opposition to the discoveries and offers of the gospel. "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God."

3. This faith, if it be genuine, will produce peace of conscience, and diffuse a sweet serenity and composure, through the soul, which sometimes arises even to the height of joy and rejoicing. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom, also, we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

Various causes concur to promote this peace and joy. Whilst the law of God has a demand against the sinner, and he sees himself exposed to the stroke of justice, conscience, the vicegerent of God in his breast, will bear testimony against him, and turn his peace into confusion. But when, by faith, he becomes united to Jesus Christ, is enabled to lay hold on his righteousness, and has his pardoning, peace-speaking blood applied, by the Holy Spirit, to his conscience, he becomes justified from all his iniquity, and feels the burden of his guilt, at least in some measure, removed. As the man-slayer, who had got into the city of refuge, was free from the avenger of blood, and might dwell there in peace and safety; so, the person, who has fled to Jesus Christ, and laid hold on him as the hope set before him in the gospel, is freed

from those evils and dangers with which he was threatened ; the debt being paid, justice is satisfied, and conscience is quieted. Viewing, on the one hand, the evils and dangers from which, through grace, he has attained to the hope of deliverance, and, on the other, the blessedness of that state into which he trusts he is brought, can he but rejoice ?—Lately he was tossed upon the boisterous waves of soul distress and trouble, in the utmost danger, and under the most alarming apprehensions and fears of being eternally cast away ; how happy, then, must he feel himself, when landed upon a safe shore, and established upon the rock of ages ? Add to these, the novelty and transcendent glory of those objects of which the believing soul, at such a season, has some discovery and enjoyment. The presence of God is the delight and the joy of Heaven, and it is the beginning of Heaven, in the soul, when God, in any measure, manifests himself a God reconciled, and lifts upon it the light of his countenance. All the glories of God, man, mediator, meet in our Immanuel. The glory of God is beheld, shining in his face ; and he is so seen in the glories of his person and character, as to render him the object of delight and rejoicing—“ Whom having not seen, ye love ;
“ in whom, though now ye see him not, yet
“ believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable,
“ and full of glory.”

4. This faith, if it be genuine, will work by love. The Apostle John, who is so remarkable, in his writings, for this grace, faith, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." And again, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God is in him. And now," says the Apostle Paul, "abidech faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity. Love is the fulfilling of the law. On these two commandments, in which it is enjoined, our Lord tells us, hang all the law and the prophets." This most excellent and permanent of all christian graces and virtues is produced by faith. "For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love."

Dependence is an essential idea in the notion of a creature. As man, then, has not that in himself, in the enjoyment of which he can be happy, his desires are continually going abroad in quest of the object of his bliss. And his unhappiness, so long as he is destitute of saving faith, is, that he is ignorant of that in which the happiness he is in pursuit of lies ; so that he is constantly engaged in a fruitless chace, seeking after happiness in that, which, in its own nature, is nothing but vanity. But, in the exercise of faith, the soul apprehends something of the beauty of holiness, and of the glory of uncreated perfection. It presents God as a most excellent and

amiable Being, as a competent portion, and all-sufficient good, and leads the soul to him as its centre and rest.

This love also acts towards our brethren of mankind, universally, in benevolence and good will. A tender concern for the welfare of others, both in soul and body, is a temper peculiar to the true believer. He so far partakes of the divine nature as sincerely to desire that all may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. But the impressions of the divine image, upon those who are of the house-hold of faith, in a particular manner, attracts his love. "Every one
 " that loveth him that begat, loveth him
 " also that is begotten of him. We know
 " that we have passed from death unto life,
 " because we love the brethren; he that lov-
 " eth not his brother abideth in death. If a
 " man say, I love God, and hateth his bro-
 " ther, he is a liar; for he that loveth not
 " his brother whom he hath seen, how can
 " he love God whom he hath not seen?" Nay, we are told, that unfeigned love of the brethren, is the genuine tendency and effect of an heart purified, in obeying the truth. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obey-
 " ing the truth through the spirit, unto un-
 " feigned love of the brethren; see that ye
 " love one another with a pure heart fervent-
 " ly." The enjoyments of the world are so lean and impoverished, and so inadequate to the desires and wishes of an immortal soul,

that the person who sets his affections upon them, not finding what satisfies him in them, is for monopolizing the whole, and excluding all others from having any share in them. But the soul, which, by faith, contemplates the glory, and feasts upon the fulness of God, needs not to be contracted with selfish views. The happiness is boundless and undiminished, and he is unable to comprehend the breadth, or length, or depth, or height, or in any competent measure to know the love of God; it passes all understanding. Love to temporal objects contracts the mind, and makes it selfish. Love to God enlarges the heart, and generously disposes it to wish, that all others might share in it. That enmity to God and man, which is the effect of sin, is subdued in all who are the subjects of divine grace. Love to God, and good will to his creatures, reigns triumphant in the heavenly mansions, and it prevails on earth as far as men are formed to the temper of Heaven.

5. This faith, if it is genuine, will be a principle of universal obedience. As action is the natural consequence and evidence of life, so are good works of faith. By purifying the heart it makes provision for holiness in the life, as the fountain which is pure will emit wholesome waters, and the tree which is good will bring forth good fruit. Holiness can have no communion with sin, nor purity with that which is defiled. To entertain

hopes, then, of going to Heaven, and of being happy in the employments and enjoyments of the redeemed of the Lord, and yet remain possessed of hearts which are enmity against God, and are not subject to his law, the servants of sin, and subject to divers lusts and pleasures, would be the most preposterous and absurd thing imaginable. Whilst the heart is in the interest, and defiled with the impurities of sin, it is impossible that God should be the portion of that soul, or that it should delight itself in any measure in him. The subject of this faith has his restoration to the original rectitude of his nature began. He delights “in the law of God after the inward man.” And although, as being sanctified but in part, the flesh may, in some degree, be subject to the law of sin; yet, with the mind he will serve the law of God. The sinner who is, at heart, in league with sin, who rolls it as a sweet morsel under his tongue, who holds it fast, and will not let it go, quarrels with the law of God, and counts his commandments rigorous and severe.— On the contrary, the language of faith is, “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good; but I am carnal, sold under sin. Faith, without works,” or that faith which is not productive of works, “is dead. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works;

“ these things are good and profitable unto
 “ men.” The redeemed of Jesus Christ are
 purified “ unto himself, a peculiar people,
 “ zealous of good works.” How faith ope-
 rates in rendering the subject of it fruitful,
 in every good word and work, will proper-
 ly fall in our way under the remaining branch
 of the subject. At present, I mean only to
 establish the truth of the proposition, that
 faith, when genuine, will be a principle of
 universal obedience, and will induce the
 subject of it, to “ have respect unto all” God’s
 “ commandments.”

6. This faith, if it is genuine, will produce
 godly sorrow, and repentance for sin. It pre-
 sents those objects to the soul which have a na-
 tural and powerful tendency to excite it, and
 stirs it up to the exercises of it. It appre-
 hends the intrinsic odiousness and deformity
 which there is in sin. It makes the subject
 of it sensible of the contrariety which is in it
 to the purity and perfection of the divine na-
 ture, and the dishonor which is done to the
 majesty of heaven and earth in the commis-
 sion of it. It discovers it to be the source and
 procuring cause of all those evils which we
 have felt, to which we are liable, or which
 we have any cause to fear. It brings the
 person to see and feel, that it is indeed an
 evil and a bitter thing that he has depart-
 ed from the Lord his God. It makes
 him sensible, that, by the indulgence of
 sin, he has grieved the Holy Spirit of God,

and provoked him to withdraw those gracious influences from his soul, upon which his spiritual life, and his eternal salvation, depend. It discovers sin, also, as the procuring cause of all that ignominy, and those bitter agonies to which Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, was exposed, and which he endured; and brings the person to lay to heart the particular concern which his own sins had in that tragical scene. It causes all the divine goodness to pass before him, and gives him the intimations of pardoning mercy and grace. These sources of repentance, when exhibited and applied to the soul, by the Holy Spirit, in the exercise of faith, are sufficient to break the hardest heart, and to dissolve the most obdurate soul into the kindly relentings of godly sorrow. When afforded, in any considerable degree, they break up the fountains of the great deep of godly sorrow. Under their influence the person is led to mourn for his sins, as one mourneth for his only begotten son, and to be in bitterness for them as one that is in bitterness for his first born child.

This is an exercise that is rational in itself, and of which its subject desires still greater and greater degrees. It brings with it unspeakable satisfaction and delight. The sorrow of this world is bitter, and worketh death; but a godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of; and is a sweet ingredient in the cup of the

believer's consolation. In these views the believing soul delights to dwell. Here would he look, and weep, and sob, until his heart would break with generous sorrow, and his soul become enlarged for the enjoyment of bliss.

