ABS.2.87.22

UNIVERSAL AND CONTINUOUS

CONCERT OF PRAYER.

(From "Evangelical Christendom," London.)

THE subjects of prayer mentioned below might be copied on the blank leaf of the Bible for daily reference. The sympathy of Christians, and their communion with God and with each other, would thus be continually maintained for the wants of a dying world. The suggestion has already been brought before the missionary brother at the Lodiana Mission, India, who first proposed the week of prayer, and he was so pleased with the idea that he caused thousands of copies of the subjects to be printed, and has been sending them to prominent Christian ministers and laymen all over the world, with the hope that the suggestions may be universally carried out. Matt. xviii. 19.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE LORD'S PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE EARTH FOR A CONCERT OF PRAYER IN THEIR CLOSETS, TO BE OBSERVED ON EVERY DAY OF EVERY YEAR.

Sabbath.....Sabbath-Schools—assumed there are at least 1,000,000 of Sunday-School Teachers in the world.
Monday .....Christian Missions.
Tuesday .....Bible Societies.
Wednesday...Abolition of Slavery—and Intemperance.
Thursday ...Tract Societies.
Friday .....Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all Mankind.
Saturday.....Ministers of the Gospel—supposed to be about 90,000.

POPULATION OF THE WORLD.

Protestants	89,000,000
Roman Catholics.....	170,000,000
Greek Church.....	76,000,000
Jews	5,000,000
Mohammedans.....	160,000,000
Heathen	788,000,000
Total	1,288,000,000

☞ *Intended for pasting in front of Bible.*

The originators of the Concert for Prayer would be glad of this slip being reprinted in any land it may reach; and if Ministers would intimate the above arrangement to their congregations it would further the object. It has already been printed in various languages, and circulated in many countries.

DAMP PAPER. "THE BACK OF THIS

11 Holland Street

Kensington

London 1863

A L'Hôtellerie
Bruxelles
3/6/83

HUMAN NATURE

IN ITS

FOURFOLD STATE

OF

PRIMITIVE INTEGRITY,	Subsisting in	The PARENTS of MANKIND in PARADISE.
ENTIRE DEPRAVATION,		The UNREGENERATE.
BEGUN RECOVERY,		The REGENERATE.
And CONSUMMATE HAPPINESS or MISERY,		All MANKIND in the FUTURE STATE.

IN SEVERAL

PRACTICAL DISCOURSES.

BY THE LATE REVEREND

MR. THOMAS BOSTON,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT ETTRICK.

John ii. 24, 25. *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.*

Luke xix. 55. *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of.*

Prov. xxvii. 19. *As in Water, Face answereth to Face: So the Heart of Man to Man.*

Glasgow

PRINTED BY WILLIAM PATON,

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1797.

PREFACE.

IT is a maxim among wife men, that the knowledge of perfons is of as great uſe in the conduct of human life, as the knowledge of things: and it is moſt certain, that he who knows the various tempers, humours and diſpoſitions of men, who can find out their turn of thought, and penetrate into the ſecret ſprings and principles of their actings, will not be at a loſs to find out proper means for compaſſing his aims, will eaſily preſerve himſelf from ſnares, and either evite or overcome difficulties. But the knowledge of human nature, *morally* conſidered, or, in other words, of the temper and diſpoſition of the ſoul in its *moral powers*, is of much greater value; as it is of uſe in the concerns of an unchangeable life and world. He who is poſſeſſed of ſo valuable a branch of knowledge, is thereby capacitated to judge aright of himſelf, to underſtand true Chriſtianity, and to conceive juſtly of perfect happineſs and conſummate miſery.

The depravity of human nature is ſo plainly taught, yea, inculcated in ſacred ſcripture, and is ſo obvious to every thinking man's obſervation, who ſearches his own breaſt, and reflects duly on his own temper and actings, that it is ſurpriſingly ſtrange and wonderful, how it comes to paſs that this important truth is ſo little underſtood, yea, ſo much diſbelieved, by men who bear the name of *Goſpel-miniſters*. Are there not perſons to be found in a neighbouring nation, in the character of preachers, appearing daily in pulpits, who are ſo unacquainted with their Bibles and themſelves, that they ridicule the doctrine of *original ſin* as unintelligible jargon? If they are perſons of a moral life and converſation, they ſeem to imagine, they cannot become better than they are; if they are immoral, they ſeem to indulge a conceit, that they can become virtuous, yea, religious, when they pleaſe. Theſe are the men who talk of the dignity of human nature, of greatneſs of mind, nobleneſs of ſoul, and generoſity of ſpirit: as if they intended to perſuade themſelves and others, that *pride* is a good principle: and do not know that pride and ſelfiſhneſs are the bane of mankind, and productive of all the wickedneſs, and much of the miſery to be found in this and in the other world; and is indeed that wherein the depravity of human nature properly conſiſts.

Upright Adam's nature faintly adumbrated the divine, in a moderated ſelf-eſteem, an adequate ſelf-love, and delightful reflection on his own borrowed excellency, regulated by a juſt eſteem of, and ſupreme love to his adored Creator; whence a peaceful ſerenity of mind, a loving, compaſſionate, and benevolent diſpoſition of ſoul, a depth of thought, and brightneſs of imagination delightfully employed in the rapturous contemplation of his beloved Maker's infinite perfections: thus bearing the divine image, and reſembling God that made him. But no ſooner did he diſobey the divine prohibitory command, than the ſcales were caſt; his moderate ſelf-eſteem degenerated into pride, his adequate ſelf-love ſhrunk into mere ſelfiſhneſs, and his delightful reflections on his own excellency varied into the tickling pleaſures of *vanity* and *conceit*: he loſt view of the Author of his being, and thenceforth, inſtead of delighting in him, firſt dreaded, and then deſpiſed him.

The modeſt, and therefore hitherto anonymous author of the following diſcourſes, Mr. Thomas Boſton, having handled this ſubject, in preaching to his own obſcure prochial congregation at Etterick, in the ſheriffdom of Selkirk, had a particular view to their benefit in printing and publiſhing them: and therefore the ſtile and method is plain and ſimple, and the firſt edition printed on a coarſe paper; but the ſubject is ſo comprehenſive and important, ſo well managed, and the book has been ſo well received, that it now appears in the world, more embelliſhed, as well as better corrected than formerly.

Let it ſuffice to recommend it to thoſe who have a right taſte for genuine Chriſtianity, that all the author's notions flow ſo directly from the ſacred fountain, that it is to be doubted if he has had much recourſe to any other helps than his Bible and his God, for aſſiſtance. Mean time, I am aware of an exception from thoſe who rank themſelves among the polite part of mankind, as that there is the ſame harſh peculiarity of dialect in it, which is commonly to be found in books of practical divinity. But I beg leave to obſerve, That the dialect they except againſt, is borrowed from ſacred ſcripture: and likeas *it has pleaſed God, by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe*; ſo alſo to countenance what they are diſpleaſed with, by the operations of his Spirit on the minds of true Chriſtians, as their common experience witneſſeth. However, I heartily wiſh, the exception were altogether removed, by ſome perſons digeſting into a methodical treatiſe, the views

of

of human nature in its primitive perfection, in its depraved condition, and in its retrieved ſtate, who is maſter of modern ſtile, and thoroughly underſtands the ſubjects diſcourſed in this book, that, by becoming all things to all men, *ſome*, viz. of all ranks and kinds of men, may be gained.

I am not to declaim at large in favours of religion; this were to write a book by way of preface. Many able pens have been employed in recommending it to the world, by ſtrong arguments drawn from its uſefulneſs to ſociety, its ſuitableneſs to the dignity of the rational nature, and the advantages ariſing to men from it in this and in the other world. But, after all, may not one be allowed to doubt, if religion be rightly underſtood by all its patrons? May not the beauties and excellencies of a precious gem be elegantly deſcribed by a naturaliſt, or jeweler, who never ſaw the particular one he talked of, and knows little of its nature, leſs of the conſtruction of its parts, and nothing of its proper uſe? Are there not men of bright parts, who reaſon finely in the defence of religion, and yet are ſo much ſtrangers to it, that they brand the perſons, who are ſo happy as to be poſſeſſed of it, with the hard name of *ſpiritualiſts*, reckoning them a kind of enthuſiaſts, unworthy of their regard? The truth is, Chriſtianity is a myſtery; mere reaſon does not comprehend it. There is a ſpiritual diſcerning neceſſary to its being rightly underſtood; whence it comes to paſs, that men of great learning and abilities, though they read the ſcriptures with attention, and comment learnedly upon them; yet do not, yea, cannot enter into the vein of thought peculiar to the inſpired penman, becauſe they ſhare not of the ſame Spirit: wherefore it is, that the apoſtle Paul aſſerts, that *the natural*, that is, unregenerate *man, doth not know the things of God, neither indeed can* be capable of knowing them, *becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

From what has been ſaid, it is eaſy to conclude, That no pedantic apology, on the part of the author, for appearing in print, or fawning compliments to the courteous reader, on the part of the prefacer, are to be expected. The truth is, both the one and the other are rather little arts, vailing pedantry and conceit, than evidences of modeſty and good ſenſe. It is of more uſe, to recommend the peruſal of the book to perſons of all ranks and degrees, from a few ſuitable topics; and then to ſhow wherein this edition differs from the firſt.

That all mankind, however differenced by their rank and ſtation in the world, have an equal concern in what is revealed concerning another and future world, will be readily owned;

ed; and it muſt be as readily granted, that, however allowable it may be for men of learning and parts to pleaſe themſelves with fineneſs of language, juſtneſs of thought, and exact connection, in writings upon other ſubjects; yet they ought not to indulge themſelves in the ſame taſte in diſcourſes on divine things, leſt they expoſe themſelves to the juſt cenſure of acting with the ſame indiſcretion, as a perſon in danger of famiſhing by hunger would be guilty of, if he perverſely rejected plain wholeſome food, when offered to him, for no other reaſon than the want of palatable ſauce, or order and ſplendour in ſerving it up.

The ſacred book we call the Bible, has a peculiar ſublimity in it, vailed with unuſual dialect and ſeeming inconnection; but it is not therefore to be rejected by men who bear the name of Chriſtians, as uncouth or unintelligible; true wiſdom dictates quite another thing; it counſels us, by frequent reading, to acquaint ourſelves well with it, become accuſtomed to its peculiar phraſes, and ſearch into its ſublimities; upon this ground, that the matters contained in it are of the utmoſt conſequence to us, and, when rightly underſtood, yield a refined delight, much ſuperior to what is to be found in reading the beſt written books on the moſt entertaining ſubjects. What pleads for the parent, is a plea for the progeny; practical diſcourſes upon divine ſubjects are the genuine offſpring of the ſacred text; and ought therefore to be read carefully and with attention, by perſons of all ranks and degrees; tho' they are indeed calculated for, and peculiarly adapted to ſuch as move in low ſpheres of life.

Let it, however, be a prevailing argument with perſons of all denominations carefully to read books of practical divinity, that many of them are not written on the ſame motives and principles as other books are; the authors have often a peculiar divine call to publiſh them, and well-founded hope of their being uſeful to advance Chriſtianity in the world. In conſequence whereof it is, that great numbers have reaped benefit by reading them, eſpecially in childhood and youth; many have been converted by them; and it may be queſtioned, if ever there was a true Chriſtian, ſince the art of printing made theſe books common, who has not, in ſome ſtage of life, reaped conſiderable advantage from them. This book recommends itſelf in a particular manner, by its being, a ſhort ſubſtantial ſyſtem of practical divinity; inſomuch, that it may with truth be aſſerted, that a perſon who is thoroughly acquainted with all that is here taught, may, without danger to his

his eternal intereſt, remain ignorant of other things, which pertain to the ſcience called Divinity. It is therefore earneſtly recommended to the ſerious and frequent peruſal of all, but eſpecially of ſuch as are in that ſtage of life called Youth, and are ſo ſtationed in the world, as not to be frequently opportuned to hear ſermons, and read commentaries on the ſacred text.

It is doubtleſs incumbent on maſters of families to make ſome proviſion of ſpiritual, as well as bodily food, for their children and ſervants. This is effectually done by putting practical books in their hands: and therefore this book is humbly and earneſtly recommended as a family-book, which all the members of it are not only allowed, but deſired to peruſe.

As to the difference betwixt this and the former edition, which gives it preference, it lies chiefly in the author's not only having reviſed the ſtile, but the thought in many places, and corrected both, ſo as to ſet ſeveral important truths in a clearer light, and make the ſtile of the book now uniform, which formerly was not ſo, becauſe of the explications of peculiar words and phraſes in uſe among the practical divines, eſpecially of the church of Scotland, which were interſperſed throughout the former edition, and introduced by another hand, for the ſake of ſuch perſons as are not accuſtomed to them. It remains, that the prefacer not only ſubjoin his name, (which was concealed in the firſt edition) as a teſtimony that he eſteems the author, and values the book, but that he may thereby recommend it in a particular manner to the peruſal of perſons of his own acquaintance. If in his aſſiſting towards its being publiſhed, and in prefacing both editions, he has not run unſent, he has what will bear him up under all cenſures: the charitable will think no evil, and others will do as they pleaſe.

