

THOUGHTS  
ON THE  
NATURE OF WAR,  
AND ITS  
REPUGNANCY  
TO THE  
*CHRISTIAN LIFE.*

Extracted from a SERMON,  
on the 29th November, 1759;

Being the Day of PUBLIC THANKSGIVING  
for the SUCCESSES obtained in the LATE WAR.

WITH *And many Thoughts*

SOME EXTRACTS

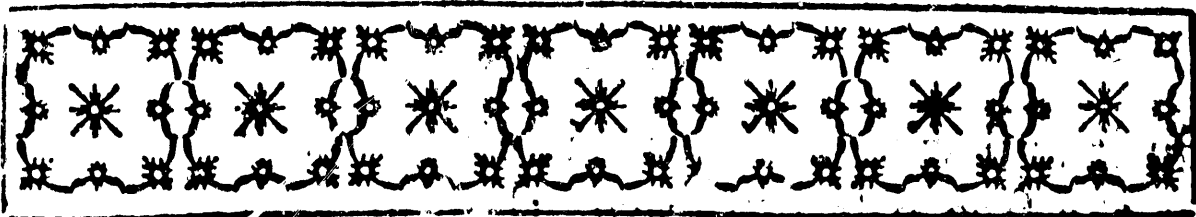
From the WRITINGS of *WILL. LAW*  
and *TH. HARLEY*, both Clergymen  
of the Church of *England*, on the NECES-  
SITY of *SELF-DENIAL*, and *bear-*  
*ing the Daily Cross*, in order to be TRUE  
FOLLOWERS of *CHRIST.*

---

LUKE ix. 23. And he said to them all, If any Man will  
come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross  
daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his Life,  
shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his Life for my sake,  
the same shall save it.

---

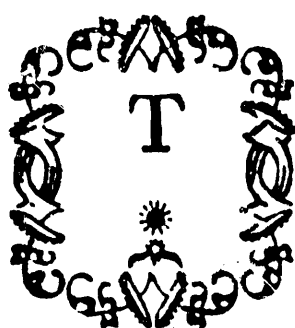
PHILADELPHIA: Printed by HENRY MILLER,  
in Second-Street. M DCC LXVI.



# THOUGHTS

ON THE

## NATURE OF WAR, &c.



THE two general views in which the subject of this day's thanksgiving can only be considered, are

First, As an event that, in its cause and consequences, is connected only with the present life; and being visibly produced by the efforts of human wisdom and human strength, is the ground of human exultation and triumph. And,

Secondly, As the sole and immediate work of "THE LORD THAT REIGNETH"—a part of the administration of that Merciful Providence, which, through all the revolutions of disordered nature and disordered life, pursues but one invariable purpose, the Redemption and Salvation of man.

It would be needless to propose the subject, in the first view, to the consideration of true Christians; who know, with the same certainty as they know their own existence, that human nature, left to itself, has no power but that of producing mere evil; and that every thing with-



in it and without it that is either great or good, is the free gift of Grace, the unmerited bounty of Redeeming Love. But the true Christian Spirit being almost departed from the earth, true Christian knowledge, as its inseparable companion, is departed with it, and men seem to be gone back again to their old animal life: and tho', in speculation and idea, they profess an assent to the truths of Revelation; yet, in heart and practice, they are too apt to consider the course of all things as connected only with temporal good and evil, and themselves as the center and circumference, the first cause and the last end of all; ascribing to human understanding designs which only Infinite Wisdom can form, and to human power events which Omnipotence only can produce.

Lest, therefore, this leaven of darkness, pride, and vanity, should have taken possession and altered the frame and habit of our spirits, it may not be improper to consider the success of War in the first general view, as the visible effect of human power, in which even the professed Christian is so apt to glory as his own work.