7. This faith, if it be genuine, will overcome the world. "For whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." The world is one of the three great enemies of mankind. It is the great rival of deity, for the supreme seat in the human heart. Its honors, its pleasures, and its profits, have all charms bewitching to the eye of depraved sense; and it is principally through their influence, that the adversary of our souls obtains so many advantages against us. Hence those pressing exhortations in scripture—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.—" "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the fashion thereof; but he that doth the will of God abideth forever." Wherever faith hath its proper effect, God is restored to his supremacy in the heart, and the world is held in comparative disesteem. Thus, in the beginning of the 12th. chapter of

the Revelations of St. John, the church of Christ, is represented by "a woman cloathed with the sun," to denote her beauty through that comeliness which he puts upon her ; and as having "the moon under her feet," to signify her victory over all sublunary things.

The world here is particularly to be considered in two respects, in its allurements, and in its terrors. In each of these is it inimical to the christian. By the first it operates upon his hopes, and by the other upon his fears ; which are the two great springs of human activity : and in each of them doth he obtain the victory over it, through faith.

In the exercise of this grace, the christian is made a partaker of comforts and enjoyments infinitely superior to any which this world affords ; comforts and enjoyments suited to his nature, and satisfying to his soul. In the exercise of this grace he also attains to the prospect and comfortable assurance of happiness inconceivably greater in reserve for him hereafter, even fulness of joy and pleasures for ever more.

And, with respect to the terrors of the world, the christian may be enabled, in the lively exercise of this grace, to set them all at defiance, and to triumph over them. "In the world," said our Saviour, "ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." "And not only so," that is, not only do we, "rejoice in hope of the glory of God ; but we glory in tribu-

" lation ; also, knowing that tribulation work-
 " eth patience ; and patience, experience ;
 " and experience, hope ; and hope maketh not
 " ashamed, because the love of God is shed
 " abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost
 " which is given unto us. Under the in-
 " fluence of faith, we will not be affraid of
 " them that kill the body, and after that
 " have no more that they can do ;" but we
 will " fear him who after he hath killed,
 " hath power to cast into hell."

8. This faith, if it be genuine, will produce submission to the will of God, and resignation to the dispensations of his providence. This will be the prevailing disposition of the christian. The sinner is either borne away with the tide of prosperity, or he despises the chastening of the Lord, and is weary when he is rebuked of him—But when indulgent heaven affords an abundance of the good things of this life, faith leads the soul up these streams until it find its rest in God, the source from whence they flow. And, when pressed under afflictions and disappointments, it can discover, even through the dark cloud, the hand of a merciful and gracious God and Father, who doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men ; who afflicts us for our benefit, and chastises us for our reformation ; who, whilst with the one hand he administers the necessary correction of a father, holds forth the

other, replete with the choicest blessings. And whose promise, more stable than the mountains, or than the foundations of the earth, is, "that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose."—In short, the sinner, who is in a state of rebellion, and enmity against God, is refractory and murmurs under all those dispensations of his providence, which are contrary to his own views and inclinations; but the believer, in the exercise of a strong and lively faith, is well pleased with that wisdom which orders all things well, and rejoiceth that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

9. Once more. This faith, if it be genuine, will recommend and endear Jesus Christ to the soul. "Unto you, therefore, who believe," saith the Apostle Peter, "he is precious—yea," saith the spouse, in the Song of Solomon, "he is altogether lovely." Precious and lovely in his person, as God, possessed of all possible perfection and glory; and, as Immanual, God with us, God in our nature, God cloathed in human flesh—Precious and lovely in his character, as the Mediator between God and man, and the Savior of sinners of the human race—Precious and lovely in his humiliation, abasement, and sufferings; and in his exaltation, glory, and happiness; in his cross, and in his crown—Precious and lovely in his offices, as the Prophet, the Priest, and the King of

his Church—Precious and lovely in his titles. As the Lord Jesus Christ—as the second Adam—as the head of his Church—as a surety—as an advocate—as an husband—as a friend—as a Bishop—as bread from Heaven—as the water of life—as the morning star—as the sun of righteousness—as the captain of salvation—as the head corner stone—as a Redeemer—as the heir of all things—as a shepherd—as the judge of the world—and as the resurrection and the life.—Precious and lovely in his benefits ; as justifying righteousness, and as sanctifying grace, through our union, to whom, by faith, we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God—And precious, and lovely in his interest. I might enlarge much, in shewing you the preciousness and loveliness of the Lord Jesus Christ, in each of these respects. And although the subject might be uninteresting and tedious to all such as have not a spiritual discernment of, and relish for, spiritual and divine things ; yet, to every true believer, it would be most pleasing and delightful. But, I must content myself, at present, with mentioning a few leading thoughts, leaving the enlargement upon them to your private pious meditations.

Such are the consequences which this faith, when genuine, will produce ; it will purify the heart—it will empty the soul of self, and deeply humble it before God—it

will produce peace of conscience, and diffuse a sweet serenity and composure through the soul—it will work by love—it will be a principle of holy obedience—it will produce godly sorrow and repentance for sin—it will overcome the world—it will produce submission to the will of God, and resignation to the dispensations of his providence—and, it will render Jesus Christ lovely and precious to the soul.

These effects, at least, in a prevailing degree, will faith, if it be genuine, produce. Sin shall not have the dominion over the subjects of it, for they are not under the law but under grace.

It cannot have escaped your notice, that in explaining the nature, or in describing the effects of justifying faith, I have made no mention of one thing which hath been strenuously insisted upon by some. It is this, that a person, in order to be saved, must be willing to be damned, if it would be for the glory of God. My reason for not taking this into the account is, because I am verily persuaded, that it is neither rational nor scriptural. It is indeed strange to me that so extravagant a notion should ever have entered into any wise man's mind; and still more so, that any who profess to be such, should attempt seriously to vindicate it. •

This sentiment, you will observe, is built upon an hypothesis or supposition. Now hypothesis, or suppositions, prove nothing.

The utmost they can do, in any case, is to illustrate. But if the hypothesis or supposition be groundless and false, then the only purpose which it can serve is to mislead and deceive. There is then, in the very nature of things, as well as by the divine appointment, an inseparable connection between the glory of God, and the happiness of his people. The dispensation of the gospel is designed and calculated to promote the one by the other. In conformity to this; you will recollect, that in enumerating the objects of faith, as it hath a particular respect to the dispensation of the gospel, I mentioned the glory of God, as the primary, and the happiness of his people, as a secondary motive, both in the divine counsels, and in the view of the believing soul. It is not, it cannot possibly be, for the glory of God, that any of his people should be damned. It is for his glory that they should be saved, and that with a great and everlasting salvation. It would be an everlasting and indelible stain upon his glory, that any such should be damned. The supposition then, that it would be for the glory of God, that any of his people should be damned, is a gross absurdity, contradiction, and falsehood. The desire of happiness is an essential principle of our nature. It was implanted in us, by the Author of our being, for the wisest purposes. Men will sooner cease to be, than cease desiring to be happy. God, it is true, requireth us to

seek our own happiness in subordination to, and in a way which tends to illustrate his glory. But he never did, nor indeed ever will, require of any intelligent creature, that it should so far renounce the principles of its nature as to have no respect to its own happiness; much less that it should be willing to be damned, in order that he might be glorified; nor can a supposition so replete with absurdity and falsehood, ever be the test of a gracious disposition. What God hath joined together let no man attempt to put in funder.

Can it be possible that any who have embraced this opinion have ever once considered what it is to be damned? Have they ever realised that it is to be given up to the unrestrained dominion, and subjected to the unremitted punishment, of sin; that it is to be most unlike the standard of all perfection, and to hate, with the most irreconcilable enmity, the sum of all excellence; that it is to be banished forever from that Being whose favor is life, and whose presence and love are the delight and the rejoicing of their hearts, and in the height of despairing rage and torment to blaspheme that name which is most dear to them.

Certainly, such persons have never duely considered the awful import of being damned, or they would never talk of it in this manner.

That every truly penitent and believing soul hath the sentence of condemnation in himself, that he feels, and confesses, that he deserves damnation, and that it would be just in God to inflict it upon him, is undoubtedly true. But this is a very different thing from being willing to be damned, which is what God never did, nor ever will require of any creature upon any terms or conditions whatever. The scriptures, I am sure, teach no such doctrine. It is a tenet which both nature and religion abhor. Let not then any serious mind give itself any perplexity or distress respecting it. If you are truly willing and desirous that God should be glorified in your salvation; if you are well pleased, that the one is to be obtained in a consistency with, and in a way manifestative of the other, this is the disposition which the gospel requires, in order to a participation in the blessings which it contains.

Let me conclude, now, by earnestly exhorting and beseeching you, to examine yourselves, and to prove yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. Trust not to lying vanities. Do not deceive yourselves in a matter of such infinite consequence. It will be a dreadful thing to go down to the pit with a lie in your right hand. Rest not satisfied, then, until you are made willing, in a day of divine power, until your souls are turned to the wisdom of the just, and every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

V. S E R M O N.

H E B. xi. 6.

BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO PLEASE HIM.

III. **T**HE third thing proposed, in the general division of this subject, remains yet to be discussed ; which is—To consider faith, as it is a ruling and governing principle in the christian life.

In entering upon this branch of the subject, it is proper to observe, that faith, in this respect, presupposes it in those two respects, in which we have already considered it. These are the foundations upon which it is built. These are the principles upon which it proceeds. Faith, as it is a ruling and governing principle in the christian life, in the very nature of things, presupposes the union of the soul to Jesus Christ, and its return to God through him. It is only “as” we “have received Christ Jesus the Lord,” that we either will or can “walk in him.” And faith, as uniting the soul to Jesus Christ, presupposes a belief of the principles of natural religion, and of the divine original and authority of the sacred scriptures. No faith, in the two first of these respects, by any means, unnecessary or useless in the

christian life. The objects of it are often called up to view, and the soul led forth in suitable actions towards them. Indeed, the progress of the christian, in the spiritual and divine life, in a great measure, depends upon the encreasing strength of his faith in these respects. The more rooted and confirmed his belief of the being of a God is, the more realising, extensive, and clear, his views of the divine perfections and glory are ; the more he sees of the beauty of holiness, and of the deformity of sin, the more habitual and deep the impressions, which he has upon his mind, of God, as the Creator, the Preserver, and Governor of the world, and all things in it ; the more firm his belief of the immortality of the soul, and of a state of rewards and punishments beyond the grave ; the more thorough his belief of the divine original and authority of the scriptures ; the more firm his union to Jesus Christ, and the more steadfast the purposes of his heart to cleave unto the Lord ; the greater will be the proficiency which the christian makes in the ways of godliness, and the more will he abound in those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. These are evidences of the proficiency which he hath already made. These lay the foundation, and afford a prospect of his future progress.

Having made this observation, let us proceed to take into consideration what

strictly and properly belongs to this branch of the subject.

With this view, we will—1st. Consider the objects of this faith. 2dly Apply these objects to the case, and experience of the christian, by taking a particular view of the various situations and circumstances which he may be in, and of the exercises of faith as corresponding with them.

We are, in the first place, to consider the objects of this faith. 1st. Then, I say, that Jesus Christ is one principal object of faith, as it is a ruling and governing principle in the christian life. Under the preceding branch of this subject, we considered Jesus Christ as an object of faith, as “God” is, “in” him, “reconciling the world, unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;” here he is to be considered in something of a different capacity. We then viewed him as making peace by the blood of the cross; we are here to consider him as maintaining and perfecting that peace and intercourse with heaven which he has already established. We then considered the sinner, making use of him as the only way of coming to the father; we are here to consider the believer as improving him for all the purposes of the divine life. In this view, the Apostle Paul, in his own experience, gives us an account of the christian life.—Gal. ii. 20. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet, not I, but Christ

“liveth in me ; and the life, which I now
 “live, in the flesh, I live by the faith of the
 “Son of God, who loved me, and gave him-
 “self for me.”

The account given us, in scripture, of Je-
 sus Christ, in this respect is, that “grace is
 “poured into,” his “lips,” that he is
 “anointed with the oil of gladness above”
 his “fellows ;” that he is “full of grace and
 “truth ;” that he is “given to be the head
 “over all things to the church ;” that “it
 “pleased the Father, that in him should all
 “fulness dwell ;” that “in him dwelleth all
 “the fulness of the God-head bodily ;” and
 that his “riches” are “unsearchable.”

This fulness, which is in Jesus Christ, is me-
 diatorial ; it is in him for the benefit of his
 church and people, and to be communicated
 to them as their various exigencies may re-
 quire. Accordingly he is represented as the
 head ; the source of vital influences to the
 church, which is his body, and to all true
 believers who are members of it ; and as the
 vine which communicates sap and nourish-
 ment to its branches. Thus it is said, Eph.
 i. 22, 23, that God “gave him to be the
 “head over all things to the church, which
 “is his body, the fulness of him that filleth
 “all in all. Abide,” says he, “in me, and I in
 “you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of it-
 “self, except it abide in the vine ; no more
 “can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine,
 “ye are the branches ; he that abideth in

“ me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth
 “ much fruit ; for without me ye can do
 “ nothing. And of his fulness,” saith the
 Evangelist John, “ have all we received, and
 “ grace for grace.” The Apostle Paul, hav-
 ing told the Colossians, that “ in him dwell-
 “ eth all the fulness of the god-head bodily,”
 immediately adds, “ And ye are complete
 “ in him, which is the head of all principal-
 “ ity and power.” This same Apostle en-
 joins it upon the Ephesians, “ Be strong in
 “ the Lord, and in the power of his might.”
 He also addresses himself, to Timothy thus,
 “ Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the
 “ grace which is in Christ Jesus.” And, in
 his Epistle to the Colossians, he cautions them
 thus, “ Let no man beguile you of your re-
 “ ward, in a voluntary humility, and wor-
 “ shipping of Angels, intruding into those
 “ things which he hath not seen, vainly puff
 “ up by his fleshly mind ; and not holding
 “ the head, from which all the body, by
 “ joints and bonds, having nourishment mi-
 “ nistered, and knit together, increaseth
 “ with the increase of God.” Faith, then,
 in this view, may be defined to be, the inter-
 course of the soul with Jesus Christ. Con-
 scious of its own weakness, it betakes itself
 to him for strength. Conscious of its igno-
 rance, it betakes itself to him for wisdom.
 In his all-sufficiency, it finds a remedy for
 its numerous and complicated wants. And
 from him, in the exercise of this grace, it

derives every necessary supply. And, by the way, in this lies a very essential difference between the old covenant, and the new. In the one, man had his stock put into his own hand, and it depended entirely upon himself what use to make of it ; whether, wisely to improve it, or foolishly squander it away. But, in the other, it is deposited in a Mediator, and is communicated to his people as their necessities require. And it is a very important lesson which the christian has to learn, but in which, alas ! he is often a very inapt scholar, that his sufficiency is not of himself, that the grace which he has received for one duty, by no means furnishes him for the next, and that he is to essay every duty in the all-sufficiency, grace, and strength, which are in the glorious Mediator, to be communicated to him, in the exercise of faith, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, whose office, in the economy of man's redemption, it is, to take of the things of Christ, and to shew them to his people.

2. The glorious realities of the invisible world are also objects of this faith. In this view, as well as that which we were just now considering, it is said, "the just shall live by faith." Thus we are said to "walk by faith, not by sight. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things

“ which are not seen are eternal.” Accordingly, faith, in the beginning of the chapter out of which I have taken my text, is defined to be, “ the substance of things hoped for, “ the evidence of things not seen.”

The life of the christian is a constant conflict between faith and sense ; between the objects and enjoyments of time, and the glory and happiness of eternity. The things of eternity, it is true indeed, are infinitely more excellent in their nature, as well as infinitely more permanent in their duration, than the things of time, and were they equally certain, and visible to the soul, the contest would be immediately at an end. But these are distant and future. “ Eye hath “ not seen” them, “ neither hath ear heard” of them, nor hath it “ entered into the heart “ of man,” in any proper manner, to conceive of them. They are only apprehended by faith, which is often so weak as to afford but a very imperfect discovery of them. Whereas the objects of time are ever present with us, they are objects of all our senses, they take a powerful hold of us, and become dangerous rivals of faith.

It is undoubtedly, however, the prevailing character of the christian, that Heaven is his desired and intended home. His treasure is there, and his heart is there. Being “ risen with Christ,” to a spiritual and divine life, he seeks “ those things which are “ above, where Christ sitteth on the right

“hand of God :” He is daily ascending heavenward in spiritual mindedness and holy converse with God. When, in the lively exercise of faith, he is enabled to enter within the vail of eternity, and to take realizing and appropriating prospects of the glory and blessedness of the celestial mansions ; when, leaving dull mortality behind, he soars aloft, upon the wings of contemplation, love and desire, snatches a prospect of the promised land, and has a foretaste of the delicious fruits of the heavenly Canaan ; the things of time and sense are out of sight, and beneath his notice. But, when these views are withdrawn, the things of time and sense recur upon him, and oftentimes so far prevail as nearly to efface from the mind, all those impressions which faith had made upon it.