Edinburgh, 18*th* *March*, 1729. } ROBERT WIGHTMAN, M.D.G.F.

THE

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STATE I.

NAMELY,

The *State* of *Innocence*, or *Primitive Integrity*, in which *Man* was created.

ECCLES. vii. 29.

Lo! this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.

THERE are four things very neceſſary to be known by all that would ſee heaven: *Firſt*, What man was in the ſtate of innocence, as God made him. *Secondly*, What he is in the ſtate of corrupt nature, as he hath unmade himſelf. *Thirdly*, What he muſt be in the ſtate of grace, as "created in Chriſt Jeſus unto "good works," if ever he be made a partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. And, *laſtly*, What he ſhall be in his eternal ſtate, as made by the Judge of all, either perfectly happy, or completely miſerable, and that for ever. Theſe are weighty points, that touch the vitals of practical godlineſs; from which moſt men, and even many profeſſors, in theſe dregs of time, are quite eſtranged. I deſign, therefore, under the divine conduct to open theſe things, and apply them.

I begin with the firſt of them, namely, the ſtate of innocence: That, beholding man "poliſhed after the "ſimilitude of a palace," the ruins may the more affect us; we may the more prize that matchleſs perſon, whom the Father has appointed the "repairer of the "breach;" and that we may, with fixed reſolves, betake ourſelves to that way which leadeth to the "city that hath" unmoveable "foundations." In the text we have three things:

1. The ſtate of innocence, wherein man was created. "God hath made man upright." By man here we are to underſtand our firſt parents; the archetypal pair, the root of mankind, the compendized world, and the fountain from whence all generations have ſtreamed; as may appear by comparing Gen. v. ver. 1. and 2.—"In the day that God created man, in "the likeneſs of God made he him. Male and fe-"male created he them, and bleſſed them, (as the "root of mankind,) and called their name Adam." The original word is the ſame in our text. In this ſenſe, man was made right, (agreeable to the nature of God, whoſe work is perfect,) without any imperfection, corruption, or principle of corruption, in his body or ſoul. He was made upright, that is, ſtraight with the will and law of God, without any irregularity in his ſoul. By the ſet it got in its creation, it directly pointed towards God, as his chief end; which ſtraight inclination was repreſented, as in an emblem, by the erect figure of his body, a figure that no other living creature partakes of. What David was in a goſpel-ſenſe, that was he in a legal-ſenſe; one according to God's own heart, altogether righteous, pure, and holy. God made him thus: He did not firſt make him, and then make him righteous; but in the very making of him, he made him righteous, original righteouſneſs was concreated with him; ſo that, in the ſame moment he was a man, he was a righteous man, morally good; with the ſame breath that God breathed in him a living ſoul, he breathed in him a righteous ſoul.

2. Here is man's fallen ſtate: "But they have "ſought out many inventions." They fell off from their reſt in God, and fell upon ſeeking inventions of their own to mend their caſe; and they quite marred it. Their ruin was from their own proper motion: They would not abide as God had made them; "but "they ſought out inventions" to deform and undo themſelves.

2. Ob-

2. Obſerve here the certainty and importance of theſe things; "Lo this only have I found," &c. Believe them, they are the reſult of a narrow ſearch, and a ſerious enquiry, performed by the wiſeſt of men. In the two preceeding verſes Solomon repreſents himſelf as in queſt of goodneſs in the world; but the iſſue of it was, he could find no ſatisfying iſſue of his ſearch after it, though it was not for want of pains, for he "counted one by one to find out the account. Be- "hold this have I found (ſaith the preacher) to wit, "That (as the ſame word is read in our text) yet my "ſoul ſeeketh, but I find not." He could make no ſatisfying diſcovery of it, which might ſtay his enquiry. He found good men very rare, one as it were among a thouſand; good women more rare, not one good among his thouſand wives and concubines, 1 Kings xi. 3. but could not ſatisfy the grand query, "Where ſhall wiſdom be found?" No, it could not: (and, if the experience of others, in this point, run counter to Solomon's, as it is no reflection on his diſcerning, it can as little decide the queſtion, which will remain undetermined till the laſt day.) But, amidſt all this uncertainty, there is one point found out and fixed: "This have I found." Ye may depend upon it as moſt certain truth, and be fully ſatisfied in it; "Lo this," fix your eyes upon it, as a matter worthy of moſt deep and ſerious regard; to wit, that man's nature is now depraved; but that depravation was not from God, for he "made man upright," but from themſelves, "they have ſought out many inventions."

Doctrine, *God made man altogether righteous.*

THIS is that ſtate of innocence, in which God ſet man down in the world. It is deſcribed in the holy ſcriptures with a running pen, in compariſon of the following ſtates; for it was of no continuance, but paſſed as a flying ſhadow, by man's abuſing the freedom of his own will. I ſhall,

First, Enquire into the righteouſneſs of this ſtate in which man was created.

Secondly, Lay before you ſome of the happy concomitants and conſequents thereof.

Laſtly, Apply the whole.

Of MAN's *original righteouſneſs.*

FIRST, As to the righteouſneſs of this ſtate, conſider, That as uncreated righteouſneſs, the righteouſneſs of God, is the ſupreme rule; ſo all created righteouſneſs, whether of men or angels, hath reſpect to a law as its rule, and is a conformity thereunto. A creature can no more be morally independent on God in its actions and powers, than it can be naturally independent on him. A creature, as a creature, muſt acknowledge the Creator's will as its ſupreme law; for, as it cannot be without him, ſo it muſt not be but for him, and according to his will; yet no law obliges, until it be revealed. And hence it follows, that there was a law, which man, as a rational creature, was ſubjected to in his creation, and that this law was revealed to him, "God made man upright," ſays the text. This preſuppoſeth a law to which he was conformed in his creation; as when any thing is made regular, or according to rule, of neceſſity the rule itſelf is preſuppoſed. Whence we may gather, that this law of righteouſneſs, obſerved in all points by the ſecond Adam, is oppoſed by the carnal mind, ſome notions of which remain yet among the Pagans, who, "having "not the law, are a law unto themſelves," Rom. ii. 15. In a word, this law is the very ſame which was afterwards ſummed up in the ten commandments, and promulgate on Mount Sinai to the Iſraelites, called by us the moral law; and man's righteouſneſs conſiſted in conformity to this law or rule. More particularly, there is a twofold conformity required of man; a conformity of the powers of his ſoul to the law, which you may call habitual righteouſneſs; and a conformity

formity of all his actions to it, which is actual righteouſneſs. Now, God made man habitually righteous: Man was to make himſelf actually righteous: The former was the ſtock God put into his hand; the latter, the improvement he ſhould have made of it. The ſum of what I have ſaid, is, that the righteouſneſs wherein man was created, was the conformity of all the faculties and powers of his ſoul to the moral law. This is what we call original righteouſneſs, which man was originally endued with. We may take it up in theſe three things:

Firſt, Man's underſtanding was a lamp of light. He had perfect knowledge of the law, and of his duty accordingly; he was made after God's image, and conſequently could not want knowledge, which is a part thereof, Col. iii. 10. "The new man is renewed in "knowledge after the image of him that created him." And indeed this was neceſſary to fit him for univerſal obedience, ſeeing no obedience can be according to the law, unleſs it proceed from a ſenſe of the commandment of God requiring it. It is true, Adam had not the law written upon tables of ſtone; but it was written upon his mind, the knowledge thereof being concreated with him. God impreſſed it upon his ſoul, and made him a law to himſelf, as the remains of it among the heathens do teſtify, Rom. ii. 14, 15. And ſeeing man was made to be the mouth of the creation, to glorify God in his works, we have ground to believe he had naturally an exquiſite knowledge of the works of God. We have a proof of this in his giving names to the beaſts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and theſe ſuch as expreſs their nature. "Whatſoever Adam called every living crea-"ture, that was the name thereof," Gen. ii. 19. And the dominion which God gave him over the creatures, ſoberly to uſe and diſpoſe of them according to his will, (ſtill in ſubordination to the will of God,) ſeems to require no leſs than a knowledge of their natures. And beſides all this, his perfect knowledge

ledge of the law, proves his knowledge in the management of civil affairs, which in reſpect of the law of God, "a good man will guide with diſcretion," Pſal. cxii. 5.

Secondly, His will lay ſtraight with the will of God, Eph. iv. 24. There was no corruption in his will, no bent nor inclination to evil; for that is ſin, properly and truly ſo called: hence the apoſtle ſays, Rom. vii. 7. "I had not known ſin, but by the "law: For I had not known luſt, except the law "had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet." An inclination to evil is really a fountain of ſin, and therefore inconſiſtent with that rectitude and uprightneſs which the text expreſsly ſays he was endued with at his creation. The will of man then was directed and naturally inclined to God and goodneſs, though mutably. It was diſpoſed, by its original make, to follow the Creator's will, as the ſhadow does the body; and was not left in an equal balance to good and evil: for at that rate he had not been upright, nor habitually conform to the law; which in no moment can allow the creature not to be inclined towards God as his chief end, more than it can allow man to be a god to himſelf. The law was impreſſed upon Adam's ſoul: now this according to the new covenant, by which the image of God is repaired, conſiſts in two things; 1. Putting the law into the mind, denoting the knowledge of it; 2. Writing it in the heart, denoting inclinations in the will, anſwerable to the commands of the law, Heb. viii. 10. So that, as the will, when we conſider it as renewed by grace, is by that grace natively inclined to the ſame holineſs, in all its parts, which the law requires; ſo was the will of man (when we conſider him as God made him at firſt) endued with natural inclinations to every thing commanded by the law. For if the regenerate are partakers of the divine nature, as undoubtedly they are, for ſo ſays the ſcripture, 2 Pet. i. 4. and if this divine nature can import no leſs than inclinations of the

the heart to holineſs, then ſurely Adam's will could not want this inclination; for in him the image of God was perfect. It is true, it is ſaid, Rom. ii. 14, 15. "That the Gentiles ſhew the work of the law "written in their hearts;" but this denotes only their knowledge of that law, ſuch as it is; but the apoſtle to the Hebrews, in the text cited, takes the word "heart" in another ſenſe, diſtinguiſhing it plainly from the *mind*. And it muſt be granted, that, when God promiſeth in the new covenant, "to write "his law in the hearts of his people," it imports quite another thing than what heathens have; for though they have notions of it in their minds, yet their hearts go another way; their will has got a ſet and bias quite contrary to that law; and therefore the expreſſion, ſuitable to the preſent purpoſe, muſt needs import, beſides theſe notions of the mind, inclinations of the will going along therewith; which inclinations, though mixed with corruption in the regenerate, were pure and unmixed in upright Adam. In a word, as Adam knew his Maſter's pleaſure in the matter of duty, ſo his will ſtood inclined to what he knew.

Thirdly, His affections were orderly, pure and holy; which is a neceſſary part of that uprightneſs wherein man was created. The apoſtle has a petition, 2 Theſſ. iii. 5. "The Lord direct your hearts into "the love of God;" that is, "The Lord ſtrengthen "your hearts," or make them lie ſtraight to the love of God: and our text tells us, man was thus made ſtraight. "The new man was created in righteouſ-"neſs and true holineſs," Eph. iv. 24. Now this holineſs, as it is diſtinguiſhed from righteouſneſs, may import the purity and orderlineſs of the affections. And thus the apoſtle, 1 Tim. ii. 8. will have men to "pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and "doubting:" becauſe, as troubled water is unfit to receive the image of the ſun, ſo the heart, filled with impure and diſorderly affections, is not fit for divine communications. Man's ſenſitive appetite was indeed naturally

naturally carried out towards objects grateful to the ſenſes. For, ſeeing man was made up of body and ſoul, and God made this man to glorify and enjoy him, and for this end to uſe his good creatures in ſubordination to himſelf, it is plain that man was naturally inclined both to ſpiritual and ſenſible good; yea to ſpiritual good, the chief good, as his ultimate end: And therefore his ſenſitive motions and inclinations were ſubordinate to his reaſon and will, which lay ſtraight with the will of God, and were not in the leaſt contrary to the ſame. Otherwiſe he ſhould have been made of contradictions; his ſoul being naturally inclined to God, as the chief end, in the ſuperior part thereof; and the ſame ſoul inclined to the creature, as the chief end, in the inferior part thereof, as they call it, which is impoſſible; for man, at the ſame inſtant, cannot have two chief ends. Man's affections then, in his primitive ſtate, were pure from all defilement; free from all diſorder and diſtemper, becauſe in all their motions they were duly ſubjected to his clear reaſon, and his holy will. He had alſo an executive power anſwerable to his will; a power to do the good which he knew ſhould be done, and which he inclined to do, even to fulfil the whole law of God. If it had not been ſo, God would not have required of him perfect obedience; for to ſay, that "the Lord gathereth where he hath not ſtrawed," is but the blaſphemy of a wicked heart againſt a good and bountiful God, Mat. xxv. 24, From what has been ſaid, it may be gathered, that the original righteouſneſs explained, was univerſal and natural, yet mutable.