If the Christian, however, recollects himself, he will find War to be a sad consequence of the apostasy and fall of man; when he was abandoned to the fury of his own lusts and passions, as the natural and penal effect of breaking loose from the Divine Government, the fundamental law of which is LOVE——“*Thou shalt*  
“*love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart,*  
“*with*



“ *with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with  
“ all thy strength; and thy FELLOW-CREATURE,  
“ as thyself.”*

St. James hath answered the question with respect to the cause of War, in so precise and determinate a manner, as to preclude all difficulty and doubt about it: “ *From whence come wars  
“ and fightings among you,*” says he? “ *Come they  
“ not hence, even of your lusts that war in your  
“ members. Ye kill, and desire to have, and can-  
“ not obtain: ye fight and war; yet ye have not,  
“ because ye ask not,*” —because ye have no respect to the will of “ THE LORD THAT REIGN-  
“ ETH;” but, forsaking the SUPREME GOOD, in whom alone your happiness consists, ye follow an earthly and deceitful good, and think only of procuring it by your own power. “ *Ye ask, and  
“ receive not; because ye ask amiss*” —from a pretended respect to “ THE LORD THAT REIGNETH,” but solely for animal and sensual enjoyment, “ *that ye may consume it upon your  
“ lusts.*”

In this very explicit and true account, War, like all other evils, is described as centering in itself; and the end of it, is declared to be the gratification of those very appetites and passions, from which it derives its birth. And thus it ever was, and ever will be — for in his unhappy circle, which is, indeed, the great circle of the history of man, the fatal mischief proceeds: War is the offspring of the inseparable union between the sensual and malignant passions; War protracted

to a certain period, necessarily compels peace; peace revives and extends trade and commerce; trade and commerce give new life, vigour and scope, to the sensual and malignant passions; and these naturally tend to generate another War.

But War, considered in itself, is the premeditated and determined destruction of human beings; of creatures originally "*formed after the image of God,*" and whose preservation, for that reason, is secured by Heaven itself within the fences of this righteous law; that "*at the hand of every man's brother, the life of man shall be required.*" And tho' this created image of the Holy Triune God must be owned to have been so wretchedly defaced, as to retain but a very faint resemblance of its Divine original; yet, as the highest enforcement of that heavenly law, which was published for the security of life, it is most graciously renewed by the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Further: the consequences of War, when impartially examined, will be found big, not only with outward and temporal distress, but with an evil that extends where in the darkness, and tumult of human passions it is neither expected nor conceived to reach. That property is confounded, scattered, and destroyed; that laws are trampled under foot, government despised, and the ties of all civil and domestic order broken into pieces; that fruitful countries are made deserts, and stately cities a heap of ruins; that  
matrons

matrons and virgins are violated ; and neither  
 the innocence of unoffending infancy, nor the  
 impotence of decrepit age, a protection from the  
 rage and thirst for blood—is but the mortal pro-  
 geny of this teeming womb of mischief. The  
 worst is still behind—and tho' remote from those  
 senses and passions that are exercised only by  
 present good and evil, and, therefore, not the  
 object of common concern ; must yet, upon the  
 least recollection, impress with horror every mind  
 that believes there is a Righteous God, and a  
 state of retribution that is to last for ever. But  
 what must the Christian feel?—he, who knows  
 that the fall of man is a fall from meekness, pu-  
 rity, and love, into sensuality, pride, and wrath ;  
 that the Son of God became incarnate, and suf-  
 fered, and died, to restore that first life of meek-  
 ness, purity, and love ; and that for those, in  
 whom the restoration of that life is not begun in  
 the present state, the Son of God incarnate has, it  
 is to be dreaded, suffered and died in vain——  
 what, I say, must he feel for those immortal spi-  
 rits, that, in the earliest dawn of their day of pu-  
 rification, are by hundreds and thousands driven  
 into eternity, in the bitterness of enmity and  
 wrath — some inflamed with drunkenness ; some  
 fired with lust ; and all stained with blood ? In  
 those direful conflicts, which are maintained with  
 so much rage, that when the Vanquished at last  
 retreats with the loss of TWENTY-THOUSAND  
 HUMAN BEINGS, the Victor finds he has pur-  
 chased some little advantage at the expence of

MORE THAN HALF THAT NUMBER \* —

Heaven and earth! what a possibility is here of a sacrifice made to *the prince of darkness*, the first and chief apostate! who rejoices in beholding men, thro' the abuse of those benefits which undeserved Mercy has conferred upon them, transformed into enmity and hatred of God and their brethren; forsaken by God, and destroying one another: and thus hastening once more into his horrid society; that having been accomplices in his rebellion: they may become partakers of his misery and torment.