3. The promises of the Gospel are also objects of this faith. These are numerous, exceeding great, and precious. The believer hath the promise of a competency of the good things of this world, as much of them as will be most for the glory of God, and his own good. Thus far “bread shall be given him, and his water shall be sure.” In confidence of this, the Psalmist saith : “Thou preparest a table before me, in the presence of mine enemies ; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”——He hath the promise of the divine presence and conduct ; “For

“ he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor for-
 “ sake thee. I will instruct thee, and teach
 “ thee in the way, which thou shalt go ; I
 “ will guide thee with mine eye. Neverthe-
 “ less, I am continually with thee ; thou hast
 “ holden me by my right hand ; thou shalt
 “ guide me with thy counsel”—He hath the
 promise of grace to furnish him, for the dis-
 charge of every duty. “ Thy shoes shall be
 “ iron and brass ; and as thy days, so shall
 “ thy strength be ; my grace is sufficient for
 “ thee ; for my strength is made perfect in
 “ weakness.”—He hath the promise of being
 restored when he wanders and of having
 his back-slidings healed. “ He restoreth my
 “ soul ; he leadeth me in the paths of righ-
 “ teousness, for his name’s sake. I will heal
 “ their back-slidings, I will love them freely ;
 “ for mine anger is turned away from him.”
 He hath the promise of the presence of God,
 and of the supports and comforts of his
 grace, in every affliction, trial, and danger.
 “ He shall deliver thee in six troubles ; yea,
 “ in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In
 “ famine, he shall redeem thee from death,
 “ and in war, from the power of the sword.
 “ Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the
 “ tongue ; neither shalt thou be afraid of
 “ destruction, when it cometh. Yea, though
 “ I walk through the valley of the shadow
 “ of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art
 “ with me ! thy rod and thy staff they comfort
 “ me—He hath the promise, that the temp-

" tations to which he is exposed, and the tri-
 " als, with which he is exercised"—shall be
 proportioned to his strength, and to the sup-
 plies of grace afforded him. " There hath no
 " temptation taken you but such as is com-
 " mon to man ; but God is faithful, who
 " will not suffer you to be tempted above
 " what ye are able, but will, with the temp-
 " tation, also make a way to escape, that ye
 " may be able to bear it." He hath the pro-
 mise of the sanctified use of the various dis-
 pensations of providence towards him. " And
 " we know that all things work together for
 " good to them, that love God, to them
 " who are the called according to his pur-
 " pose." And he hath the promise of an
 exceeding and eternal weight of glory, as the
 reward of a fidelity, diligence, and perse-
 verance. " Thou shalt guide me with thy
 " counsel, and afterwards receive me to glo-
 " ry. As for me, I will behold thy face in
 " righteousness ; I shall be satisfied, when I
 " awake, with thy likeness. Thou wilt show
 " me the path of life, in thy presence, is ful-
 " ness of joy, at thy right hand, are pleasures
 " forever more. Yea, the promise hath ref-
 " erence, not only to himself, it extends to his
 " posterity after him. For I the Lord thy
 " God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniqui-
 " ty of the fathers upon the children, unto
 " the third and fourth generation, of them
 " that hate me ; and showing mercy unto
 " thousands, of them that love me, and keep

“ my commandments. For the promise is
 “ unto you, and to your children. I have
 “ been young, and now am old ; yet have I
 “ not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his
 “ seed begging bread, he is ever merciful, and
 “ lendeth ; and his seed is blessed. Leave
 “ thy fatherless children, I will preserve them
 “ alive ; and let thy widows trust in me.”

In short, there is nothing, which concerns
 the believer, but what is the subject of a di-
 vine promise. “ Godliness is profitable un-
 “ to all things, having promise of the life
 “ that now is, and of that which is to come.
 “ For all things are yours ; whether Paul, or
 “ Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life,
 “ or death, or things present, or things to
 “ come, all are yours, and ye are Christ’s,
 “ and Christ is God’s.”

On these promises the faith and hope of
 the people of God fix. These are their comfort
 and support, until the time of the enjoyment
 of the blessings promised. So the Apostle
 tells us of the saints of old. “ These all
 “ died in faith, not having received the pro-
 “ mises, but having seen them afar off, and
 “ were persuaded of them, and embraced
 “ them, and confessed that they were strangers
 “ and pilgrims on the earth.”

Faith, then, fixes upon these promises
 themselves, or upon the blessings contained
 in them. It fixes, also, upon the power, and
 wisdom, and faithfulness, of God, as ensur-
 ing the accomplishment of them. It con-

templates him as the Almighty God, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords ; who ruleth and reigneth ; whose kingdom is over all ; who exercises an incontrollable superiority ; who doeth, in the armies of Heaven above, and amongst the inhabitants of this lower world, according to his eternal purpose and pleasure. It realises him as wise in heart, and mighty in counsel ; who ordereth all things well ; who taketh the wicked in their own craftiness, and against whom no device ever prospered. And it relies upon him as unchangeably faithful, and true ; who, though Heaven and earth should pass away, will not suffer one word, which he hath spoken, to fall to the ground, or one of his promises to fail of its full accomplishment.

4. The threatenings of the gospel are also objects of this faith. These are particularly to be considered in two respects ; as they refer to the miserable end of those, who, having made a profession of religion, apostatise from it ; and as they refer to the fatherly corrections and chastisements with which God exercises his own people.

It is, indeed, the promise of a faithful God, and which will undoubtedly be accomplished with respect to every true believer, that they shall be “ kept, by the power of “ God, through faith, unto salvation ;” and, could the christian always make good his title to the character, he needs not fear the

accomplishment of the promise. But this he is not always able to do. The evidences of a work of grace in his heart, are liable to be, and often are, observed by many causes. He has, then, no farther reason to conclude himself a christian, than as he finds, in himself, the marks and characters of one as laid down in the word of God. As far as he finds his heart disposed to turn aside from God, and his feet deviating from the right path of the divine commandments ; so far has he reason to fear, that he has been deceiving himself, and that he may turn an apostate. This is clearly exemplified in the case of the Apostle Paul, “ I,” therefore, says he, “ so run, not as certainly ; so fight “ I, not as one that beatech the air, but I “ keep under my body, and bring it into sub- “ jection ; lest, that, by any means, when I “ have preached to others, I, myself, should “ be a cast away.”

So many and subtil are the devices of Satan ; so great the treachery of our own hearts ; so liable are we to be deceived, and so prone to deceive ourselves ; and so many are the instances of persons, who once seemed to bid fair for the kingdom of Heaven, and afterwards denied the Lord that bought them ; that the exhortation carries in it a dreadful alarm to all, “ Wherefore, let him, “ that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest “ he fall.” The sin of such, as, having made a profession of religion, again apostatise from

it, is most heinous and aggravated, and their punishment will be dreadful. “ No
 “ man, having put his hand to the plough,
 “ and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of
 “ God. If any man draw back, my soul
 “ shall have no pleasure in him. For, if we
 “ sin wilfully, after that we have received
 “ the knowledge of the truth, there remain-
 “ eth no more sacrifice for sins ; but a cer-
 “ tain fearful looking for of judgment, and
 “ fiery indignation, which shall devour the
 “ adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law,
 “ died without mercy, under two or three
 “ witnesses : Of how much sorer punish-
 “ ment, 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
 “ hath done despite unto the spirit of grace.”
 For it is impossible, &c. See Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6.
 Although, then, the true believer is secured
 from either total or final apostacy ; yet, not
 being able, always, to make good his cha-
 racter, to his own satisfaction, he is by no
 means exempted from the fears of it ; and
 these fears are designed and made subservi-
 ent to his perseverance and safety. It is
 clear to me, my brethren, there are few, or
 rather none of the people of God, whose ap-
 prehensions and fears of apostacy, do not
 occasion many serious and sad reflections ;
 and if there are any of you arrived to such a

degree of security as to judge caution and circumspection in this case unnecessary, let me assure such, that their very security bespeaks their greater danger. But although the real christian is secured from either total or final apostacy, yet he is by no means exempted from God's fatherly corrections and chastisements. "Thou wast," saith the Psalmist, "a rod that forgavest them, though they
 " tool of vengeance of their inventions." The condition of the covenant of grace in this respect, we have already seen. "I will be as a father to the fatherless, and as a merciful father to such as are left without a father; and will visit the fatherless, and will walk not in my judgments; they shall not keep my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes." On this account, it is, that the Psalmist says, Psalm cxix. 120. "My
 " flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am
 " affraid of thy judgments."

Hope and fear are two of the most powerful principles of human activity; and, notwithstanding there is a principle of superior energy to either of them in the heart of the christian, yet their influence is by no means excluded, or rendered unnecessary. He is constrained indeed by the ties of the greatest and most endearing love; yet, he is greatly influenced by the hope of a reward, and the fear of punishment. So the Apostle enjoins it upon christians—"Work out your own
 " salvation with fear and trembling. For it

“ is God which worketh in you, both to will
 “ and to do of his good pleasure. And let
 “ us not be weary in well-doing ; for in due
 “ season we shall reap, if we faint not.” I
 cannot stay here to give you an account of
 the various ways in which God corrects his
 own people. It is sufficient to my present
 purpose that I have shewn you that the things
 contained in the word of God, both when
 they have respect to moral apostates, and to
 the transgressions and falls of the people of God,
 themselves are objects of this faith, and that
 the Christian may and ought to be influenced
 by them.