Firſt, It was univerſal; both with reſpect to the ſubject of it, the whole man, and the object of it, the whole law. Univerſal, I ſay, with reſpect to the ſubject of it; for this righteouſneſs was diffuſed through the whole man: it was a bleſſed leaven that leavened the whole lump. There was not one wrong pin in the tabernacle of human nature, when God

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ſet it up, however ſhattered it is now. Man was then holy in ſoul, body, and ſpirit; while the ſoul remained untainted, its lodging was kept clean and undefiled; the members of the body were conſecrated veſſels, and inſtruments of righteouſneſs. A combat betwixt fleſh and ſpirit, reaſon and appetite; nay, the leaſt inclination to ſin, or luſt of the fleſh in the inferior part of the ſoul, was utterly inconſiſtent with this uprightneſs in which man was created; and has been invented to vail the corruption of man's nature, and to obſcure the grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt: it looks very like the language of fallen Adam, laying his own ſin at his Maker's door, Gen. iii. 12. "The "woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave "me of the tree, and I did eat." But as this righteouſneſs was univerſal in reſpect of the ſubject, becauſe it ſpread through the whole man; ſo alſo it was univerſal in reſpect of the object, the holy law. There was nothing in the law but what was agreeable to his reaſon and will, as God made him; though ſin hath now ſet him at odds with it: his ſoul was ſhapen out in length and breadth to the commandment, though exceeding broad; ſo that his original righteouſneſs was not only perfect in parts, but in degrees.

Secondly, As it was univerſal, ſo it was natural to him, and not ſupernatural in that ſtate. Not that it was eſſential to man, as man; for then he could not have loſt it, without the loſs of his very being; but it was connatural to him; he was created with it, and it was neceſſary to the perfection of man, as he came out of the hand of God; neceſſary to conſtitute him in a ſtate of integrity. Yet, thirdly, It was mutable; it was a righteouſneſs that might be loſt, as is manifeſted by the doleful event. His will was not abſolutely indifferent to good or evil; God ſet it towards good only; yet he did not ſo fix and confirm its inclinations, that it could not alter. No, it was moveable to evil, and that only by man himſelf, God having

having given him a ſufficient power to ſtand in this integrity, if he had pleaſed. Let no man quarrel God's work in this: for if Adam had been unchangeably righteous, he behoved to have been ſo, either by nature, or by free gift: by nature he could not be ſo, for that is proper to God, and incommunicable to any creature; if by free gift, then no wrong was done him, in with-holding of what he could not crave. Confirmation in a righteous ſtate is a reward of grace, given upon continuing righteous through the ſtate of trial; and would have been given to Adam, if he had ſtood out the time appointed for probation by the Creator; and accordingly is given to the ſaints, upon the account of the merits of Chriſt, who was obedient, even to the death. And herein believers have the advantage of Adam, that they can never totally nor finally fall away from grace.

Thus was man made originally righteous, being "created in God's own image," Gen. i. 27. which conſiſts in the poſitive qualities of knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs, Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. All that God made "was very good," according to their ſeveral natures, Gen. i. 31. and ſo was man morally good, being made after the image of him who is good and upright, Pſal. xxv. 8. Without this he could not have anſwered the great end of his creation, which was to know, love, and ſerve his God, according to his will: nay, he could not be created otherwiſe; for he behoved either to be conform to the law in his powers, principles, and inclinations, or not: if he was, then he was righteous; and, if not, he was a ſinner: which is abſurd and horrible to imagine.

Of MAN's *original happineſs.*

SECONDLY, I ſhall lay before you ſome of thoſe things which did accompany or flow from the righteouſneſs of man's primitive ſtate. Happineſs is the reſult

reſult of holineſs; and as this was an holy, ſo it was an happy ſtate.

Firſt, Man was then a very glorious creature. We have reaſon to ſuppoſe, that as Moſes' face ſhone when he came down from the mount, ſo man had a very lightſome and pleaſant countenance, and beautiful body, while as yet there was no darkneſs of ſin in him at all. But ſeeing God himſelf is "glorious "in holineſs," (Exod. xv. 11.) ſurely that ſpiritual comelineſs the Lord put upon man at his creation, made him a very glorious creature. O how did light ſhine in his holy converſation, to the glory of the Creator! while every action was but the darting forth of a ray and beam of that glorious unmixed light which God had ſet up in his ſoul, while that lamp of love, lighted from heaven, continued burning in his heart, as in the holy place: and the law of the Lord, put in his inward parts by the finger of God, was kept by him there as in the moſt holy. There was no impurity to be ſeen without; no ſquint look in the eyes, after any unclean thing; the tongue ſpoke nothing but the language of heaven; and, in a word, "the King's SON was all glorious within, and his "clothing of wrought gold."

Secondly, He was the favourite of heaven. He ſhone brightly in the image of God, who cannot but love his own image, wherever it appears. While he was alone in the world, he was not alone, for God was with him. His communion and fellowſhip was with his Creator, and that immediately; for as yet there was nothing to turn away the face of God from the work of his own hands, ſeeing ſin had not as yet entered, which alone could make the breach.

By the favour of God, he was advanced to be confederate with Heaven in the firſt covenant, called, the covenant of works. God reduced the law, which he gave in his creation, in the form of a covenant, whereof perfect obedience was the condition, life was the thing promiſed, and death the penalty. As for

the condition, one great branch of the natural law was, that man believe whatſoever God ſhall reveal, and do whatſoever he ſhall command: accordingly God, making this covenant with man, extended his duty to the "not eating of the tree of knowledge" of good and evil; and the law thus extended was the rule of man's covenant-obedience. How eaſy were theſe terms to him who had the natural law written on his heart; and that inclining him to obey this poſitive law revealed to him, it ſeems, by an audible voice, (Gen. ii. 17.) the matter whereof was ſo very eaſy? And, indeed, it was highly reaſonable, that the rule and matter of his covenant obedience ſhould be thus extended, that which was added being a thing in itſelf indifferent, where his obedience was to turn upon the preciſe point of the will of God, the plaineſt evidence of true obedience; and it being in an external thing, wherein his obedience or diſobedience would be moſt clear and conſpicuous.

Now, upon this condition, God promiſed him life, the continuance of natural life, in the union of ſoul and body, and of ſpiritual life, in the favour of his Creator: he promiſed him alſo eternal life in heaven, to have been entered into when he paſſed the time of his trial upon earth, and the Lord ſhould ſee meet to tranſport him into the upper paradiſe. This promiſe of life was included in the threatning of death, mentioned in Gen. ii. 17: for while God ſays, "In the "day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die:" it is in effect, "If thou do not eat it, thou ſhalt ſurely "live." And this was ſacramentally confirmed by another tree in the garden, called therefore, "the "tree of life," which he was debarred from when he had ſinned; Gen. iii. 22, 23. "Leſt he put forth "his hand, and take alſo of the tree of life, and "eat and live for ever; therefore the Lord God "ſent him forth from the garden of Eden." Yet it is not to be thought that man's life and death did hang only on this matter of the forbidden fruit, but

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on the whole law; for ſo ſays the apoſtle, Gal. iii. 10. "It is written, Curſed is every one that continueth "not in all things which are written in the book of "the law to do them." That of the forbidden fruit was a revealed part of Adam's religion; and ſo behoved expreſsly to be laid before him: but as to the natural law, he naturally knew death to be the reward of diſobedience; for the very heathens were not ignorant of this, "knowing the judgment of God, that they "which commit ſuch things are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. And moreover, the promiſe included in the threatning, ſecured Adam's life, according to the covenant, as long as he obeyed the natural law, with the addition of that poſitive command; ſo that he needed nothing to be expreſſed to him in the covenant, but what concerned the eating of the forbidden fruit. That eternal life in heaven was promiſed in the covenant is plain from this, that the threatning was of eternal death in hell: to which when man had made himſelf liable, Chriſt was promiſed by his death to purchaſe eternal life. And Chriſt himſelf expounds the promiſe of the covenant of works, of eternal life, while he propoſeth the condition of that covenant to a proud young man, who, though he had not Adam's ſtock, yet would needs enter into life in the way of working, as Adam was to have done under this covenant, Matth. xix. 17. "If thou "wilt enter into life, (viz. eternal life, by doing, ver. "16.) keep the commandments."

The penalty was death, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day "that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die." The death threatened was ſuch as the life promiſed was; and that moſt juſtly, to wit, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal death. The event is a commentary on this; for that very day he did eat thereof, he was a dead man in law; but the execution was ſtopped, becauſe of his poſterity, then in his loins, and another covenant was prepared; however, that day his body got its death's wound, and became mortal. Death alſo

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ſeized his ſoul; he loſt his original righteouſneſs, and the favour of God: witneſs the grips and throws of conſcience which made him hide himſelf from God. And he became liable to eternal death, which would have actually followed of courſe, if a Mediator had not been provided, who found him bound with the cords of death, as a malefactor ready to be led to execution. Thus you have a ſhort deſcription of the covenant into which the Lord brought man in the ſtate of innocence.

And ſeemeth it a ſmall thing unto you, that earth was thus confederate with heaven? This could have been done to none but him whom the King of heaven delighted to honour. It was an act of grace, worthy of the gracious God whoſe favourite he was; for there was grace and free favour in the firſt covenant; though "the exceeding riches of grace," as the apoſtle calls it, Eph. ii. 7. was reſerved for the ſecond. It was certainly an act of grace, favour, and admirable condeſcenſion in God, to enter into a covenant, and ſuch a covenant, with his own creature. Man was not at his own, but at God's diſpoſal; nor had he any thing to work with, but what he had received from God. There was no proportion betwixt the work and the promiſed reward. Before that covenant, man was bound to perfect obedience, in virtue of his natural dependence on God; and death was naturally the wages of ſin, which the juſtice of God could and would have required, though there never had been any covenant betwixt God and man: but God was free; man could never have required eternal life as the reward of his work, if there had not been ſuch a covenant. God was free to have diſpoſed of his creatures as he ſaw meet; and if he had ſtood in his integrity as long as the world ſtood, and there had been no covenant promiſing eternal life to him upon his obedience, God might have withdrawn his ſupporting hand at laſt, and ſo made him creep back into the womb of nothing, whence almighty

power had drawn him out. And what wrong could there have been in this, while God would take back what he freely gave? But now, the covenant being made, God becomes debtor to his own faithfulnefs: if man will work, he may crave the reward on the ground of the covenant. Well might the angels then, upon his being raifed to this dignity, have given him this falutation, "Hail! thou highly favoured, the "Lord is with thee."

Thirdly, God made him lord of the world, prince of the inferior creatures, univerfal lord and emperor of the whole earth. His Creator gave him dominion over the fifh of the fea, and over the fowl of the air, over all the earth, yea, and every living thing that moveth on the earth: he "put all things under his "feet," Pfal. viii. 6, 7, 8. He gave him a power, foberly to ufe and difpofe of the creatures in the earth, fea, and air. Thus man was God's depute-governor in the lower world; and this his dominion was an image of God's fovereignty. This was common to the man and the woman: but the man had one thing peculiar to him, to wit, that he had dominion over the woman alfo, 1 Cor. xi. 7. Behold how the creatures came to him to own their fubjection, and to do him homage as their lord; and quietly ftood before him, till he put names on them as his own, Gen. ii. 19. Man's face ftruck an awe upon them; the ftouteft creatures ftood aftonifhed, tamely and quietly adoring him as their lord and ruler. Thus was "man "crowned with glory and honour," Pfal. viii. 5. The Lord dealt moft liberally and bountifully with him, "put all things under his feet:" only he kept one thing, one tree of the garden out of his hands, even the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

But you may fay, 'And did he grudge him this?' I anfwer, Nay; but when he had made him thus holy and happy, he graciouflly gave him this reftriction, which was in its own nature a prop and ftay to keep him from falling. And this, I fay, upon thefe three grounds:

grounds: (1.) As it was moſt proper for the honour of God, who had made man lord of the lower world, to aſſert his ſovereign dominion over all, by ſome particular viſible ſign; ſo it was moſt proper for man's ſafety. Man being ſet down in a beautiful paradiſe, it was an act of infinite wiſdom, and of grace too, to keep from him one ſingle tree, as a viſible teſtimony that he muſt hold all of his Creator, as his great landlord; that ſo, while he ſaw himſelf lord of the creatures, he might not forget that he was ſtill God's ſubject. (2.) This was a memorial of his mutable ſtate given to him from heaven, to be laid up by him for his great caution. For man was created with a free will to good, which the tree of life was an evidence of: but his will was alſo free to evil, and the forbidden tree was to him a memorial thereof. It was, in a manner, a continual watch-word to him againſt evil, a beacon ſet up before him, to bid him beware of daſhing himſelf to pieces on the rock of ſin. (3.) God made man upright, directed towards God as the chief end. He ſet him, like Moſes, on the top of the hill, holding up his hands to heaven: and as Aaron and Hur ſtayed up Moſes' hands, (Exod. xvii. 10, 11, 12.) ſo God gave man an erect figure of body, and forbid him the eating of this tree, to keep him in this poſture of uprightneſs wherein he was created. God made the beaſts, looking down towards the earth, to ſhew that their ſatisfaction might be brought from thence; and accordingly it does afford them what is commenſurable to their appetite; but the erect figure of man's body, which looketh upward, ſhewed him that his happineſs lay above him, in God; and that he was to expect it from heaven, and not from earth. Now this fair tree of which he was forbidden to eat, taught him the ſame leſſon, that his happineſs lay not in enjoyment of the creatures, for there was a want even in paradiſe: ſo that the forbidden tree was, in effect, the hand of all the creatures, pointing man away from them-

themſelves to God for happineſs. It was a ſign of emptineſs hung before the door of creation, with that inſcription, "This is not your reſt."