Now, if the man of valour, whom consenting nations have dignified with the title of HERO, and the man devoted to the world, are asked, from whence this immortal mischief, that may thus extend its influence into the regions of eternity, can proceed; what must they answer?—indeed, what can they answer, but that it is engendered by the love of human glory—as vain a phantom  
as

\* SMOLLETT, in his Continuation of the History of England, speaking of the battle of Cunersdorf, where the Prussians attacked the Muscovites in the year 1759, says,  
“ The carnage was truly horrible; above twenty thousand  
“ Prussians lay dead on the field. The loss of the Russians  
“ amounted to ten thousand. It must be owned, that if the  
“ King was prodigal of his own person, he was likewise very  
“ free with the lives of his subjects.” He adds: “ That at no  
“ time since the days of ignorance and barbarity, have the  
“ lives of men been squandered away with such profusion  
“ as in the course of this German war. They have not only  
“ been unnecessarily sacrificed in various exploits of no consequence, but they have been lavishly exposed to all the  
“ rigour and distemper of winter-campaigns,—in despite  
“ of nature, and in contempt of humanity.”

as ever play'd before a madman's eye! by the lust of dominion; the avarice of wealth; and the infamous ambition of being dreaded as the conquerors and tyrants of mankind? Heaven preserve Britain from these, "*earthly, sensual, devilish*" motives—so repugnant to the generous, compassionate, and forgiving temper, with which Redeeming Mercy has blest it, in union with the purer beams of heavenly light; that light which is intended to remove all the darkness of human corruption, and transform selfish, sensual, proud, and malignant spirits, into Angels of patience, humility, meekness, purity, and love; the "*children and heirs of God, the brethren and joint heirs of Christ!*"

But Britain, in the midst of those outward advantages in which she is so apt to place her confidence, must not forget, that there is no possibility of being preserved from such principles, dreadful and detestable as they are, but by the most humble, affectionate, and constant application to and dependance upon "**THE LORD THAT REIGNETH,**" that Gracious Power which first plucked them from her breast. It is, indeed, a standing observation among the prattlers of human philosophy, "that the mind must be very weak, that cannot bear a prosperous condition:" but where is the mind strong enough to bear it, that is not blest from **ABOVE** with something better than prosperity itself? That is not blessedness, which is something that can be separated from the mind; much less that, which

B may



may leave it miserable to all eternity; and least of all that, which may tend to make it thus miserable, by degenerating into a curse. And this is the case of all external things that are called blessings; which, in their own nature, are temporary and changeable, and in their use and application may be perverted to the most dangerous and lasting evils: “*If ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of Hosts; I will even send a curse upon you, and I will CURSE YOUR BLESSINGS.*” All external blessings, whether national or personal, are curses, when they become the fuel of the sensual and malignant fire in corrupt nature; when they not only alienate the mind from “THE LORD THAT REIGNETH,” but madden it to impious rebellion and defiance against him.

From this view of war, begun from human passions, and carried on for human purposes, for honour, dominion, trade, or some other end that centers in the present life; it is evident, that the Christian can have no interest in it: he cannot derive blessing from its success, nor triumph and exult when to the short-sighted view of the human mind the appearance of success presents itself; he knows, that the means are infinitely disproportionate to the end; and his Redeemer himself has declared, that “*all they that take the sword,*” inflamed by malignity, and seeking some earthly and temporal good, “*shall perish with the sword.*” But, without any circumstances of limitation, the same Redeemer, in the  
Reve-

Revelation of his future judgments upon a fallen and obstinately evil world, has further declared, that “ *he that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity; and he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword: Here is the trial of the faith and patience of the saints,*” who, being called to a state of suffering, and treading in the footsteps of their great Exemplar, “ *when they are reviled, revile not again; when they suffer, threaten not; but commit themselves to THE LORD THAT REIGNETH, to him that judgeth righteously.*” And to this solemn declaration of righteous judgment, the penman of that awful book calls upon all mankind to attend, and says, “ *If any man have an ear,*” an ear that is not totally deafened by the tumultuous passions of nature, separated from God, and turned wholly to itself, “ *let him now hear;*” let him now repent, and forsaking his own sensual and malignant will, seek after the **GOD of P E A C E and L O V E**, and live.