5. The many and illustrious examples pro-
 posed in the word of God, for our imitation,
 are also to be taken into the account in con-
 sidering the objects of this faith. We are to
 be “ followers of them, who, through faith
 “ and patience, inherit the promises. Where-
 “ fore,” saith the Apostle, “ I beseech you,
 “ be ye followers of me. Be ye followers
 “ of me, even as I also am of Christ. Bre-
 “ thren, be followers together of me, and
 “ mark them which walk so, as ye have us
 “ for an ensample.” The whole of this
 chapter, out of which I have taken my text, is
 a celebration of the heroic triumphs of faith,
 and holds forth various illustrious examples
 for our imitation. The Apostle having, in
 the close of the preceding chapter, told us,
 that “ the just shall live by faith ;” in the
 beginning of this defines faith, in this ref-

pect, to be, “the substance of things hoped
 “for, the evidence of things not seen.” He
 then proceeds to give us an account of many
 of the saints of old, who had been remarka-
 ble instances of the powerful operations and
 effects of this faith. He particularly mentions,
 Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sara, Isaac,
 Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Rahab, and closes
 the list of those worthies thus—“And what
 “shall I say more? For the time would fail
 “me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and
 “of Samson, and of Jophtha, of David also,
 “and Samuel, and of the Prophets; who,
 “through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought
 “righteousness, obtained promises, stopped
 “the mouths of lions, quenched the violence
 “of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out
 “of weakness, were made strong, waxed va-
 “liant in fight, turned to flight the armies
 “of the aliens. Women received their
 “dead raised to life again, and others were
 “tortured, not accepting deliverance; that
 “they might obtain a better resurrection.
 “And others had trial of cruel mockings,
 “and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds
 “and imprisonments. They were stoned,
 “they were sawn asunder; were tempted;
 “were slain with the sword; they wandered
 “about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being
 “destitute, persecuted, tormented; of whom
 “the world was not worthy; they wandered
 “in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens,
 “and caves of the earth. And these all,

“ having obtained a good report through
 “ faith, received not the promise : God hav-
 “ ing provided some better things for us,
 “ that they without us should not be made
 “ perfect.”

Now, that these are proposed as exam-
 ples for our imitation, is evident, from what
 the Apostle says in the beginning of the fol-
 lowing chapter. “ Wherefore,” says he,
 “ seeing we also are compassed about with
 “ so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay
 “ aside every weight, and the sin which doth
 “ so easily beset us, and let us run with pa-
 “ tience the race that is set before us.”—
 Example has a powerful influence upon hu-
 man nature. It is much more powerful
 than precept. It renders precepts, as it were,
 visible, and has a powerful assimilating in-
 fluence. Whether then the christian be call-
 ed upon to do or to suffer, many illustrious
 examples present themselves to his view.—
 These renowned heroes point out to him
 the way to glory, and call upon him to fol-
 low them to the enjoyment of it. And
 whilst the believer has them full in the view
 of faith, they will raise him above himself,
 and animate him to the atchievement of glo-
 rious exploits. But, in a particular manner,
 is the christian, in the exercise of faith, to
 keep in view the example of the Captain of
 his salvation : “ Looking unto Jesus, the au-
 “ thor and finisher of faith ; who, for the

“ joy that was set before him, endured the
 “ cross, despising the shame, and is set
 “ down at the right hand of the throne of
 “ God. For consider him that endured
 “ such contradiction of sinners against him-
 “ self, lest ye be wearied and faint in your
 “ minds.” All human examples are defec-
 tive and imperfect, and we are to follow the
 best of saints no farther than they are fol-
 lowers of the Lord. But, in the life and
 death of Jesus Christ, every divine grace
 and every human virtue shine forth without
 a spot to intercept their lustre. And to the
 contemplation and imitation of this exam-
 ple are we called by our christian profession,
 until we transplant into our hearts and lives
 every grace and virtue which was conspi-
 cuous in him.

We come now, in the second place, to
 apply these objects to the case and experience
 of the christian, by taking a particular view
 of some of the various situations and circum-
 stances which he may be in, and of the exer-
 cises of faith as corresponding with them.

Is the believer, then, called forth to the
 discharge of many and arduous duties, and
 is he utterly insufficient of himself, for any
 good word or work? Faith apprehends the
 fulness and all-sufficiency which are in Jesus
 Christ, his glorious head. It considers this
 fulness as deposited in him, and possessed by
 him, for the express purpose of being com-
 municated to his body and members; and,

in the exercises of it, the person actually derives from him those supplies which he stands in need of. It takes hold on the divine strength ; and the subject of it strengthens himself in the Lord his God. The language of it is, “ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. I can do all things through Christ strengthening me. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me ; for when I am weak, then am I strong.” Alas ! says the christian, how shall I perform the services which I am, or may be called unto ? “ Hast thou not known ?” saith saith, “ hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young man shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary ; and they shall walk and not faint.” Is the christian called to endure many and severe afflictions and trials ? Faith opens up to him various sources of support and consolation. It satisfies him, that, “ although man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly up-

“wards, yet, affliction cometh not forth out
 “of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out
 “of the ground ;” but that they are under
 the direction of an infinitely wise and good
 Cod. It shews their necessity and use.
 “By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of
 “Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to
 “take away his sin.” It discovers, even
 through the dark cloud of affliction and ad-
 verse dispensations, the hand of a merciful
 and gracious Father, who doth not afflict
 willingly, nor grieve the children of men ;
 who afflicts us for our benefit, and chastises
 us for our reformation ; who deals thus with
 us that we may be partakers of his holiness.
 “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,
 “and scourgeth every son whom he receiv-
 “eth. Now no chastening for the present
 “seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; ne-
 “vertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peace-
 “able fruit of righteousness, unto them
 “which are exercised thereby.” It opens
 up sources of abundant support and conso-
 lation under all the afflictions and sufferings
 to which he is exposed. “For as the suf-
 “ferings of Christ abound in us, so our con-
 “solation also aboundeth by Christ.” It
 satisfies him, also, of the happy issue of a
 sanctified affliction. “For our light affliction,
 “which is but for a moment, worketh for
 “us a far more exceeding and eternal weight
 “of glory.” Justly, then, may the christian,
 in the lively exercise of faith “not only

“ rejoice in hope of the glory of God, but,
 “ glory in tribulations also, knowing that
 “ tribulation worketh patience ; and pati-
 “ ence, experience ; and experience, hope ;
 “ and hope maketh not ashamed, because the
 “ love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,
 “ by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto
 “ us.” Is the christian exposed to the blas-
 phemous suggestions of Satan ? In the exer-
 cise of “ the shield of faith,” he may be
 “ able to quench all the fiery darts of the
 “ wicked.” Faith considers Satan as a van-
 quished enemy. It contemplates the Captain
 of his salvation as, on the cross, bruising the
 serpent’s head ; and, in his resurrection and
 ascension, leading captivity captive, and tri-
 umphing over all the powers of darkness.—
 And it views complete and everlasting victory
 as ensured to all his people through the vic-
 tory which he has obtained.

Do the possessions and enjoyments of this
 world solicit, in an inordinate degree, the
 affections and pursuits of the christian ? “ We
 “ have,” saith faith, “ no continuing city here,
 “ but we seek one to come,” we look “ for a
 “ city which hath foundations, whose builder
 “ and maker is God ; a building of God, an
 “ house not made with hands, eternal in the
 “ heavens. We seek to be partakers of an
 “ eternal inheritance ; an inheritance incor-
 “ ruptable, and undefiled, and that fadeth not
 “ away, reserved in heaven for us ; an in-
 “ heritance among all them which are sanctifi-

"ed ; the inheritance of the saints in light." We " look for new heavens and a new earth, " wherein dwelleth righteousness," when " the earth, and the things which are therein " shall be burnt up. The Lord is my portion, " faith my soul. Whom have I in heaven " but thee ? and there is none upon earth " that I desire besides thee." Is the christian solicited to the gratification of any of the desires or prepensties of the flesh ? The pleasures of sin, faith faith, are unsatisfying ; they are but for a season ; and they leave a sting behind them. " What fruit had ye then, " in those things whereof ye are now ashamed, " for the end of these things is death!" for, " if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but " if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds " of the body, ye shall live. What have I to " do any more with idols? How can I do this " great wickedness and sin against God ?" Is the christian sensible of many infirmities and failings ? Is he conscious, that in many things he offends, and in all comes short of the glory of God ? Faith discovers a glorious advocate and propitiation ; who, by one offering, has perfected forever, them that are sanctified ; and, having entered into the holiest of all, by his blood, now appears in the presence of God, in our behalf. Is the christian in prosperous and comfortable circumstances with respect to this world ? Hath God increased his greatness, and doth he comfort him on every side ? Faith considers

these enjoyments as only distant emanations from the great and unwasted source of blessedness; and it conducts the soul up those streams until it finds its rest in God.