Fourthly, As he had a perfect tranquillity within his own breaſt, ſo he had a perfect calm without. His heart had nothing to reproach him with; conſcience then had nothing to do, but to direct, approve, and feaſt him: and without there was nothing to annoy him. The happy pair lived in perfect amity: and though their knowledge was vaſt, true, and clear, they knew no ſhame: though they were naked, there were no bluſhes in their faces; for ſin, the ſeed of ſhame, was not yet ſown, Gen. ii. 25. And their beautiful bodies were not capable of injuries from the air: ſo that they had no need of clothes, which are originally the badges of our ſhame. They were liable to no diſeaſes nor pains: and, though they were not to live idle, yet toil, wearineſs, and ſweat of the brows, were not known in this ſtate.

Fifthly, Man had a life of pure delight, and undreggy pleaſure in this ſtate. Rivers of pure pleaſures run through it. The earth, with the product thereof, was now in its glory; nothing had yet come in to marr the beauty of the creatures. God ſet him down, not in a common place of the earth; but in Eden, a place eminent for pleaſantneſs, as the name of it imports; nay, not only in Eden, but in the garden of Eden; the moſt pleaſant ſpot of that pleaſant place; a garden planted by God himſelf, to be the manſion-houſe of this his favourite. As, when God made the other living creatures, he ſaid, "Let the "water bring forth the moving creature," Gen. i. 20. and "Let the earth bring forth the living crea-"ture," verſe 24. but when man was to be made, he ſaid, "Let us make man," verſe 26. ſo, when the reſt of the earth was to be furniſhed with herbs and trees, God ſaid, "Let the earth bring forth "graſs,"—and "the fruit-tree," &c. Gen. i. 11. But of paradiſe it is ſaid, "God planted it," chap.

ii. 8. which cannot but denote a ſingular excellency in that garden beyond all other parts of the then beautiful earth. There he wanted neither for neceſſity nor delight; for there was "every tree that is "pleaſant to the ſight, and good for food," verſe 9. He knew not theſe delights which luxury invented for the gratifying of luſts; but his delights were ſuch as came out of the hand of God, without paſſing through ſinful hands, which readily leave marks of impurity on what they touch. So his delights were pure, his pleaſures refined. And yet may "I ſhow "you a more excellent way: wiſdom had entered in-"to his heart;" ſurely then "knowledge was plea-"ſant unto his ſoul." What delight do ſome find in their diſcoveries of the works of nature, by the ſcraps of knowledge they have gathered! but how much more exquiſite pleaſure had Adam, while his piercing eyes read the book of God's works; which God laid before him, to the end he might glorify him in the ſame; and therefore had ſurely fitted him for the work! But above all, his knowledge of God, and that as his God, and the communion he had with him, could not but afford him the moſt refined and exquiſite pleaſure in the innermoſt receſſes of his heart. Great is that delight which the ſaints find in theſe views of the glory of God, that their ſouls are ſometimes let into, while they are compaſſed about with many infirmities: but much more may well be allowed to ſinleſs Adam: no doubt he reliſhed theſe pleaſures at another rate.

Laſtly, He was immortal. He would never have died if he had not ſinned; it was in caſe of ſin that death was threatened, Gen. ii. 17. which ſhews it to be the conſequent of ſin, and not of the ſinleſs human nature. The perfect conſtitution of his body, which came out of God's hand very good, and the righteouſneſs and holineſs of his ſoul, removed all inward cauſes of death; nothing being prepared for the grave's devouring mouth, but "the vile body,"

Phil.

Phil. iii. 21. and "thoſe who have ſinned," Job xxiv. 19. And God's ſpecial care of his innocent creature, ſecured him againſt outward violence. The apoſtle's teſtimony is expreſs, Rom. v. 12. "By one man ſin "entered into the world, and death by ſin." Behold, the door by which death came in! Satan wrought with his lies till he got it opened, and ſo death entered; and therefore is he ſaid to have been "a mur-"derer from the beginning," John viii. 44.

Thus have I ſhown you the holineſs and happineſs of man in this ſtate. If any ſhall ſay, What is all this to us, who never taſted of that holy and happy ſtate? They muſt know, it nearly concerns us, in ſo far as Adam was the root of all mankind, our common head and repreſentative, who received from God our inheritance and ſtock, to keep it for himſelf and his children, and to convey it to them. The Lord put all mankind's ſtock (as it were) in one ſhip; and, as we ourſelves would have done, he made our common father the pilot. He put a bleſſing in the root, to have been, if rightly managed, diffuſed into all the branches. According to our text, making Adam upright, he made man upright; and all mankind had that uprightneſs in him; for, "if the root be holy, "ſo are the branches;" but more of this afterwards. Had Adam ſtood, none would have quarrelled the repreſentation.

The doctrine of the ſtate of innocence applied.

USE I. For information. This ſhews us, (1.) That not God, but man himſelf, was the cauſe of his ruin. God made him upright; his Creator ſet him up, but he threw himſelf down. Was the Lord's directing and inclining him to good, the reaſon of his woful choice? or did Heaven deal ſo ſparingly with him, that his preſſing wants ſent him to hell to ſeek ſupply? Nay, man was, and is, the cauſe of his own ruin. (2.) God may moſt juſtly require of men perfect obe-

dience to his law, and condemn them for their not obeying it perfectly, though now they have no ability to keep it. In ſo doing " he gathers but where he has ſtrawed." He gave man ability to keep the whole law; man has loſt it by his own fault: but his ſin could never take away that right which God hath to exact perfect obedience of his creature, and to puniſh in caſe of his diſobedience. (3.) Behold here the infinite obligation we lie under to Jeſus Chriſt the ſecond Adam, who, with his own precious blood, has bought our eſcheat, and freely makes offer of it again to us, Hoſ. xiii. 9. and that with the advantage of everlaſting ſecurity, that it can never be altogether loſt any more, John x. 28, 29. Free grace will fix thoſe, whom free will ſhook down into a gulf of miſery.

USE II. This reacheth a reproof to three ſorts of perſons: (1.) To theſe who hate religion in the power of it, wherever it appears; and can take pleaſure in nothing, but in the world and their luſts. Surely thoſe men are far from righteouſneſs: they are " haters of God," Rom. i. 30. for they are haters of his image. Upright Adam in paradiſe would have been a great eye-ſore to all ſuch perſons; as he was to the ſerpent, whoſe ſeed they prove themſelves to be, by their malignity. (2.) It reproves thoſe who put religion to ſhame, and thoſe who are aſhamed of religion, before a graceleſs world. There is a generation who make ſo bold with the God that made them, and can in a moment cruſh them, that they ridicule piety, and make a mock of ſerioufneſs. " Againſt whom do ye ſport yourſelves? againſt whom " make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?" Iſ. lvii. 4. Is it not againſt God himſelf, whoſe image, in ſome meaſure, repaired on ſome of his creatures, makes them fools in your eyes? But " be ye not mock- " ers, leſt your bands be made ſtrong," Iſ. xxviii. 22. Holineſs was the glory of God put on man, when he made him: but now the ſons of men turn that glory into

into ſhame, becauſe they themſelves glory in their ſhame. There are others that ſecretly approve of religion, and in religious company will profeſs it, who, at other times, to be neighbour-like, are aſhamed to own it: ſo weak are they, that they are blown over with the wind of the wicked's mouth. A broad laughter, an impious jeſt, a ſilly jibe out of a profane mouth, is to many an unanſwerable argument againſt religion and ſerioufneſs: for, in the cauſe of religion, they are "as ſilly doves without heart." O that ſuch would conſider that weighty word, Mark viii. 38. "Whoſoever therefore "ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this "adulterous and ſinful generation; of him alſo ſhall "the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in "the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." (3.) It reproves the proud ſelf-conceited profeſſor, who admires himſelf in a garment he hath patched together of rags. There are many, who, when once they have gathered ſome ſcraps of knowledge of religion, and have attained to ſome reformation of life, do ſwell big with conceit of themſelves; a ſad ſign that the effects of the fall lie ſo heavy upon them, that they have not as yet come to themſelves, Luke xv. 17. They have eyes behind, to ſee their attainments; but no eyes within, no eyes before, to ſee their wants, which would ſurely humble them: for true knowledge makes men to ſee, both what once they were, and what they are at preſent; and ſo is humbling, and will not ſuffer them to be content with any meaſure of grace attained; but puts them on to preſs forward, "forgeting the things that are behind," Phil. iii. 13, 14. But thoſe men are ſuch a ſpectacle of commiſeration, as one would be that had his palace on fire, and were glorying in a cottage he had built for himſelf out of the rubbiſh, though ſo very weak, that it could not ſtand againſt a ſtorm.

USE III. Of lamentation. Here was a ſtately building; a man carved like a fair palace, but now lying

lying in aſhes: let us ſtand and look on the ruins, and drop a tear. This is a lamentation, and ſhall be for a lamentation. Could we chuſe but to weep, if we ſaw our country ruined, and turned by the enemy into a wilderneſs? if we ſaw our houſes on fire, and our houſeholds periſhing in the flames? But all this comes far ſhort of the diſmal ſight, "man fallen as a "ſtar from heaven." Ah! may we not now ſay, "O "that we were as in months paſt," when there was no ſtain in our nature, no cloud in our minds, no pollution in our hearts! Had we never been in better caſe, the matter had been leſs: But "they that were "brought up in ſcarlet do now embrace dunghills!" Where is our primitive glory now? Once no darkneſs in the mind, no rebellion in the will, no diſorder in the affections. But ah! "how is the faithful city be-"come an harlot! Righteouſneſs lodged in it; but "now murderers: Our ſilver is become droſs, our "wine mixt with water." That heart which was once the temple of God, is now turned into a den of thieves. Let our name be Ichabod, for the glory is departed. Happy waſt thou, O man, who was like unto thee? No pain nor ſickneſs could affect thee, no death could approach thee, no ſigh was heard from thee, till theſe bitter fruits were plucked off the for-bidden tree. Heaven ſhone upon thee, and earth ſmiled: Thou waſt the companion of angels, and the envy of devils. But how low is he now laid, who was created for dominion, and made lord of the world! "The crown has fallen from our head: wo unto us "that we have ſinned." The creatures that waited to do him ſervice, are now, ſince the fall, ſet in bat-tle-array againſt him, and the leaſt of them, having commiſſion, proves too hard for him. Waters over-flow the old world; fire conſumes Sodom; the ſtars in their courſes fought againſt Siſera; frogs, flies, lice, &c. turn executioners to Pharaoh and his Egyptians; worms eat up Herod: Yea, man needs "a league "with the beaſts," yea, with the very "ſtones of the "field,"

" field," Job v. 23.; having reaſon to fear, that every one that findeth him will ſlay him. Alas! how are we fallen! how are we plunged into a gulf of miſery! The ſun has gone down on us, death has come in at our window; our enemies have put out our two eyes, and ſport themſelves with our miſeries. Let us then lie down in our ſhame, and let our confuſion cover us. Nevertheleſs there is hope in Iſrael concerning this thing. Come then, O ſinner, look to Jeſus Chriſt the ſecond Adam: quit the firſt Adam and his covenant; come over to the Mediator and Surety of the new and better covenant; and let your hearts ſay, " Be thou our ruler, and let this breach be under thy " hand:" and let your " eye trickle down, and ceaſe " not, without any intermiſſion, till the Lord look " down and behold from heaven," Lam. iii. 49.

STATE

STATE II.

NAMELY,

The *State* of *Nature*, or of *Entire Depravation.*

HEAD I.

The *Sinfulneſs* of Man's *Natural State.*

GENESIS vi. 5.

And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

WE have ſeen what man was, as God made him; a lovely and happy creature: let us view him now as he hath unmade himſelf; and we ſhall ſee him a ſinful and miſerable creature. This is the ſad ſtate we were brought into by the fall; a ſtate as black and doleful, as the former was glorious; and this we commonly call the ſtate of nature, or man's natural ſtate, according to that of the apoſtle, Eph. ii. 3. "And were by nature the children of wrath, e-"ven as others." And herein two things are to be conſidered: 1ſt, The ſinfulneſs; 2dly, The miſery of this eſtate, in which all the unregenerate do live. I begin with the ſinfulneſs of man's natural ſtate, where-of the text gives us a full, though ſhort account. "And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great," &c.