We will, therefore, turn our attention to the only light in which Success in War can properly be considered by us; namely, As the sole work of “ **THE LORD THAT REIGNETH** ”—a part of the administration of that Merciful Providence, which, thro’ all the revolutions of disordered nature and disordered life, pursues but one invariable purpose, the Redemption and Salvation of man.

The disorders of nature and of life are wholly

the effects of sin ; of a voluntary aversion and alienation from the life, light, and love of God, in perfect union with which, perfect purity, peace, and happiness are only to be found. Hence that discordancy of the outward elements, which brings forth pestilence, famine, inundations, earthquakes, storms, and tempests : hence, in the corporal part of the human frame, pain, sickness, and death ; in the mental, sensuality, pride, and malignity, including all the selfish and wrathful passions, that, between individuals, engender envy, hatred, injury, resentment and revenge, and between nations a peculiar kind of enmity and wrong that issues in war. In the elements strife and evil will subsist, 'till they are purified' and united by the last renovating fire ; in man, 'till all the designs of Grace are fully accomplished : but surrounded with evil as men are, and full of evil themselves, what would become of the whole wretched race at any given instant of time, at this very moment for example, if the effects of that evil were not continually suspended and directed by Infinite Power, so as to become continually subservient to the purposes of Infinite Wisdom, Righteousness and Love, in Universal Redemption.

The nature of that Redemption it would be needless to mention, if in this age of levity we were not so apt to forget it. It is, in general, a full restoration of the life of God in the soul, that Life of Father Son and Holy Spirit, which was once the life and perfection of fallen angels  
and

and fallen man; which is and only can be the life and perfection of all holy angels; and which the Son of God has been restoring to human nature from the time in which Adam fell.

When the Son of God became incarnate, what was implied in this Redemption as the effect of its influence upon man, was fully evident from His doctrine and His life; namely, the conquest and renunciation of the world, and the death of the will and all the appetites and passions of fallen animal nature, thro' faith in HIS NAME—not an historical and speculative faith, a meer rational assent to the truth of a well-attested history of facts and doctrines; but a full, ardent, continual *desire* of the LIFE OF CHRIST, as begotten and formed in the soul by the continual operation of the Holy Ghost. Thus, what was at first the Personal duties of single Christians, when they were scattered over the face of the earth, and were only parts of different nations; became afterwards National duties, when whole nations became Christians. If, therefore, “*to love an enemy, to forgive him, do him good; and pray for him*”—it to “*overcome the world,*” whose power consists in “*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*”—are Christian Personal duties; if, to “*love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength, and our fellow-creatures as ourselves,*”—is the purity and perfection of the Christian Personal life; the same must also be true of Christian National life and duty:

duty : for a Christian nation differs no otherwise from a Christian person, than as the whole differs from one of the parts of which it essentially consists ; and is only the aggregated body of those single persons, on whom universally such duties are enjoined, from whom universally such perfection is required.

But, to this perfect and heavenly life and duty, War is repugnant, in its cause, in itself, and in its consequences : it can be but comparatively irrepugnant, with respect to the degrees of its own evil ; and the more or less it partakes of the malignity of animal passions, and the sensuality of animal views, the more or less obnoxious must it render a people to the severe judgments of  
 “ THE LORD THAT REIGNETH.”