Is the christian altogether at a loss to account for many of the dispensations of providence? Are his paths in the deep waters, and his foot-steps not known? his judgments unsearchable, and his ways past finding out? Although, faith faith, he make "darkness his secret place," and "his pavilion round about him be dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies;" yet, "justice and judgment are the habitation of" his "throne; mercy and truth shall go before" his "face. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." Is the christian environed, on all hands, with difficulties, enemies, and dangers, so that he knows not which way to turn himself? "Though," faith faith, "I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me, thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me." Viewing the prosperity of the wicked, the afflictions of the righteous, and the particular calamities under which he himself labors; is the christian ready to be envious at the foolish, and to call in question the providence of God; his knowledge of the affairs of the children of men; his care of, and kindness to his own people? Is he ready to say, "How

“ doth God know, and is there knowledge
 “ in the most high ? Verily, I have cleansed
 “ my heart in vain, and washed my hands in
 “ innocency ? Verily,” saith saith, “ there is
 “ a reward for the righteous ; verily there is
 “ a God that judgeth in the earth. Though
 “ hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be
 “ justified.” Their present situation is
 exceedingly precarious and dangerous,
 “ surely thou didst set them in slippery pla-
 “ ces.” And their end will be certain, irre-
 “ trievable, and dreadful ruin ; “ Thou
 “ castedst them down into destruction. How
 “ are they brought into desolation, as in a
 “ moment ! They are utterly consumed with
 “ terrors. But the seed of the righteous
 “ shall be delivered.”

Is the believer straitened in his worldly
 circumstances, so that, by the utmost dili-
 gence he scarcely obtains a scanty sustenance ?
 “ The earth,” saith saith, “ is the Lord’s and
 “ the fulness thereof. No good thing will
 “ he with-hold from them that walk upright-
 “ ly.” Is he tempted to violate the rights of
 conscience for the sake of any worldly ad-
 vantage ? “ What,” saith saith, “ is a man
 “ profited, if he shall gain the whole world,
 “ and loose his own soul ? Or, what shall a
 “ man give in exchange for his soul ? For
 “ the redemption of their soul is precious,
 “ and it ceaseth for ever.” Doth the chris-
 tian languish under the hidings of God’s
 face, whilst, at the same time, he is pressed

fore by many and grievous afflictions?—
 “ Though he slay me,” saith faith, “ yet will
 “ I trust in him.” I will “ trust in the
 “ name of the Lord, and stay” myself “ upon
 “ my God.” Is the christian stripped of ma-
 ny, or of all the comforts and enjoyments
 of this life? “ The Lord,” saith faith,
 “ gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blef-
 “ sed be the name of the Lord.” Although
 “ the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall
 “ fruit be in the vines; the labor of the
 “ olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield
 “ no meat; the flock shall be cut off from
 “ the fold, and there shall be no herd in the
 “ stalls; yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I
 “ will joy in the God of my salvation.”—
 Doth unbelief say, “ 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? The
 “ Lord,” saith faith, “ is not slack concern-
 “ ing his promise (as some men count slack-
 “ nefs) but is long suffering to us ward, not
 “ willing that any should perish, but that
 “ all should come to repentance. One day
 “ is with the Lord, as a thousand years, and
 “ a thousand years, as one day. But the
 “ day of the Lord will come, as a thief in
 “ the night. Behold the Lord cometh with
 “ ten thousands 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. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and
 “ every eye shall see him, and they also
 “ which pierced him; and all kindreds of
 “ the earth shall wail because of him; even
 “ so—Amen.”

Is the christian oppressed with griefs and
 fears which he cannot account for? Doth
 he say, with the Psalmist, “ I remembered
 “ God, and was troubled—I complained and
 “ my spirit was overwhelmed: O my God,
 “ my soul is cast down in me; I am so
 “ troubled that I cannot speak! From the
 “ end of the earth,” saith saith, “ will I cry
 “ unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed:
 “ lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
 “ Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and
 “ why art thou disquieted within me? hope
 “ thou in God, for I shall yet praise him,
 “ who is the health of my countenance and
 “ my God. I will remember the years of
 “ the right hand of the most high. I will re-
 “ member the works of the Lord; surely I
 “ will remember thy wonders of old. I will
 “ meditate also of all thy works, and talk of
 “ thy doings.” Doth the christian know,
 that he is liable to death? “ We are,”
 saith saith, “ always confident, knowing that,
 “ whilst we are at home in the body, we are
 “ absent from the Lord (for we walk by
 “ faith, not by sight.) We are confident,
 “ I say, and willing rather to be absent from

“ the body, and to be present with the Lord.
 “ Death is swallowed up in victory. O death,
 “ where is thy sting ? O grave where is thy
 “ victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and
 “ the strength of sin is the law. But thanks
 “ be to God, who giveth us the victory,
 “ through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Thus, my brethren, I have shewn you, in a great variety of instances, how faith, as it is a ruling and governing principle in the christian life, will be exercised with respect to its different objects.

VI. S E R M O N.

H E B. xi. 6.

BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
 TO PLEASE HIM.

IT only remains, now, that we make some general improvement of what has been said, and to conclude the whole :

1. From what hath been said, we infer the necessity and excellence of faith. Although every grace be essential to salvation ; although the various graces of the Holy Spirit be inseparable with respect to the subject of them ; and although the principle of every grace be in the heart of all true believers, yet, I apprehend, the figures sul-

ficiently warrant me in saying, that there is no other grace so closely and inseparably connected with salvation as that of faith. Faith unites the soul to Jesus Christ, and interests it in all the benefits of his purchase. Faith brings the subject of it within the bonds of the new covenant, and gives it an interest in all the precious blessings and privileges contained in it. We are justified by faith. Faith is the great principle of our sanctification. And we become the children of God by faith. The life of grace is begun in faith, carried on in the exercises of it, and perfected by it. Hence the scriptures so frequently and expressly connect faith with salvation, declaring, that he that believeth shall be saved ; but that he that believeth not shall be damned. Justly, then, doth the Apostle Peter term it, “ precious faith.”

2. Let us improve what hath been said by examining ourselves, whether or no we are the subjects of that faith, without which it is impossible to please God.

In entering upon this, I would beg leave to remind you of some of those observations which I made after the general division of the subject. They were these ; that when I spoke of faith in the three respects in which it was proposed to consider it, viz. as the principle, and lying at the foundation of all religion—as having a particular respect to the dispensation of the Gospel—and as a ruling and governing principle in the christian

life—I by no means meant three different kinds of faith, but the same faith as it hath respect to, and is exercised about its different objects—that in each of these respects it is common to all who are in a capacity to please God—and that, although, in the order of nature, there be a priority with regard to the objects of faith in these several respects; yet, in the order of time, or in the soul's acting toward them, there is no such precedency always maintained; but that it may be first in exercise, or that the actings of it may be first discerned, sometimes in one of these respects and sometimes in another. So that faith, in any of these respects, will evidence it in all the rest, or it will evidence the principle of faith from which all its actings proceed.

In this view, then, there is not a branch of this subject but what would afford us marks and characters by which to try ourselves. Time, however, will not admit that I should even mention the various things, which arise from the subject, as descriptive of the christian character. I hope, my brethren, you have not been unconcerned, or merely curious hearers, whilst we have been engaged in the particular investigation of this subject, but have been applying the various things which have been suggested, to yourselves, in judging of your

state and character by them. All I can now propose to do is, to select a few of the most distinguishing characteristics, of the true believer, and to propose them to your hearts and consciences.

It may be necessary that I premise one thing more here, namely, that the christian character is to be determined by the prevailing disposition. The present enquiry is not so much respecting the strength and perfection, as the sincerity and reality of your faith. It is not whether you have any remains of unbelief, or in what proportion it may be to your faith ; but whether faith or unbelief hath the ascendancy. In short, whether faith hath the ascendancy over every opposite principle, and hath a practical influence.

Having premised these things, let us now proceed to the consideration of some of the principal marks and characters of the true believer which have occurred in the prosecution of this subject.