The ſcope and deſign of theſe words is, to clear God's

God's juſtice, in bringing the flood on the old world. There are two particular cauſes of it taken notice of in the preceeding verſes. (1.) Mixt marriages, ver. 2. "The ſons of God," the poſterity of Seth and Enos, profeſſors of the true religion, married with "the "daughters of men," the profane curſed race of Cain. They did not carry the matter before the Lord, that he might chuſe for them, Pſal. xlviii. 14: but, without any reſpect to the will of God, they choſe, not according to the rules of their faith, but of their fancy; they "ſaw that they were fair:" and their marriage with them occaſioned their divorce from God. This was one of the cauſes of the deluge which ſwept away the old world. Would to God all profeſſors in our day could plead not guilty; but though that ſin brought on the deluge, yet the deluge hath not ſwept away that ſin; which, as of old, ſo in our day, may juſtly be looked upon as one cauſe of the decay of religion. It was an ordinary thing among the Pagans, to change their gods, as they changed their condition into a married lot; and many ſad inſtances the Chriſtian world affords of the ſame; as if people were of Pharaoh's opinion, That religion is only for thoſe who have no other care upon their heads, Exod. v. 17. (2.) Great oppreſſion, ver. 4. "There "were giants in the earth in thoſe days;" men of great ſtature, great ſtrength, and monſtrous wickedneſs, "filling the earth with violence," ver. 11. But neither their ſtrength, nor treaſures of wickedneſs, could profit them in the day of wrath. Yet the gain of oppreſſion ſtill carries many over the terror of this dreadful example. Thus much for the connection, and what particular crimes that generation was guilty of.

But every perſon that was ſwept away with the flood could not be guilty of theſe things; and "ſhall "not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Therefore, in my text, there is a general indictment drawn up againſt them all, "The wickedneſs of man was "great in the earth," &c. And this is well inſtruct-

ed, for "God ſaw it." Two things are laid to their charge here:

Firſt, Corruption of life, wickedneſs, "great wick-"edneſs." I underſtand this of the wickedneſs of their lives; for it is plainly diſtinguiſhed from the wickedneſs of their hearts. The ſins of their outward converſation were great in the nature of them, and greatly aggravated by their attending circumſtances: and this not only among thoſe of the race of curſed Cain; but thoſe of holy Seth; the wickedneſs of man was great. And then it is added, "in the earth;" (1.) To vindicate God's ſeverity, in that he not only cut off ſinners, but defaced the beauty of the earth; and ſwept off the brute creatures from it, by the deluge; that as men had ſet the marks of their impiety, God might ſet the marks of his indignation, on the earth. (2.) To ſhew the heinouſneſs of their ſin, in making the earth, which God had ſo adorned for the uſe of man, a ſink of ſin, and a ſtage whereon to act their wickedneſs, in defiance of heaven. God ſaw this corruption of life; he not only knew it, and took notice of it, but he made them to know that he did take notice of it, and that he had not forſaken the earth, though they had forſaken heaven.

Secondly, Corruption of nature: "Every imagina-"tion of the thoughts of his heart was only evil con-"tinually." All their wicked practices are here traced to the fountain and ſpring head: a corrupt heart was the ſource of all. The ſoul, which was made upright in all its faculties, is now wholly diſordered. The heart, that was made according to God's own heart, is now the reverſe of it, a forge of evil imaginations, a ſink of inordinate affections, and a ſtorehouſe of all impiety, Mark vii. 21, 22. Behold the heart of the natural man, as it is opened in our text. The mind is defiled; the thoughts of the heart are evil; the will and affections are defiled; the imagination of the thoughts of the heart (*i. e.* whatſoever the heart frameth within itſelf by thinking, ſuch as judg-

judgment, choice, purpoſes, devices, deſires, every inward motion), or rather, the frame of the thoughts of the heart, (namely, the frame, make, or mould of theſe, 1 Chron. xxix. 18.), is evil: Yea, and "every imagination," every frame of his thoughts, is ſo. The heart is ever framing ſomething; but never one right thing: the frame of thoughts in the heart of man, is exceeding various; yet are they never caſt into a right frame. But is there not, at leaſt a mixture of good in them? No, they are "only evil;" there is nothing in them truly good and acceptable before God: nor can any thing be ſo that comes out of that forge; where, not the Spirit of God, but "the "prince of the power of the air, worketh," Eph. ii. 2. Whatever changes may be found in them, are only from evil to evil; for the imagination of the heart, or frame of thoughts in natural men, is evil continually, or every day. From the firſt day to the laſt day, in this ſtate, they are in midnight darkneſs; there is not a glimmering of the light of holineſs in them; not one holy thought can ever be produced by the unholy heart. O what a vile heart is this! O what a corrupt nature is this! The tree that always brings forth fruit, but never good fruit, whatever ſoil it be ſet in, whatever pains be taken on it, muſt naturally be an evil tree: and what can that heart be, whereof "every imagination," every ſet of thoughts, is "only evil," and that "continually?" Surely that corruption is ingrained in our hearts, interwoven with our very natures, has ſunk into the marrow of our ſouls, and will never be cured but by a miracle of grace. Now ſuch is man's heart, ſuch is his nature, till regenerating grace change it. God that ſearcheth the heart ſaw man's heart was ſo, he took ſpecial notice of it; and the faithful and true witneſs cannot miſtake our caſe; though we are moſt apt to miſtake ourſelves in this point, and generally do overlook it.

Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked

heart, ſaying, What is that to us? Let that generation of whom the text ſpeaks ſee to that. For the Lord has left the caſe of that generation on record, to be a looking-glaſs to all after-generations, wherein they may ſee their own corruption of heart, and what their lives would be too if he reſtrained them not: for "as in water face anſwereth to face, ſo the heart "of man to man," Prov. xxvii. 19. Adam's fall has framed all men's hearts alike in this matter. Hence the apoſtle, Rom. iii. 10,—18. proves the corruption of the nature, hearts and lives of all men, from what the Pſalmiſt ſays of the wicked in his day, Pſal. xiv. 1, 2, 3. Pſal. v. 9. Pſal. cxl. 3. Pſal. x. 7. Pſal. xxxvi. 1. and from what Jeremiah ſaith of the wicked in his day, Jer. ix. 3. and from what Iſaiah ſays of thoſe that lived in his time, Iſa. lvii. 7, 8. and concludes with that, chap. iii. 19. "Now ye know, that what things "ſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under "the law; that every mouth may be ſtopped, and "all the world may become guilty before God." Had the hiſtory of the deluge been tranſmitted unto us, without the reaſon thereof in the text, we might thence have gathered the corruption and total depravation of man's nature: for what other quarrel could a holy and juſt God have with the infants that were deſtroyed by the flood, ſeeing they had no actual ſin? If we ſaw a wiſe man, who having made a curious piece of work and heartily approved of it when he gave it out of his hand, as fit for the uſe it was deſigned for, riſe up in wrath and break it all in pieces, when he looked on it afterwards; would we not thence conclude the frame of it had been quite marred, ſince it went out of his hand, and that it does not ſerve for that uſe it was at firſt deſigned for? How much more, when we ſee the holy and wiſe God deſtroying the work of his own hands, once ſolemnly pronounced by him very good, may we conclude that the original frame thereof is utterly marred, that it cannot be mended, but it muſt needs be new made or loſt altogether?

gether? Gen. vi. 6, 7. "And it repented the Lord "that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved "him at his heart: and the Lord ſaid, I will deſtroy "man," or blot him out; as a man doth a ſentence out of a book, that cannot be corrected by cutting off ſome letters, ſyllables, or words, and interlining others here and there, but muſt needs be wholly new-framed. But did the deluge carry off this corruption of man's nature? did it mend the matter? No, it did not. God, in his holy providence, "that every "mouth may be ſtopped, and all the new world may "become guilty before God," as well as the old, permits that corruption of nature to break out in Noah, the father of the new world, after the deluge was over. Behold him, as another Adam, ſinning in the fruit of a tree: Gen. ix. 20, 21. "He planted a "vineyard, and he drank of the wine, and was "drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent." More than that, God gives the ſame reaſon againſt a new deluge, which he gives in our text for bringing that on the old world; "I will not," ſaith he, "again "curſe the ground any more for man's ſake; for the "imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," Gen. viii. 21. Whereby it is intimated, that there is no mending of the matter by this means; and that if he would always take the ſame courſe with men that he had done, he would be always ſending deluges on the earth, ſeeing the corruption of man's nature remains ſtill. But though the flood could not carry off the corruption of nature, yet it pointed at the way how it is to be done; to wit, that men muſt be "born of "water and of the Spirit," raiſed from ſpiritual death in ſin, by the grace of Jeſus Chriſt, "who came by "water and blood:" out of which a new world of ſaints ariſe in regeneration, even as the new world of ſinners out of the waters, where they had long lain buried (as it were) in the ark. This we learn from 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. where the apoſtle, ſpeaking of Noah's ark, ſaith, "Wherein few, that is, eight ſouls,

"were

" were ſaved by water. The like figure whereunto, " even baptiſm, doth alſo now ſave us." Now the waters of the deluge being a like figure to baptiſm, it plainly follows, that they ſignified (as baptiſm doth) " the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the " holy Ghoſt." To conclude then, theſe waters, though now dried up, may ſerve us ſtill for a looking-glaſs, in which we may ſee the total corruption of our nature, and the neceſſity of regeneration.

From the text, thus explained, ariſeth this weighty point of doctrine, which he that runs may read in it, viz. " Man's nature is now wholly corrupted." Now is there a ſad alteration, a wonderful overturn, in the nature of man: Where, at firſt, there was no-thing evil; now there is nothing good. In proſecuting of this doctrine, I ſhall,

Firſt, Confirm it.

Secondly, Repreſent this corruption of nature in its ſeveral parts.

Thirdly, Shew you how man's nature comes to be thus corrupted.

Laſtly, Make application.

That man's nature is corrupted.

FIRST, I am to confirm the doctrine of the corruption of nature; to hold the glaſs to your eyes, wherein you may ſee your ſinful nature; which, though God takes particular notice of it, many do quite overlook. And here we ſhall conſult, 1. God's word. 2. Men's experience and obſervation.

I. For ſcripture-proof, let us conſider,

Firſt, How the ſcriptures take particular notice of fallen Adam's communicating his image to his poſterity, Gen. v. 3. " Adam begat a ſon in his own " likeneſs, after his image; and called his name " Seth." Compare with this verſe 1. of that chapter

ter. "In the day that God created man, in the like-
"nefs of God made he him." Behold here, how the image after which man was made, and the image after which he is begotten, are oppofed. Man was made in the likenefs of God; that is, a holy and righteous God made a holy and righteous creature; but fallen Adam begat a fon, not in the likenefs of God, but in his own likenefs; that is, corrupt finful Adam begat a corrupt finful fon. For as the image of God bore righteoufnefs and immortality in it, as was cleared before; fo this image of fallen Adam bore corruption and death in it, 1 Cor. xv. 49, 50. compare ver. 22. Mofes, in that fifth chapter of Genefis, being to give us the firft bill of mortality that ever was in the world, ufhers it in with this, that dying Adam begat mortals. Having finned, he became mortal, according to the threatening; and fo he begat a fon, in his own likenefs, finful, and therefore mortal. Thus fin and death paffed on all. Doubtlefs he begat both Cain and Abel in his own likenefs, as well as Seth. But it is not recorded of Abel; becaufe he left no iffue behind him, and his falling the firft facrifice to death in the world was a fufficient document of it; nor of Cain, to whom it might have been thought peculiar, becaufe of his monftrous wickednefs; and befides all his pofterity was drowned in the flood: But it is recorded of Seth, becaufe he was the father of the holy feed; and from him all mankind fince the flood have defcended, and fallen Adam's own likenefs with them.

Secondly, It appears from that fcripture-text, Job xiv. 4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an un-
"clean? Not one." Our firft parents were unclean, how then can we be clean? how could our immediate parents be clean? or how fhall our children be fo? The uncleannefs here aimed at, is a finful uncleannefs; for it is fuch as makes man's days full of trouble: and it is natural, being derived from unclean parents; "Man is born of a woman," ver. 1. "And
"how

" how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Job xxv. 4. An omnipotent God, whose power is not here challenged, could bring a clean thing out of an unclean, and did so in the case of the man Christ; but no other can. Every person that is born according to the course of nature, is born unclean. If the root be corrupt, so must the branches be. Neither is the matter mended, though the parents be sanctified ones: for they are but holy in part, and that by grace, not by nature; and they beget their children as men, not as holy men. Wherefore, as the circumcised parent begets an uncircumcised child, and after the purest grain is sown, we reap corn with the chaff; so the holiest parents beget unholy children, and cannot communicate their grace to them, as they do their nature; which many godly parents find true, in their sad experience.

Thirdly, Consider the confession of the Psalmist David, Psal. li. 5. " Behold, I was shapen in iniqui-
" ty, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Here he ascends from his actual sin, to the fountain of it, namely, corrupt nature. He was a man according to God's own heart; but " from the beginning it was " not so" with him. He was begotten in lawful marriage; but when the lump was shapen in the womb, it was a sinful lump. Hence the corruption of nature is called the old man; being as old as ourselves, older than grace, even in those that are sanctified from the womb.