# E X T R A C T S

from the WRITINGS

OF

*WILLIAM LAW, M. A.*

**T**HAT grand enemy of mankind, the devil, is very justly called in scripture the prince and god of this world, for indeed he has great power in it, many of its rules, and principles being invented by this evil spirit, the father of all lies and falshood, to separate us from God, and prevent our return to happiness: For, according to the spirit and vogue of this world, whose corrupt air we have all breathed, there are many things that pass for great and honourable, and most desirable, which yet are so far from being so, that the true greatness and honour of our nature consists in the not desiring them. To abound in wealth, to have fine houses and rich cloaths, to be attended with splendor and equipage, to be beautiful in our persons, to have titles of dignity, to be above our fellow-creatures, to be looked on with admiration, to overcome our enemies with power, to heap up treasures upon earth, to add house to house and field to field, and delight ourselves in the most costly manner, these are the great, the honourable, the desirable things, to which the spirit of the world turns the eyes of most people. And many a man is afraid of standing still; and not en-

gaging in the pursuit of these things, lest the same world should take him for a fool.

Yet the history of the gospel, is chiefly the history of Christ's conquest over this spirit of the world, and the number of true Christians, is only the number of those, who following the spirit of Christ, have lived contrary to this spirit of the world.

This is the mark of Christianity, *Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.* 1 John v. 4. *Set your affections on things above, and not on things on earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* Col. iii. 2. *Love not the world, nor the things of 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, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father; but is of the world.* 1 John ii. 15. *Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.* James iv. 4. *Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Rom. xii. 2.

This is the language of the whole New-Testament. You are to be dead to the world, and to live a new life in Christ Jesus our Lord. But notwithstanding the clearness and plainness of these doctrines by which believers in Christ are required thus to renounce the world, yet great part of the Christians live and die slaves to the customs and tempers of the world. *Learn of me, saith our blessed Saviour, for I am meek and lowly in heart,*  
and

*and you shall find rest to your souls.* Matth. xi. 29. Now this meek, this lowly state, that constitutes the true rest of the soul, cannot subsist in any mind, but so far as it is thus dead to the world, and has parted with all desires of enjoying all its riches, pleasures and honours. So that in order to be truly humble, you must unlearn all these notions, which you have been all your life learning, from this corrupt spirit of the world. You can make no stand against the assaults of pride, the meek affections of humility can have no place in your souls, till you stop the power of the world over you, and resolve against a blind obedience to its laws. And when you are once advanced thus far, as to be able to stand still in the torrent of worldly fashions, and opinions, and examine the worth and value of things, which are most admired and valued in the world, you have gone a great way in the gaining of your freedom, and have laid a good foundation for the amendment of your heart. Think upon the rich, the great, and the learned persons, that have made great figures, and been high in the esteem of the world; many of them died in your time, and yet they are sunk, and lost, and gone, and as much disregarded by the world, as if they had been only so many bubbles of water. And is it worth your while to lose the smallest degree of virtue, for the sake of pleasing so bad a master, and so false a friend, as the world is. Is it worth your while to bow the knee to such an idol, as



this, that so soon will have neither eyes, nor ears, nor a heart to regard you; instead of serving that great, and holy, and mighty God, that will make all his servants partakers of his own eternity.

Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ *gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.* Gal. i. 4. Christianity therefore implieth a deliverance from this world; and he that professeth it, professeth to live contrary to every thing, and every temper, that is peculiar to this evil world. The Apostle John declareth this opposition to the world in this manner: *They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them: We are of God, &c.* 1 John iv. 5. This is the description of the followers of Christ; and it is proof enough, that no people are to be reckon'd Christians in reality, who in their hearts and tempers belong to this world. *We know, saith the same Apostle, that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* Chap. v. 19. Christians therefore can no farther know that they are of God, than so far as they know they are not of the world, that is, that they don't live according to the ways and spirit of the world. And he is only of God, or born of God, in Christ Jesus, who has overcome this world, that is, who has chosen to live by faith, and govern his actions by the principles of a wisdom revealed from God, by Christ Jesus. *They are not of this world, as I am not of this world,* says  
our

our blessed Saviour. This is the state of Christianity with regard to this world, the profession of Christians requiring them to live as citizens of the new Jerusalem, and to have their conversation in heaven. If you are not thus out of, and contrary to the world, you want the distinguishing mark of Christianity; you don't belong to Christ, but by being out of the world, as he was out of it. We may deceive ourselves; if we please, with vain, and softning comments upon these words; but they are, and will be understood in their first simplicity, and plainness, by every one that reads them in the same spirit, that our blessed Lord spoke them. And to understand them in any lower, less significant meaning, is to let carnal wisdom explain away that doctrine, by which itself was to be destroyed.