If then, you are the subjects of that faith, without which it is impossible to please God, you have returned to God, choosing him as your portion, and delighting yourselves in him as an all-sufficient good ; being persuaded, that his favor is life, that it is your glory to be like him, and that your happiness can be found only in his service, and in the enjoyment of him. And, if you have thus returned to God, it hath been in the way of his own appointment, in the way which infinite wisdom and love have devised and

provided. You have accepted of Jesus Christ as he was offered to you in the gospel, as a whole Savior, and as a free Savior, to do all the work, and to have all the praise. You have consented to, you have approved of, you have acquiesced in, and you have complied with that device which God hath made known in the gospel, of glorifying his name in the redemption of a lost world. And you have betaken yourselves to this Savior, and to this method of salvation through him, under a rational and clear conviction, and a feeling sense of it, that you had destroyed yourselves, that you were ungodly and without strength, and that there was no other way in which you could possibly be saved. You indeed believe, that there is a God, possessed of all possible perfection; who hath created, who upholds, and who governs the world and all things in it; that there is, in the very nature of things, an essential difference, between virtue and vice, sin and holiness, that the one is intrinsically beautiful and lovely, and the other intrinsically odious and deformed; that your souls are immortal; that there will be a state of retribution; and that the scriptures are of divine original and authority. Your faith hath purified your heart, it hath emptied you of self, and deeply humbled you before God—it hath produced peace of conscience, and diffused a sweet serenity and composure through your souls—it works by love—it is a princi-

ple of universal obedience—it produces godly sorrow for sin—it overcomes the world—it produces submission to the will of God, and resignation to the dispensations of his providence—and it renders Jesus Christ universally precious and lovely in your esteem. You live by the faith of the son of God—you live under the habitual prevailing influence of spiritual and divine things—you are allured by the promises, and deterred by the threatenings contained in the word of God—and you are animated by the many and illustrious examples proposed in it for your imitation.

These, my brethren, I am persuaded, are some of the most distinguishing characteristics of the faith of God's elect.

I hope, then, I trust, that there is a goodly number of you, now in my hearing, who can lay a just claim to these characters; who, after the most strict and impartial examination, cannot but conclude, that such is the disposition, and that such have been the actings and exercises of your minds, as we have now been describing. Justly may such adopt the language of the Psalmist—“ Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” O what infinite obligations are such under to redeeming mercy and love.

Let me remind you, however, that your work is not yet done. “ Let” faith, as well as “ patience, have its perfect work.”

You are to “ add to your faith, virtue ;
 “ and to virtue, knowledge ; and to know-
 “ ledge, temperance ; and to temperance,
 “ patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and
 “ to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to
 “ brotherly kindness, charity.” Still will
 there be a necessity for the exercise of this
 grace, until grace is made perfect in glory,
 and you receive the end of your faith, even
 “ the salvation of your souls.” And still will
 you find reason to adopt the prayer of the
 Apostles, “ Lord, increase our faith.” Whilst
 faith is in lively exercise, every other grace
 will flourish and thrive ; but when faith is
 weak, every other grace will be in a lan-
 guishing condition. Live near to God, and
 under a sense of his constant presence. Live
 by the faith of the Son of God. Live under
 the habitual influence of spiritual and divine
 things. Walk by faith, until it be forever
 lost in the sight and enjoyment of God.

Probably, there are others of you, now in
 my hearing, living in uncertainty whether
 you have ever believed or not. And why,
 I pray you, leave this matter in doubt for
 one moment longer ? Why not, this moment,
 put it out of doubt, for ever hereafter ?
 Why not now set to your seals, that God is
 true ? The people of God frequently spend
 that time in questioning the sincerity and re-
 ality of their faith, which ought to be em-
 ployed in actual believing. This is the most
 direct and speedy method of coming at satis-
 faction in this matter.

But, my brethren, are there not some of you, now in my hearing, who, if you will deal faithfully and truly with your own souls, must conclude, that you are strangers to that disposition, and those exercises which we have been describing, as characteristic of the true believer. It is with such I mean, at present, principally to deal, by urging upon you that faith, without which it is impossible to please God; particularly, that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And may God enable me to press this matter in a suitable manner, and so concur, by the gracious operations of his Holy Spirit, as to render what may be said effectual.

I shall not spend much time, at present, in telling you what it is to believe. This I have already endeavored to do at considerable length. But let me remind you, that had I spent much more time upon it, and explained it to much better purpose than I have been able to do, it would all have been insufficient to have given those of you, who are yet strangers to it, any true notion of it. Faith in Jesus Christ, or the exercises of the soul in believing, is one of the things of the spirit of God, which the natural man receiveth not, neither can he know it, because it is spiritually discerned. Happy they, who, from their own experience, know what it is! Happy they, who, having heard and learned of the Father, have come to Jesus Christ! Commit yourselves, I pray you, in

this case, to the conduct of the Holy Spirit of God, whose office it is to “bring the blind
 “by a way that they know not, to lead them
 “in paths that they have not known; to
 “make darkness light, and crooked things
 “strait unto them.”

The point which I am now to urge upon you, is, not to believe that Christ is yours, that the promises of the gospel are yours, that pardon, grace, and salvation are yours. To believe this, would, with respect to many of you, be to believe what is not true; and before you can, whilst in your present situation, believe it, you must relinquish your reason, and give yourselves up to delusion. But what I am now to urge upon you is, to lay hold upon the hope set before you; to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, as your Savior, and to accept of the salvation purchased by him, and freely offered to you in the gospel. I am to call upon you, for the cheerful consent of your souls to, their full approbation of, and their hearty acquiescence in, that way which God hath made known of glorifying his name in the redemption of a lost world. When you have been enabled to do this, then, and not until then, have you a rational, and scriptural foundation to believe, that Jesus Christ hath loved you, and given himself for you. Make good the first of these, and the other will follow of course.

But here a difficulty occurs, which, unless I am able to remove, may render my endeavors in this case of none effect. I am about to urge upon you the exercise of that faith without which it is impossible to please God ; particularly that you believe on the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God. But, it may be said, Is not faith the gift of God ? Must it not be given us of God, in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him ? True.— The first act, and all the subsequent exercises of faith, are of God. And would to God, that you were truly sensible of this. That faith, which is produced through the operations of the Holy Spirit of God, is always preceded by a feeling sense, that it is not of ourselves to believe. And it is by endeavoring to act faith that this sense of our own inability to believe is obtained. You will never know your own inability in this case, until you are put to try your strength. Then, instead of making your inability an excuse for not doing what you have no heart to do, your sense of it will induce you to look to God, and humbly to wait upon him, for the influences of his spirit to work in you the work of faith, and every grace, with power. So that, although that faith, through which we are saved, is not of ourselves, but the gift of God ; yet my urging you to believe, and your attempting to comply with your duty in this case, may answer a very valuable purpose. It may, by the

blessing of God, be a mean of bringing you to that sense of your inability to believe ; without which you have no reason to expect, that you will ever have the precious gift of faith conferred upon you. There is a pride and self-sufficiency natural to the human heart, which induces men to wish to bring a price in their hands, to merit salvation by their own endeavors, to be in whole, or in part, their own Saviors ; or, at least, to render themselves, in some measure, fit objects of the divine grace and power ; they cannot think of being entirely indebted to rich, free, and sovereign grace. But, believe me, if ever you come to Jesus Christ for salvation, according to the terms of the gospel, you will come to him just as you are. You cannot better yourselves. And you will come to him for those very things which you are now looking for in yourselves as recommendations to him. You will cast yourselves at the foot-stool of sovereign grace, crying, " God be merciful to me, a sinner. Help, Lord, or I perish."

But your attempts may, in this case, serve another very valuable purpose. God deals with us as rational creatures. All his operations upon us are perfectly consistent with that nature which he hath given us, and those faculties with which we are endowed. What he doth for us, in bringing us to a participation of the blessings of grace and salvation, he doth by us. He

confers the power, and calls upon us to exert it. He implants the principle, and calls upon us for the actings of it. He communicates grace, and calls upon us for the exercise and improvement of it. He deals, in short, with us, as our Lord did with the man who had his hand withered. He said unto him, "Stretch forth thine hand; and he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole like as the other." Let it be your importunate prayer, then, Give, Lord, what thou requirest; and then require what thou wilt. Attempt to put forth the actings of faith, and God may, at that instant, convey to your souls the power to believe.

It is the indispensable duty of every one, who hears the gospel, instantly, to comply with the commandment of God, in it, by believing on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. What you will do, in this case, and what you ought to do, may be entirely different things.

Were such of you, as are yet in your natural state, in any proper measure sensible of the deplorable situation in which you are, less persuasion and intreaty, in urging upon you faith in Jesus Christ, might be necessary. Your importunate cry would then be, "What must I do to be saved? O for a messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto me my uprightness."—Let me beseech and intreat all such, now in my hearing, to lay this matter seriously and thoroughly to heart. Open your eyes, and

behold your misery and danger, before it be forever too late. Open your eyes, and behold the remedy before it be forever out of your reach. You are the degenerate offspring of an apostate Adam. You have transgressed the divine law, and are under its curse. You have broken covenant with God, and are liable to the penalty. You are by nature the children of wrath ; and to your original guilt, which was sufficient, of itself, to have made you miserable to all eternity, you have added innumerable actual transgressions, many of them, exceedingly heinous in their nature, and highly aggravated in their circumstances. Your iniquities are more than the hairs of your head. They are as the sand upon the sea shore, which cannot be numbered. They are gone over your heads as a thick cloud, they are grown up even to the heavens, and they call loudly for judgment to be executed upon you. And if there are any of you who do not know this to be the case, it is because you are asleep in security, and dead in trespasses and in sins. It is because the God of this world hath blinded your minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them. The favor God is life, and his loving kindness is better than life ; these you have forfeited and lost. His frowns and displeasure, his wrath and curse, are worse than death ; and to these are you become liable, " For our God is a consum-

“ing fire.” And he “will, by no means, clear
“the guilty.”