Fourthly, Hear our Lord's determination of the point, John iii. 6. " That which is born of the flesh, " is flesh." Behold the universal corruption of mankind, all are flesh. Not that all are frail, though that is a sad truth too: yea, and our natural frailty is an evidence of our natural corruption; but that is not the sense of this text: but here is the meaning of it, all are corrupt and sinful, and that naturally: Hence our Lord argues here, that because they are flesh, therefore they must be " born again, or else they

" cannot

" cannot enter into the kingdom of God, ver. 3, 5. And as the corruption of our nature evidenceth the abſolute neceſſity of regeneration, ſo the abſolute neceſſity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature; for why ſhould a man need a ſecond birth, if his nature were not quite marred in the firſt birth? Infants muſt be born again, for that is an except (John iii. 3.) which admits of no exception. And therefore they were circumciſed under the Old Teſtament; as having the " body of the ſins of the " fleſh" (which is conveyed to them by natural generation) to put off, Col. ii. 11. And now, by the appointment of Jeſus Chriſt, they are to be baptized; which ſays they are unclean, and that there is no ſalvation for them, but " by the waſhing of regenera- " tion, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt," Tit. iii. 5.

Fifthly, Man certainly is ſunk very low now, in compariſon of what he once was. God made him but a " little lower than the angels:" but now we find him likened to the beaſts that periſh. He hearkened to a brute, and is now become like one of them. Like Nebuchadnezzar, his portion (in his natural ſtate) is with the beaſts, " minding only earthly " things," Philip. iii. 19. Nay, brutes, in ſome ſort, have the advantage of the natural man, who is ſunk a degree below them. He is more witleſs, in what concerns him moſt, than the ſtork, or the turtle, or the crane, or the ſwallow, in what is for their intereſt, Jer. viii. 7. He is more ſtupid than the ox or aſs, If. i. 3. I find him ſent to ſchool to learn of the ant or emmet, which having no guide, or leader to go before her; no overſeer or officer, to compel or ſtir her up to work; nor ruler, but may do as ſhe liſts, being under the dominion of none; yet " pro- " videth her meat in the ſummer and harveſt," Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8. while the natural man hath all theſe, and yet expoſeth himſelf to eternal ſtarving. Nay, more than all this, the ſcripture holds out the natural man, not only as wanting the good qualities of thoſe crea-

tures; but as a compound of the evil qualities of the worſt of the creatures: in which do concentre the fierceneſs of the lion, the craft of the fox, the unteachableneſs of the wild aſs, the filthineſs of the dog and ſwine, the poiſon of the aſp and ſuch like. Truth itſelf calls them ſerpents, "a generation of vipers;" yea, more, even "children of the devil," Mat. xxiii. 33. John viii. 44. Surely then man's name is miſerably corrupted.

Laſtly, "We are by nature the children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3. We are worthy of, and liable to the wrath of God; and this by nature: and therefore, doubtleſs, we are by nature ſinful creatures. We are condemned before we have done good or evil; under the curſe, ere we know what it is. "But will a lion "roar in the foreſt while he hath no prey?" Amos iii. 4. that is, will a holy and juſt God roar in his wrath againſt man, if he be not, by his ſin, made a prey for wrath? No, he will not, he cannot. Let us conclude then, that, according to the word of God, man's nature is a corrupt nature.

II. If we conſult experience, and obſerve the caſe of the world, in theſe things that are obvious to any perſon, that will not ſhut his eyes againſt clear light; we ſhall quickly perceive ſuch fruits as diſcover this root of bitterneſs. I ſhall propoſe a few things, that may ſerve to convince us in this point.

Firſt, Who ſees not a flood of miſeries overflowing the world? and whether can a man go where he ſhall not dip his foot, if he go not over head and ears in it? Every one at home and abroad, in city and country, in palaces and cottages, is groaning under ſome one thing or other, ungrateful to him. Some are oppreſſed with poverty, ſome chaſtened with ſickneſs and pain, ſome are lamenting their loſſes; none wants a croſs of one ſort or another. No man's condition is ſo ſoft, but there is ſome thorn of uneaſineſs in it. And at length death, the wages of ſin, comes after

after theſe its harbingers, and ſweeps all away. Now, what but ſin has opened the ſluice? There is not a complaint nor ſigh heard in the world, nor a tear that falls from our eye, but it is an evidence that man is fallen as a ſtar from heaven; for "God diſtributeth "ſorrows in his anger," Job xxi. 17. This is a plain proof of the corruption of nature: foraſmuch as thoſe that have not yet actually ſinned, have their ſhare of theſe ſorrows; yea, and draw their firſt breath in the world weeping, as if they knew this world, at firſt ſight, to be a Bochim, the place of weepers. There are graves of the ſmalleſt, as well as of the largeſt ſize in the church-yard; and there are never wanting ſome in the world, who, like Rachel, "are weeping "for their children, becauſe they are not," Matth. ii. 18.

Secondly, Obſerve how early this corruption of nature begins to appear in young ones. Solomon obſerves that "even a child is known by his doings," Prov. xx. 11. It may ſoon be diſcerned, what way the bias of the heart lies. Do not the children of fallen Adam, before they can go alone, follow their father's footſteps? What a vaſt deal of little pride, ambition, curioſity, vanity, wilfulneſs, and averſeneſs to good, appears in them? And when they creep out of infancy, there is a neceſſity of uſing "the rod of "correction, to drive away the fooliſhneſs that is "bound in their heart," Prov. xxii. 15. Which ſhews, that if grace prevail not, the child will be as Iſhmael, a wild aſs man, as the word is, Gen. xvi. 12.

Thirdly, Take a view of the manifold groſs outbreakings of ſin in the world. "The wickedneſs of "man" is yet "great in the earth." Behold the bitter fruits of the corruption of our nature, Hoſ. iv. 2. "By ſwearing and lying, and killing, and ſteal-"ing, and committing adultery, they break out (like "the breaking forth of waters) and blood toucheth "blood." The world is filled with filthineſs, and all

manner of lewdneſs, wickedneſs, and profanity. Whence is this deluge of ſin on the earth, but from the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, the heart of man, "out of which proceed evil thoughts, "adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetouſ- "neſs, wickedneſs," &c. Mark vii. 21, 22. Ye will, it may be, thank God with a whole heart, that ye are not like theſe other men: and indeed ye have better reaſon for it, than, I fear, ye are aware of: for, "as in water, face anſwereth to face, ſo the "heart of man to man," Prov. xxvii. 19. As looking into clear water ye ſee your own face, ſo looking into your heart, ye may ſee other mens there; and looking into other mens, in them ye may ſee your own. So that the moſt vile and profane wre ches that are in the world, ſhould ſerve you for a looking-glaſs, in which you ought to diſcern the corruption of your own nature: and if you do ſo, ye would, with a heart truly touched, thank God, and not yourſelves, indeed, that ye are not as other men, in your lives; ſeeing the corruption of nature is the ſame in you, as in them.

Fourthly, Caſt your eye upon theſe terrible convulſions the world is thrown into by the luſts of men. Lions make not a prey of lions, nor wolves of wolves; but men are turned wolves to one another, "biting "and devouring one another." Upon how ſlight occaſions will men ſheath their ſwords in one another's bowels? The world is a wilderneſs, where the cleareſt fire men can carry about with them, will not fright away the wild beaſts that inhabit it, (and that becauſe they are men, and not brutes) but one way or other they will be wounded. Since Cain ſhed the blood of Abel, the earth has been turned into a ſlaughter-houſe; and the chace has been continued ſince Nimrod began his hunting; on the earth, as in the ſea, the greater ſtill devouring the leſſer. When we ſee the world in ſuch ferment, every one ſtabbing another with words or ſwords, we may conclude, there is an evil ſpirit among them. Theſe violent heats

heats among Adam's ſons, ſpeak the whole body to be diſtempered, the whole head to be ſick, and the whole heart faint. They ſurely proceed from an inward cauſe, James vi. 1. " luſts that war in our mem-
" bers."

Fifthly, Conſider the neceſſity of human laws, fenced with terrors and ſeverities; to which we may apply what the apoſtle ſays, 1 Tim. i. 9. That " the " law is not made for a righteous man, but for the " lawleſs and diſobedient; for the ungodly, and for " ſinners," &c. Man was made for ſociety; and God himſelf ſaid of the firſt man, when he had created him, that it was " not meet that he ſhould be a-
" lone;" yet the caſe is ſuch now, that in ſociety he muſt be hedged in with thorns. And that from hence we may the better ſee the corruption of man's nature, conſider, (1.) Every man naturally loves to be at full liberty himſelf; to have his own will for his law; and if he would follow his natural inclinations, would vote himſelf out of the reach of all laws, divine and human. And hence ſome (the power of whoſe hands has been anſwerable to their natural inclination) have indeed made themſelves abſolute and above laws; agreeable to man's monſtrous deſign at firſt, to be as gods, Gen. iii. 5. Yet, (2.) There is no man that would willingly adventure to live in a lawleſs ſociety; and therefore even pirates and robbers have laws among themſelves, tho' the whole ſociety caſts off all reſpect to law and right. Thus men diſcover themſelves to be conſcious of the corruption of nature; not daring to truſt one another, but upon ſecurity. (3.) How dangerous ſoever it is to break through the hedge, yet the violence of luſt makes many adventure daily to run the riſk. They will not only ſacrifice their credit and conſcience, which laſt is lightly eſteemed in the world; but, for the pleaſure of a few moments, immediately ſucceeded with terror from within, they will lay themſelves open to a violent death by the laws of the land wherein they live. (4.) The laws are often

ten made to yield to mens luſts, ſometimes whole ſocieties run into ſuch extravagancies, that, like a company of priſoners, they break off their fetters, and put their guard to flight; and the voice of laws cannot be heard for the noiſe of arms. And ſeldom is there a time wherein there are not ſome perſons ſo great and daring, that the laws dare not look their impetuous luſts in the face; which made David ſay, in the caſe of Joab who had murdered Abner, "Theſe "men, the ſons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me," 2 Sam. iii. 39. Luſts ſometimes grow too ſtrong for laws, ſo that the law is ſlacked, as the pulſe of a dying man, Hab. i. 3, 4, (5.) Conſider what neceſſity often appears of amending old laws and making new ones; which have their riſe from new crimes, that man's nature is very fruitful of. There would be no need of mending the hedge, if men were not, like unruly beaſts, ſtill breaking it down. It is aſtoniſhing to ſee what figure the Iſraelites, who were ſeparated unto God from among all the nations in the earth, do make in their hiſtory; what horrible confuſions were among them when there was no king in Iſrael, as you may ſee in xviii. xix. xx. and xxi. chapters of Judges: how hard it was to reform them, when they had the beſt of magiſtrates; and how quickly they turned aſide again when they got wicked rulers. I cannot but think, that one grand deſign of that ſacred hiſtory was, to diſcover the corruption of man's nature, the abſolute need of the Meſſiah, and his grace, and that we ought, in the reading of it, to improve it to that end. How cutting is that word the Lord has to Samuel, concerning Saul, 1 Sam. i. 17. "The ſame ſhall reign over (or, as the word is, "ſhall reſtrain) my people." O the corruption of man's nature! the awe and dread of the God of heaven reſtrains them not; but they muſt have gods on earth to do it "to put them to ſhame," Judges xviii. 7.

Sixthly, Conſider the remains of that natural corruption

ruption in the ſaints. Though grace has entered, yet corruption is not quite expelled; though they have got the new creature, yet much of the old corrupt nature remains, and theſe ſtruggle together within them, as the twins in Rebekah's womb, Gal. v. 17. They find it preſent with them at all times, and in all places even in the moſt retired corners. If a man have an ill neighbour, he may remove; if he have an ill ſervant, he may put him away at the term; and if a bad yoke-fellow, he may ſometimes leave the houſe, and be free of moleſtation that way. But ſhould the ſaint go into a wilderneſs, or ſet up his tent in ſome remote rock in the ſea, where never foot of man, beaſt nor fowl, had touched, there will it be with him. Should he be with Paul, caught up to the third heavens, it ſhall come back with him, 2 Cor. xii. 7. It follows him as the ſhadow does the body: it makes a blot in the faireſt line he can draw. It is like the fig-tree in the wall; which how nearly ſoever it was cut, yet ſtill grew, till the wall was thrown down; for the roots of it are fixed in the heart, while the ſaint is in the world, as with bands of iron and braſs. It is eſpecially active "when he would do good," Rom. vii. 31. then the fowls come down upon the carcaſes. Hence, often in holy duties, the ſpirit, even of a ſaint (as it were) evaporates, and he is left ere he is aware, like Michael, with an image in the bed, inſtead of a huſband. I need not ſtand to prove the remains of the corruption of nature in the godly, to themſelves; for they groan under it; and to prove it to them, were to hold out a candle to let men ſee the ſun: and as for the wicked, they are ready to account mole-hills in the ſaints as big as mountains, if not to reckon them all hypocrites. But conſider theſe few things on this head. (1.) "If it be thus in the green tree, how "muſt it be in the dry?" The ſaints are not born ſaints, but made ſo by the power of regenerating grace. Have they got a new nature, and yet ſo much of the old remains with them? How great muſt that cor-

corruption be in others, where it is altogether unmixed with grace! (2.) The saints groan under the remains of it, as a heavy burden. Hear the apostle, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am! who "shall deliver me from the body of this death?" What though the carnal man lives at ease and quiet, and the corruption of nature is not his burden: is he therefore free from it? No, no; only he is dead, and feels not the sinking weight. Many a groan is heard from a sick-bed, but never one from a grave. In the saint, as in the sick man, there is a mighty struggle: life and death striving for the mastery: but in the natural man, as in the dead corpse, there is no noise, because death bears full sway. (3.) The godly man resists the old corrupt nature; he strives to mortify it, yet it remains; he endeavours to starve it, and by that means to weaken it, yet it is active; how must it spread then, and strengthen itself in that soul, where it is not starved, but fed? And this is the case of all the unregenerate, who make "provision for the flesh, "to fulfil the lusts thereof." If the garden of the diligent afford him new work daily, in cutting off and rooting up; surely that of the sluggard must needs be "all grown over with thorns."