Our blessed Saviour suffered, and was a sacrifice, to make our suffering, and sacrifice of ourselves fit to be received by God. And we are to suffer, to be crucified, to die, and to rise with Christ; or else his crucifixion, death, and resurrection will profit us nothing. The necessity of this conformity to all that Christ did, and suffered upon our account is very plain from the whole tenor of scripture. *First*, As to his sufferings, this is the only condition of our being saved by them. *If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.* 2 Tim. ii. 11. *Secondly*, As to his crucifixion, *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him.* Rom. vi. 6. Here you see

Christ is not crucified in our stead; but unless our old man be really crucified with him, the cross of Christ will profit us nothing. *Thirdly,* As to the death of Christ, the condition is this: *If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him,* vers 8. If therefore Christ be dead alone, if we are not dead with him, we are as sure from this scripture, that we shall not live with him. *Lastly,* As to the resurrection of Christ, the scripture sheweth us, how we are to partake of the benefit of it: *If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.* Col. iii. 1. It was for this reason, that the holy Jesus said of his disciples, and in them of all true believers, *They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.* Because all true believers conforming to the sufferings, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Christ, live no longer after the spirit and temper of this world, but their life is hid with Christ in God. This is the state of separation from the world, to which all orders of Christians are called. They must so far renounce all worldly tempers, be so far governed by the things of another life, as to shew, that they are truly and really crucified, dead, and risen with Christ. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.* 2 Cor. v. 17.

The ancient Philosophers began all their virtue in a total renunciation of the spirit of this world;

world; they saw with the eyes of heaven, that darkness was not more contrary to light, than the spirit and wisdom of this world was contrary to divine wisdom: Therefore they allowed of no progress in virtue, but so far as a man had overcome himself, and the spirit of this world. This gave a divine solidity to all their instructions, and proved them to be masters of true wisdom. But the doctrine of the cross of Christ, the last, the highest, the most finishing stroke given to the spirit of this world, that speaks more in one word, than all the philosophy of voluminous writers, is yet professed by those, who are in more friendship with the world, than was allowed to the disciples of Pithagoras, Socrates, Plato or Epictetus. Nay, if those ancient Sages were to start up amongst us with their divine wisdom, they would bid fair to be treated by the sons of the gospel, if not by some Fathers of the church, as dreaming Enthusiasts. But, this is a standing truth, the world can only love its own, and wisdom can only be justified of her children. The heaven-born Epictetus told one of his scholars, *That then he might first look upon himself as having made some true proficiency in virtue, when the world took him for a fool; an oracle, like that, which said, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.*

If you ask what is the apostasy of these last times, or whence is all the degeneracy of the present Christian church, it must be placed to a  
world-

worldly spirit. If here you see open wickedness, there only form of godliness, if here superficial holiness, political piety, there haughty sanctity, partial zeal, if almost every where, you see a Jewish blindness, and hardness of heart, and the church trading with the gospel, as visibly, as the old Jews bought and sold beasts in their temple, all this is only in many forms, and proper fruits of the worldly spirit. This is the great net, with which the devil becomes a fisher of men; and be assured of this, that every son of man is in this net, till through, and by the Spirit of Christ he breaks out of it. I say the Spirit of Christ, for nothing else can deliver him from it. If you trust to any kind or form of religious observances, to any kind of learning, or effort of human prudence, and then I will tell you what your case will be, you will overcome one temper of the world, only and merely by cleaving to another: For nothing can overcome or renounce the world, but singly and solely the Spirit of Christ. Hence it is, that many learned men with all the rich furniture of their brain live and die slaves to the spirit of this world, the Spirit of Christ is not the only thing that is the desire of their hearts, and therefore their learning only works in and with the spirit of this world, and becomes itself no small parts of the vanity of vanities.