Bad as your situation, in this respect, is, it is not all. You have not only forfeited the favor of God, which is your life ; you have lost his image also, which is your greatest glory. Sin hath despoiled you of your excellency, and robbed you of your happiness. You are alienated from God and from a life of godliness, and in these consist the very wretchedness of misery. Enjoy God in these circumstances you cannot, and without the enjoyment of him, you cannot be happy. You can find no pleasure in the worship and service of God here. To these you have an utter aversion—“Because the carnal
“mind is enmity against God ; for it is not
“subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” And, I am persuaded, that, rather than dwell in Heaven, you would choose your residence in the fire and brimstone, the blackness and darkness, the weepings and wailings of hell. These would be less intolerable and distressing to you, than the glory and joys of Heaven. Sooner shall light and darkness become one, fire and water be blended together, and the most opposite and jarring things in nature be sweetly united, and hold social intercourse, than an impure and unholy soul can have intercourse with an holy God, or be happy in his service or the enjoyment of him. “Can
“two walk together, except they be agreed ?

“ for what fellowship hath righteousness with
 “ unrighteousness ? And what communion
 “ hath light with darkness ? And what con-
 “ cord hath Christ with Belial ? ”

Is not, then, the situation which you are in, a deplorable one ? And doth not this contain argument enough to persuade you to believe in Jesus Christ ? In vain will you look for relief from any other quarter. You are, in yourselves, not only ungodly, but also without strength. You “ are all as an unclean
 “ thing, and all ” your “ righteousnesses are as
 “ filthy rags. ” If God should enter into judgment with you, you could not stand before him, or answer him for one of the thousands of your sins. If he should plead a controversy with your souls, the spirits which he hath made would fail before him. Should you ask for help from the creatures, they would all reply—It is not me. Neither Angels in Heaven, men on earth, nor Devils in Hell ; nothing, whether animate, or inanimate, throughout the whole creation of God, could afford it unto you. God’s own right hand must work out your deliverance. Jesus Christ is that horn of salvation which God hath raised up for you. Look to him, then, and be ye saved. “ Behold the lamb of God,
 “ which taketh away the sin of the world. ” He is “ the way, the truth, and the life ; no man
 “ cometh to the father but by ” him. “ Neither is
 “ there salvation in any other ; for there is none

“ other name under Heaven given among
 “ men whereby we must be saved.”

Are there any of you ready, under a sense of your misery and danger, to exclaim and say, Alas ! is there any hope for one in so deplorable a situation ? Is there any ground for one, so guilty, to expect pardon ? May one, so polluted and depraved, entertain the prospect that he may be regenerated and sanctified ? Is there any reason to expect, that one, who hath so long abused the patience and long-suffering of God, may yet find mercy ? Yes. Turn your attention to that rich and ample provision made for you in the gospel. There is a remedy in all respects adequate to your disease. There is no case shall reproach the skill of the glorious Physician of souls. There is no disease can surpass the sovereign efficacy of the balm of his most precious blood. Infinite wisdom hath devised a way in which God can be glorified in your salvation ; a way in which he can magnify the riches of his grace, and make an illustrious display of his divine perfections and glory, by raising you from the depths of misery and distress, and advancing you to the greatest glory and happiness of which your nature is capable ; glory and happiness, greater and more permanent than those from which you have fallen. Sovereign and distinguishing love hath provided a ransom for you. God can now be just, and the justifier of him that believeth. He, on whom help is

laid for you, is "mighty to save; able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Dare no more, then, to murmur at, or arrogantly to arraign the dispensation of an holy, wise, just, and sovereign God, in constituting Adam the head of the human race. No more, in fullen discontent, repine at the providence of God, in permitting him to fall. But be persuaded to except of the righteousness and salvation which are brought nigh unto you; and to admire and adore the wisdom and love, the mercy and grace of God, which have taken occasion from our base and groundless apostacy to make a display of his perfections and glory to the admiration of every intelligent creature, and made provision not only for our recovery, but also for our promotion.

"O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

Do you ask, upon what terms are these invaluable blessings obtained? I answer, the terms are most gracious and easy. Water, wine, milk and bread, are proposed in the gospel market, without money, and without price. Whosoever will may come, and take them freely. Nay, God condescends to expostulate the case with you, and kindly invites you to come and accept of them. "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. Where-
 “ fore do ye spend money for that which is
 “ not bread ? and your labor for that which
 “ satisfieth not ? Hearken diligently unto
 “ me, and eat ye that which is good, and
 “ let your soul delight itself in fatness. In-
 “ cline your ear, and come unto me ; hear,
 “ and your soul shall live, and I will make
 “ an everlasting covenant with you, * even
 “ the sure mercies of David. If any man
 “ thirst, let him come unto me and drink. The
 “ spirit and the bride say, Come. And let
 “ him that heareth say, Come. And let him
 “ that is athirst come. And whosoever will,
 “ let him take the water of life freely.

Are you disposed to receive the invita-
 ception which is here made to you by Je-
 sus Christ ? Let me ask you—Did he not,
 from eternity, rejoice in the habitable parts
 of the earth, and were not his delights, even
 then, with the sons of men ? Did he not,
 from that early period, engage to be the Sa-
 viour of sinners of our race ? Did he not do
 this with the most cheerfulnefs and readi-
 ness ? Hath he not said that sinners might
 live ; and shed his precious blood, that, by
 it, he might wash them from their sins ?
 Doth he not invite all, indiscriminately, to
 come to him ? Hath he not said, “ Him
 “ that cometh to me, I will in no wise call
 “ out ?” Hath he ever rejected one soul that

come to him, according to his invitations ? Is he not grieved for the hardness of sinners hearts ? Will he not rejoice and be satisfied in seeing of the travail of his soul ? And yet, dost thou question his willingness to receive thee ? What unworthy apprehensions are these of the divinely compassionate Redeemer ? How ensnaring are the devices of Satan ? How deceitful, above all things, and desperately wicked, is the human heart ? Behold, O sinner, the arms and the heart of the Savior, both open to receive thee ! He will sooner deny himself than spurn from his presence one soul that cometh to him in the way of his own appointment.

Nay, you are not only permitted, and invited to come to Jesus Christ. God hath interposed his divine authority in this case. He hath made it your indispensable duty, by an absolute and positive command, which you disobey at your utmost peril. "This," saith the Apostle John, "is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." God hath given many commandments to mankind, but his glory, and the sinners own happiness, are most closely connected with this one than all the rest.

Consider, then, O sinner, how great the guilt which you will contract, and how certain and dreadful the punishment which you will incur, must be, if you reject the counsel of God, and live in disobedience to this, his commandment. Although you may have

broken all the commandments of God, yet the guilt of them shall not be laid to your charge, if you will but now accept of the offered mercy. Were your sins ten thousand times as numerous as they are, they shall not debar you from mercy, if you do not crown them all by your impenitence and unbelief. But if you refuse him that speaketh, if you still persist in rejecting the Saviour, and in pouring contempt upon all the grace and mercy of the gospel, besides remaining under the condemnation and wrath of your natural state, and answerable for all the actual transgressions which you have committed, your guilt will hereby be increased above measure, and your plagues will be terrible. "If," saith the Saviour, "ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation," the great, the aggravated, the dreadful condemnation, "that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

I have urged you to that faith, without which it is impossible to please God, particularly, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, from a consideration of the wretchedness and misery of your natural state—the absolute impossibility of being saved in any other way

—the rich and ample provision made for you in the gospel—the gracious and easy terms upon which grace and salvation are proposed unto you—the tender compassions of the Savior, whose arms and heart are always open to receive the repenting, returning sinner—the authority and commandment of God—and the dreadful issue of unbelief. Let, I beseech you, these arguments have their due weight and efficacy upon you.

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye
 “lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King
 “of glory shall come in. Who is this King
 “of glory? the Lord, strong and mighty, the
 “Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your
 “heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye
 “everlasting doors, and the King of glory
 “shall come in. Who is this King of glo-
 “ry? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of
 “glory. Selah.”

Thus, my brethren, I have, according to the measure of grace and spiritual understanding, given to me, shewn what that faith is, without which it is impossible to please God. I have now only to acknowledge the patient attention which you have given me in the prosecution of this subject, which hath employed so great a portion of time; and to add my most sincere and fervent prayers to Almighty God, that he would bless what hath been said to your spiritual instruction, and to the salvation of your precious and immortal souls. Amen.