Lastly, I shall add but one observe more; and that is, that in every man naturally, the image of fallen Adam does appear. Some children, by their features and lineaments of their face, do, as it were, father themselves; and thus we do resemble our first parents. Every one of us bears the imge and impress of their fall upon him: and to evince the truth of this, I do appeal to the consciences of all, in these following particulars:

1st, Is not sinful curiosity natural to us? and is not this a print of Adam's image? Gen. iii. 6. Is not man naturally much more desirous to know new things, than to practise old known truths? How like to old Adam do we look in this, itching after novelties, and disrelishing old solid doctrines? We seek after

ter knowledge rather than holineſs, and ſtudy moſt to know theſe things which are leaſt edifying. Our wild and roving fancies need a bridle to curb them, while good ſolid affections muſt be quickened and ſpurred up.

2dly, If the Lord, by his holy law, and wiſe providence, do put a reſtraint upon us, to keep us back from any thing, doth not that reſtraint whet the edge of our natural inclinations, and make us, ſo much the keener in our deſires? And in this do we not betray it plainly, that we are Adam's children? Gen. iii. 2, 3, 6. I think this cannot be denied; for daily obſervation evinceth, that it is a natural principle, that "ſtolen waters are ſweet, and bread eaten in ſecret is "pleaſant," Prov. ix. 17. The very heathens were convinced, that man was poſſeſſed with this ſpirit of contradiction, though they knew not the ſpring of it. How often do men give themſelves the looſe in theſe things, in which, if God had left them at liberty, they would have bound up themſelves! but corrupt nature takes a pleaſure in the very jumping over the hedge. And is it not a repeating of our father's folly, that men will rather climb for forbidden fruit, than gather what is ſhaken off the tree of good providence to them, when they have God's expreſs allowance for it?

3dly, Which of all the children of Adam is not naturally diſpoſed to hear the "inſtruction that cauſ-"eth to err?" And was not this the rock our firſt parents ſplit upon? Gen. iii. 4, 6. How apt is weak man, ever ſince that time, to parley with temptations! "God ſpeaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth "it not," Job xxxiii. 14. but readily doth he liſten to Satan. Men might often come fair off, if they would diſmiſs temptations with abhorrence, when firſt they appear; if they would nip them in the bud, they would ſoon die away; but, alas! when we ſee the train laid for us, and the fire put to it, yet we ſtand till it run along, and we be blown up with its force.

4thly, Do not the eyes in our head often blind the eyes of the mind? And was not this the very caſe of our firſt parents? Gen. iii. 6. Man is never more blind than when he is looking on the objects that are moſt pleaſing to ſenſe. Since the eyes of our firſt parents were opened to the forbidden fruit, mens eyes have been the gates of deſtruction to their ſouls; at which impure imaginations and ſinful deſires have entered the heart to the wounding of the ſoul, waſting of the conſcience, and bringing diſmal effects ſometimes on whole ſocieties, as in Achan's caſe, Joſh. vii. 21. Holy Job was aware of this danger, from theſe two little rowling bodies, which a very ſmall ſplinter of wood will make uſeleſs; ſo as (with that king who durſt not, with his ten thouſand, meet him that came with twenty thouſand againſt him, Luke xiv. 31, 32.) he ſendeth and deſireth conditions of peace, Job xxxi. 1. "I have made a covenant with "mine eyes," &c.

5thly, Is it not natural to us to care for the body even at the expence of the ſoul? This was one ingredient in the ſin of our firſt parents, Gen. iii. 6. O how happy might we be, if we were but at half the pains about our ſouls, that we beſtow upon our bodies! If that queſtion, "What muſt I do to be ſaved?" (Acts xvi. 30.) did run but near as oft through our minds as theſe other queſtions do, "What ſhall "we eat? What ſhall we drink? Wherewithal ſhall "we be clothed?" (Matth. vi. 31.) many a now hopeleſs caſe would turn very hopeful. But the truth is, moſt men live as if they were nothing but a lump of fleſh: or as if their ſouls ſerved for no other uſe, but, like ſalt, to keep their body from corrupting. "They are fleſh," John iii. 6. "they mind things of "the fleſh," Rom. viii. 5. "and live after the fleſh," ver. 13. If the conſent of the fleſh be got to an action, the conſent of the conſcience is rarely waited for;

or; yea, the body is often ſerved, when the conſcience has entered a diſſent againſt it.

6thly, Is not every one by nature diſcontent with his preſent lot in the world, or with ſome one thing or other in it? This alſo was Adam's caſe, Gen. iii. 5, 6. Some one thing is always miſſing; ſo that man is a creature given to changes. And, if any doubt of this, let them look over all their enjoyments; and, after a review of them, liſten to their own hearts, and they will hear a ſecret murmuring for want of ſomething; though, perhaps, if they conſider the matter aright, they would ſee that it is better for them to want, than to have that ſomething. Since the hearts of our firſt parents flew out at their eyes, on the forbidden fruit, and a night of darkneſs was thereby brought on the world; their poſterity have a natural diſeaſe, which Solomon calls, "The wandering of "the deſire," (or, as the word is, "The walking of "the ſoul"), Eccl. vi. 9. This is a ſort of diabolical trance, wherein the ſoul traverſeth the world; feeds itſelf with a thouſand airy nothings; ſnatcheth at this and the other created excellency, in imagination and deſire; goes here, and there, and every where, except where it ſhould go. And the ſoul is never cured of this diſeaſe, till overcoming grace bring it back, to take up its everlaſting reſt in God through Chriſt: but till this be, if man were ſet again in paradiſe, the garden of the Lord, all the pleaſures there would not keep him from looking, yea, and leaping over the hedge a ſecond time.

7thly, Are we not far more eaſily impreſſed and influenced by evil councils and examples, than by thoſe that are good? You ſee this was the ruin of Adam, Gen. iii. 6. Evil example, to this day, is one of Satan's maſter-devices to ruin men. And though we have, by nature, more of the fox than of the lamb, yet that ill property, ſome obſerve in this creature, viz. that, if one lamb ſkip into a water, the reſt that are near will ſuddenly follow, may be obſerved alſo

in the diſpoſition of the children of men; to whom it is very natural to embrace an evil way, becauſe they ſee others upon it before them. Ill example has frequently the force of a violent ſtream, to carry us over plain duty; but eſpecially if the example be given by thoſe we bear a great affection to: our affection, in that caſe, blinds our judgment; and what we would abhor in others, is complied with, to humour them. And nothing is more plain, than that generally men chuſe rather to do what the moſt do, than what the beſt do.

8thly Who of all Adam's ſons needs be taught the art of "ſewing fig-leaves together," to cover their nakedneſs? Gen. iii. 7. When we have ruined ourſelves, and made ourſelves naked to our ſhame, we naturally ſeek to help ourſelves by ourſelves; and many poor ſhifts are fallen upon, as ſilly and inſignificant as Adam's fig-leaves. What pains are men at to cover their ſin from their own conſciences, and to draw all the fair colours upon it that they can? And when once convictions are faſtened upon them, ſo that they cannot but ſee themſelves naked, it is as natural for them to attempt to ſpin a cover to it out of their own bowels, as for fiſhes to ſwim in the waters, or birds to fly in the air. Therefore the firſt queſtion of the convinced is, "What ſhall we do?" Acts ii. 27. How ſhall we qualify ourſelves? what ſhall we perform? Not minding that the new creature is God's own workmanſhip, (or deed, Eph. ii. 10.) more than Adam thought of being clothed with the ſkins of ſacrifices, Gen. iii. 21.

9thly, Do not Adam's children naturally follow his footſteps, in "hiding themſelves from the pre-"ſence of the Lord?" Gen. iii. 8. We are every whit as blind in this matter as he was, who thought to hide himſelf from the preſence of God among the ſhady trees of the garden. We are very apt to promiſe ourſelves more ſecurity in a ſecret ſin, than one that is openly committed. "The eye of the adulterer

"waiteth

" waiteth for the twilight, ſaying, No eye ſhall ſee " me," Job. xxiv. 15. And men will freely do that in ſecret, which they would be aſhamed to do in the preſence of a child; as if darkneſs could hide from an all-ſeeing God. Are we not naturally careleſs of communion with God; ay, and averſe to it? Never was there any communion betwixt God and Adam's children, where the Lord himſelf had not the firſt word. If he would let them alone, they would never inquire after him. Iſa. lvii. 17. " I hid me." Did he ſeek after a hiding God? Very far from it, " He went on " in the way of his heart."

Lothly, How loth are men to confeſs ſin, to take guilt and ſhame to themſelves? And was it not thus in the caſe before us? Gen. iii. 10. Adam confeſſeth his nakedneſs, which he could not get denied; but not one word he ſays of his ſin: here was the reaſon of it, he would fain have hid it if he could. It is as natural for us to hide ſin, as to commit it. Many ſad inſtances thereof we have in this world; but a far clearer proof of it we ſhall get at the day of judgment, the day in which " God will judge the ſecrets of men," Rom. ii. 16. Many a foul mouth will then be ſeen, which is now " wiped, and ſaith, I have done no " wickedneſs," Prov. xxx. 20.

Laſtly, Is it not natural for us to extenuate our ſin, and transfer the guilt upon others? And when God examined our guilty firſt parents, did not Adam lay the blame on the woman? and did not the woman lay the blame on the ſerpent? Gen. iii. 12, 13. Now Adam's children need not be taught this helliſh policy; for before they can well ſpeak (if they cannot get the fact denied) they will cunningly liſp out ſomething to leſſen their fault, and lay the blame upon another. Nay, ſo natural is this to men, that, in the greateſt of ſins, they will lay the fault upon God himſelf; they will blaſpheme his holy providence under the miſtaken name of misfortune or ill-luck, and thereby lay the blame of their ſin at Heaven's door. And

was not this one of Adam's tricks after his fall? Gen. iii. 12. "And the man ſaid, The woman whom thou "gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and "I did eat." Obſerve the order of the ſpeech. He makes his apology in the firſt place; and then comes his confeſſion: his apology is long; but his confeſſion very ſhort; it is all comprehended in a word, "and I did eat." How pointed and diſtinct is his apology, as if he was afraid his meaning ſhould have been miſtaken? "The woman," ſays he, or "that "woman," as if he would have pointed the Judge to his own work, of which we read, Gen. ii. 22. There was but one woman then in the world; ſo that one would think he needed not to have been ſo nice and exact in pointing at her: yet ſhe is as carefully marked out in his defence, as if there had been ten thouſand. "The woman whom thou gaveſt me:" here he ſpeaks, as if he had been ruined with God's gift. And to make the gift look the blacker, it is added to all this, "thou gaveſt to be with me," as my conſtant companion, to ſtand by me as a helper. This looks as if Adam would have fathered an ill deſign upon the Lord in giving him this gift. And, after all, there is a new demonſtrative here, before the ſentence is complete: he ſays not, "The woman gave "me," but "the woman ſhe gave me," emphatically; as if he had ſaid, "She," even "ſhe" gave me of the tree. This much for his apology. But his confeſſion is quickly over, in one word, (as he ſpoke it), "and I did eat." And there is nothing here to point to himſelf, and as little to ſhew what he had eaten. How natural is this black art to Adam's poſterity? he that runs may read it. So univerſally does Solomon's obſerve hold true, Prov. xix. 3. "The "fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way, and his heart "fretteth againſt the Lord." Let us then call fallen Adam father; let us not deny the relation, ſeeing we bear his image.

And

And now, to ſhut up this point, ſufficiently confirmed by concurring evidence from the Lord's word, our own experience and obſervation, let us be perſuaded to believe the doctrine of the corruption of our nature: and to look to the ſecond Adam, the bleſſed Jeſus, for the application of his precious blood, to remove the guilt of this ſin; and for the efficacy of his holy Spirit, to make us new creatures; knowing that, "except we be born again, we cannot enter into the "kingdom of God."

Of the corruption of the underſtanding.

SECONDLY, I proceed to inquire into the corruption of nature in the ſeveral parts thereof. But who can comprehend it? who can take the exact dimenſions of it, in its breadth, length, height, and depth? "The heart is deceitful above all things and "deſperately wicked; who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9. However, we may quickly perceive as much of it as may be matter of deepeſt humiliation, and may diſcover to us the abſolute neceſſity of regeneration. Man in his natural ſtate is altogether corrupt. Both ſoul and body are polluted, as the apoſtle proves at large, Rom. iii. 10, to 18. As for the ſoul, this natural corruption has ſpread itſelf through all the faculties thereof; and is to be found in the underſtanding, the will, the affections, the conſcience, and the memory.