Would you know the evil nature and effect of a spirit given up to the world, and not subjected to the Spirit of Grace: you need only look at  
the

the blessed effect of a continual state of watching, a continual humble application to God in the true spirit of prayer, for the one goes downwards with the same strength, as the other goes upward, the one betroths, and weds to an earthly nature, with the same certainty, as the other espouses, and unites to Christ. The spirit of continual watchings and prayer, is a pressing forth of the soul out of this earthly life, it is a stretching with all its desire after the life of God, it is a leaving as far as it can, all its own spirit, to receive a spirit from above, to be one life, one love, one spirit with Christ in God. This prayer, which is an emptying itself of all its own lusts and natural tempers, and an opening itself for the light and love of God to enter into it, is the prayer in the Name of Christ, to which nothing is denied; for the love which God bears to the soul, is an eternal never ceasing desire to open the birth of his holy word and spirit in it, and stays no longer till the door of the heart open for Him; and nothing does or can keep God out of the soul, or hinder his union with it, but the desire of the heart turned from it. What the soul desireth, that is the fuel of its fire, and as its fuel is, so is the flame of its life. As we sow we shall reap; if to the spirit, we shall reap life and peace; if to the flesh, we shall of the devil reap corruption. Wherever and in whatsoever the will chuseth to dwell and delight, that becometh the soul's food, its cloathing and habitation.

tion. Since this is the case, let us stop a while, let our hearing be turned into feeling. Let us consider, whether there is any thing in life, that deserves a thought, but how to keep in a continual state of watching and prayer, that we may attain to that purity of heart, which alone can see, find and possess God.

---

*THOMAS HARLEY.*

IN HIS

DISCOURSE ON MISTAKES  
concerning RELIGION, &c.

*thus expresseth himself:*

**W**HAT cause shall we assign for the opposition to Gospel-truths that appears amongst us, and for that dislike to those, who urge the necessity of regeneration and of the spiritual life? The true reason is nigh at hand, tho' others are pretended: Such doctrines are contrary to the maxims and principles that govern the hearts and conduct of the children of this generation, are at variance with the false interests of flesh and blood, declare open war against the kingdom of Self, and strike at every thing that is most near and dear to corrupt nature; and therefore carnal men of every denomination think themselves concerned in character to oppose and discredit such a  
repre-

representation of Christianity. They can be zealous for opinions, forms, and an external worship of any kind, because they leave them in quiet possession of their ambition, their covetousness, their love of themselves, and their love of the world: They can readily take up a profession of faith in a suffering Saviour, nay bring themselves to trust in an outward covering of his Merits and Righteousness for Salvation, because this costs them nothing; but to be cloathed with his spirit of humility, poverty and self-denial; to renounce their own wills in his lowliness, meekness, and total resignation to the will of God, to mortify the fleshly appetites; to be crucified to the world; to strip themselves of all complacency and satisfaction in those endowments, whether natural or acquired, which appear great and glorious in the eyes both of themselves and others; and, in a word, to take up their cross, and nakedly follow a naked Christ in the regeneration: These are hard sayings, they cannot bear them: But wisdom is justified of her children; unacceptable as these doctrines are to others, yet to them, and in them too, they are the power of God, and the wisdom of God. It was by such foolishness of preaching that Christ's kingdom first prevailed over the kingdoms of this world; and it must be by the same doctrine, under the influence of the same spirit, that we can only hope for its continuance to the end of it.

The way to any good degree of perfection in  
the



the divine life, lies thro' great mortification and self-denial: Some think it enough to get doctrines into the head; but till the heart is in some measure purified by faith, nothing is rightly done: and in order to this, the children of Anak, (those corrupt passions and inclinations that war against the soul) must be driven out, the perverseness of the will broken, the understanding simplified, the pride of our hearts pluckt up by the roots, and all the cords that bind us to the world, and the things of it, untwisted; in a word, our idols must be cast out, and every cursed thing removed that separates betwixt God and us; for the pure in heart, and they only, shall see God. It was by this kind of holy violence practised on themselves, that the worthies both of the Old and New Testament, in all ages of the church, have laid hold on the kingdom of heaven, been favoured with such rich communications from God, and enabled to work such wonders as surpass the belief of many in this degenerate incredulous age: And that a preparatory discipline of strictness and severity is necessary in order to qualify us for any extraordinary vouchsafements of illumination and grace, we may learn from the schools instituted among the Jews for the training up of persons for the prophetic office, where they were educated in great abstraction from the world, in the government of their passions, and the mortification of their natural propensions, that being so disengaged from the common impediments of

a holy

a holy life, they might be more at liberty for devotion and the contemplation of heavenly things, and by such previous exercises become fit instruments for the Holy Spirit, and more receptive of heavenly wisdom. Thus came they out holy enthusiasts, men of God furnished to every good word and work, scribes well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and fearless of giving offence in the way of duty, even before kings, being no less qualified for reproof and correction, than for doctrine and instruction in righteousness: patterns these for all persons of a religious character, whether they live in colleges or in kings houses; whether they attend on those who go cloathed in purple and fine linnen, and fare sumptuously every day, or are called forth to a more promiscuous employment of their office; for tho' the dispensation of prophecy, as it respects the foretelling future events, has a long time ceased in the church, yet the character of prophets in the capacity of declarers of God's word and will, and as denouncers of his judgments on all impenitents, even the most dignified offenders, is never to cease in it, neither is the Lord's hand shortned that it cannot extend comfort and courage, light and direction for these purposes now as formerly: But, alas! our hearts are straitned that they cannot receive it as they ought, and we are so entangled, as to many of us, with such an evil covetousness after the things of this life, so studious to seek the honour that cometh

of man, more than the honour that cometh of God, that we want boldness to hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ without respect of persons: For let men be never so highly titled or characterized, let their pretensions to learning be what they will, and their acquaintance with creeds, canons and commentators never so extensive, yet so long as they continue men of this world, and follow the things of it, so long as their affections are set on things beneath, and their hearts unsundered to God, they are not better than dry bones as to the divine life, without marrow or moisture; and as they cannot in such a state receive the things of the Spirit of God, not having spiritual senses exercised thereto, so will these things of course appear foolishness unto them in others, and they will speak evil of that which they know not. It is from a revival of the spirit of true Christianity in the hearts of men alone, that we can hope to see peace restored on earth among the divided churches of Christendom. Whilst religion resides only in the reasoning part of man, it is tainted with all the prejudices and passions of his nature, and his reason will be ready to plead for, or against the truth, as interest or education sways him — But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, full of mercy, and without partiality; for the same good spirit that enlightens the understanding, cleanses the heart of  
all

all bitterness, malice, and hypocrisy, and therefore operates by pureness, by knowledge, by love unfeigned.

A party-spirit, whether it be in religion or politics, proceeds from littleness of mind and narrowness of heart, it puts out both the eye of the judgment and the eye of charity, and so hinders us from seeing the brightest excellence in our neighbour that is not just as high or low as ourselves; as I heard a man of learning once say, that he could not allow Milton's *Paradise Lost* to be a good book, because written by an Oliverian. But the Christian knows no such straitness; for his bowels are enlarged towards all that will come within the embraces of his charity, which is as wide as the east is from the west. He cannot wrangle and hate about differences of opinion, for he is got above them; his call, his universal call is love, and he has adopted for his motto that saying of Luther: *In whomsoever I see any thing of Christ, him I love.* In this man, wheresoever he lives, and by what name soever he is called, the kingdom of Christ is come: and of such heavenly men and women it will consist in that enlarged glorious state of it which we are given to look for: And what, if it be already begun on earth!

“ The one true church of Christ is the communion of saints, and charity; true charity,  
 “ i. e. the love of Christ is the life and soul of it:  
 “ Is then the love of God shed abroad in our  
 “ hearts

“ hearts, and have we fervent charity among  
 “ ourselves? For, be it known of a truth, that  
 “ as much as we possess of this heavenly trea-  
 “ sure, so much have we of Christianity, and no  
 “ more; and that without it, all zeal for reli-  
 “ gion is but contention, all modes of worship  
 “ but formality, and all orthodoxy but vain  
 “ opinion. ”

F I N I S.