I. The underſtanding, that leading faculty, is deſpoiled of its primitive glory, and covered over with confuſion. We have fallen into the hands of our grand adverſary, as Samſon into the hands of the Philiſtines, and are deprived of our two eyes. "There is none that underſtandeth," Rom. iii. 11. "Mind and conſcience are defiled," Tit. i. 15. The natural man's apprehenſion of divine things is corrupt, Pſal. l. 21. "Thou thoughteſt that I was alto-"gether ſuch an one as thyſelf." His judgment is

corrupt,

corrupt, and cannot be otherwiſe, ſeeing "his eye is "evil:" and therefore the ſcripture, to ſhew that men did all wrong, ſays, "Every one did that which "was right in his own eyes," Judges xvii. 6. and xxi. 25. And his imaginations, or reaſonings, muſt be caſt down, by the power of the word, being of a piece with his judgment, 2 Cor. x. 5. But, to point out this corruption of the mind or underſtanding more particularly, let theſe things be conſidered.

Firſt, There is a natural weakneſs in the minds of men with reſpect to ſpiritual things. The apoſtle determines concerning every one that is not endued with the graces of the Spirit, "That he is blind, and can-"not ſee afar off," 2 Pet. i. 9. Hence the Spirit of God in the ſcripture clothes as it were divine truths with earthly figures, even as parents teach their children, "uſing ſimilitudes," Hoſ. xii. 10. Which, though it doth not cure, yet doth evidence this natural weakneſs in the minds of men. But we want not plain proofs of it from experience. As, (1.) How hard a taſk is it to teach many people the common principles of our holy religion, and to make truths ſo plain as they may underſtand them? Here there muſt be "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; "line upon line, line upon line," Iſ. xxviii. 9. Try the ſame perſons in other things, they ſhall be found "wiſer in their generation than the children of light." They underſtand their work and buſineſs in the world, as well as their neighbours; though they be very ſtupid and unteachable, in the matters of God. Tell them how they may advance their worldly wealth, or how they may gratify their luſts, and they will quickly underſtand theſe things; though it is very hard to make them know how their ſouls may be ſaved, or how their hearts may find reſt in Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) Conſider theſe who have many advantages above the common race of mankind; who have had the benefit of good education and inſtruction; yea, and are bleſſed with the light of grace in that meaſure where-

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in it is distributed to the saints on earth; yet how small a portion have they of the knowledge of divine things! what ignorance and confusion do still remain in their minds; how often are they mired, even in the matter of practical truths, and speak as a child in these things! It is a pitiful weakness that we cannot perceive the things which God has revealed to us; and it must needs be a sinful weakness, since the law of God requires us to know and believe them. (3.) What dangerous mistakes are to be found amongst men, in their concerns of greatest weight! what woful delusions prevail over them! do not we often see those, who, otherwise, are the wisest of men, the most notorious fools with respect to their souls interest? Matth. xi. 25. "Thou hast hid these things "from the wise and prudent." Many that are eagle-eyed in the trifles of time, are like owls and bats in the light of life. Nay, truly, the life of every natural man is but one continued dream and delusion, out of which he never awakes, till either, by a new light darted from heaven into his soul, he "come to himself," Luke xv. 17. or "in hell he lift up his eyes," chap. xvi. 23. And therefore, in scripture-account, be he never so wise, he is a fool and a simple one.

Secondly, Man's understanding is naturally overwhelmed with gross darkness in spiritual things. Man, at the instigation of the devil, attempting to break out a new light in his mind, (Gen. iii. 5.) instead of that, broke up the doors of the bottomless pit; so as, by the smoke thereof, he was buried in darkness. When God at first had made man, his mind was a lamp of light; but now when he comes to make him over again, in regeneration, he finds it darkness, Eph. v. 8. "Ye were sometimes darkness." Sin has closed the windows of the soul, darkness is over all that region: it is the land of darkness and shadow of death, where the light is as darkness. The prince of darkness reigns there, and nothing but the works of darkness are framed there. We are born

ſpiritually blind, and cannot be reſtored without a miracle of grace. This is thy caſe, whoſoever thou art, that art not born again. And that you may be convinced in this matter, take theſe following evidences of it.

Evidence 1. The darkneſs that was upon the face of the world, before, and at that time when Chriſt came, ariſing as "the Sun of righteouſneſs" upon the earth. When Adam by his ſin had loſt that primitive light wherewith he was endued in his creation, it pleaſed God to make a gracious revelation of his mind and will to him, touching the way of ſalvation, Gen. iii. 15. This was handed down by him, and other godly fathers, before the flood: yet the natural darkneſs of the mind of man prevailed ſo far againſt that revelation, as to carry off all ſenſe of true religion from the old world, except what remained in Noah's family, which was preſerved in the ark. After the flood, as men multiplied on the earth, the natural darkneſs of mind prevails again, and the light decays, till it died out among the generality of mankind, and is preſerved only among the poſterity of Shem. And even with them it was well near its ſetting, when God called Abraham from ſerving other gods, Joſh. xxiv. 15. God gives Abraham a more clear and full revelation, and he communicates the ſame to his family, Gen. xviii. 19. yet the natural darkneſs wears it out at length, ſave that it was preſerved among the poſterity of Jacob. They being carried down into Egypt, that darkneſs prevailed ſo, as to leave them very little ſenſe of true religion; and a new revelation behoved to be made them in the wilderneſs. And many a cloud of darkneſs got above that, now and then, during the time from Moſes to Chriſt. When Chriſt came, the world was divided into Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, and the true light with them, were within an incloſure, Pſal. cxlvii. 19, 20. Betwixt them and the Gentile world, there was a partition-wall of God's making, namely, the ceremonial law: and upon that there

there was reared up another of man's own making, namely, a rooted enmity betwixt the parties, Eph. ii. 14, 15. If we look abroad without the inclosure, (and except those proselytes of the Gentiles, who, by means of some rays of light breaking forth unto them from within the inclosure, having renounced idolatry; worshipped the true God, but did not conform to the Mosaical rites) we see nothing but "dark "places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruel-"ty," Psal. lxxiv. 20. Gross darkness covered the Gentile world, and the way of salvation was utterly unknown among them. They were drowned in superstition and idolatry, and had multiplied their idols to such a vast number, that above thirty thousand are reckoned to have been worshipped by those of Europe alone. Whatever wisdom was among their philosophers, "the world by" that "wisdom knew not "God," 1 Cor. i. 21. and all their researches in religion were but groping in the dark, Acts xvii. 27. If we look within the inclosure, and except a few that were groaning and "waiting for the consolation of Israel," we will see a gross darkness on the face of that generation Though "to them were committed "the oracles of God;" yet they were most corrupt in their doctrine. Their traditions were multiplied; but the knowledge of these things, wherein the life of religion lies, was lost: masters of Israel knew not the nature and necessity of regeneration, John iii. 10. Their religion was to build on their birth-privilege, as children of Abraham, Matth. iii 4. to glory in their circumcision, and other external ordinances, Philip. iii. 2, 3. and to "rest in the law," (Rom. ii. 17.) after they had, by their false glosses, cut it so short, as they might go well near to the fulfilling of it, Matth. v.

Thus was darkness over the face of the world, when Christ the true light came into it; and so is darkness over every soul, till he as the day-star arise in the

heart. The former is an evidence of the latter. What, but the natural darkneſs of men's minds, could ſtill thus wear out the light of external revelation, in a matter upon which eternal happineſs did depend? Men did not forget the way of preſerving their lives: but how quickly did they loſe the knowledge of the way of ſalvation of their ſouls, which are of infinite more weight and worth! When patriarchs and prophets teaching was ineffectual, men behoved to be taught of God himſelf, who alone can open the eyes of the underſtanding. But, that it might appear, that the corruption of man's mind lay deeper than to be cured by mere external revelation; there were but very few converted by Chriſt's preaching "who ſpoke "as never man ſpoke," John xii. 37, 38. The great cure on the generation remained to be performed, by the Spirit accompanying the preaching of the apoſtles; who, according to the promiſe, (John xiv. 12.) were to do greater works. And if we look to the miracles wrought by our bleſſed Lord, we will find, that, by applying the remedy to the ſoul, for the cure of bodily diſtempers, (as in the caſe of the man ſick of the palſy, Mat. ix. 2.) he plainly diſcovered, that it was his main errand into the world to cure the diſeaſes of the ſoul. I find a miracle wrought upon one that was born blind, performed in ſuch a way, as ſeems to have been deſigned to let the world ſee in it, as in a glaſs, their caſe and cure, John ix. 6. "He made "clay and anointed the eyes of the blind man with "the clay." What could more fitly repreſent the blindneſs of men's minds, than eyes cloſed up with earth? Iſa. vi. 1. "ſhut their eyes:" ſhut them up by anointing, or caſting them with mortar, as the word will bear. And chap. xliv. 18. "He hath ſhut their "eyes:" and the word properly ſignifies he hath "plaiſtered" their eyes; as the houſe in which the leproſy had been was to be plaiſtered, Levit. xiv. 42. Thus the Lord's word diſcovers the deſign of that ſtrange work; and by it ſhews us, that the eyes of our

our underſtanding are naturally ſhut. Then the blind man muſt "go and waſh" off this clay "in the "pool of Siloam:" no other water will ſerve this purpoſe. If that pool had not repreſented him, whom the Father ſent into the world "to open the blind "eyes," Iſa. xliii. 7.) I think the Evangeliſt had not given us the interpretation of the name, which he ſays, ſignifies "ſent," John ix. 7. And ſo we may conclude, that the natural darkneſs of our minds is ſuch, as there is no cure for, but from the blood and Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe "eye-ſalve" only can make us "ſee," Rev. iii. 18.

Evid. 2. Every natural man's heart and life is a maſs of darkneſs, diſorder, and confuſion; how refined ſoever he appear in the ſight of men. "For we our-"ſelves alſo," ſaith the apoſtle Paul, "were ſome-"times fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers "luſts and pleaſures," Tit. iii. 3. and yet, at that time which this text looks to, he was "blameleſs, "touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law," Phil. iii. 6. This is a plain evidence that "the eye "is evil, the whole being full of darkneſs," Matth. vi. 23. The unrenewed part of mankind is rambling through the world, like ſo many blind men; who will neither take a guide, nor can guide themſelves; and therefore are falling over this and the other precipice, into deſtruction. Some are running after their covet-ouſneſs, till they be pierced through with many ſor-rows; ſome ſticking in the mire of ſenſuality; others daſhing themſelves on the rock of pride and ſelf-con-ceit; every one ſtumbling on ſome one ſtone of ſtum-bling or other: all of them are running themſelves on the ſword-point of juſtice, while they eagerly follow whither their unmortified paſſions and affections lead them: and while ſome are lying alone in the way, o-thers are coming up and falling headlong over them. And therefore, "Wo unto the (blind) world becauſe "of offences," Mat. xviii. 7. Errors in judgment ſwarm in the world; becauſe it is "night, wherein

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"all the beafts of the foreft do creep forth." All the unregenerate are utterly miftaken in the point of true happinefs: for though Chriftianity hath fixed that matter in the point of principle, yet nothing lefs than overcoming grace can fix it in the practical judgment. All men agree in the defire to be happy; but amongft unrenewed men, touching the way to happinefs, there are almoft as many opinions as there are men; they being "turned every one to his own way," Ifa. liii. 6. They are like the blind Sodomites about Lot's houfe, all were feeking to find the door; fome grop one part of the wall for it, fome another; but none of them could certainly fay, he had found it; and fo the natural man may ftumble on any good, but the chief good. Look into thine own unregenerate heart, and there thou wilt fee all turned upfide down; heaven lying under, and the earth a-top. Look into thy life, there thou mayft fee how thou art playing the madman, fnatching at fhadows, and neglecting the fubftance eagerly flying after that which is not, and flighting that which is, and will be for ever.

Evid. 3. The natural man is always as a workman left without light; either trifling or doing mifchief. Try to catch thy heart at any time thou wilt, and thou fhalt find it either "weaving the fpider's web," or "hatching cockatrice eggs," (Ifa. lix. 5.) roving through the world, or digging into the pit; filled with vanity, or elfe with vilenefs; bufy, doing nothing, or what is worfe than nothing. A fad fign of a dark mind.

Evid. 4. The natural man is void of the faving knowledge of fpiritual things. He knows not what a God he has to do with; he is unacquainted with Chrift, and knows not what fin is. The greateft

xxix. 3.), to whom nevertheleſs, the Lord had not "given an heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and "ears to hear unto that day," ver. 4. Many a man that bears the name of a Chriſtian, may make Pharaoh's confeſſion of faith, Exod. v. 2. "They "know not the Lord, neither will they let go" what he commands them to part with. God is with them, as a prince in diſguiſe among his ſubjects, who meets with no better treatment from them, than if they were his fellows, Pſal. l. 21. Do they know Chriſt, or ſee his glory, and any beauty in him, for which he is to be deſired? If they did, they would not ſlight him as they do; a view of his glory would ſo darken all created excellency, that they would take him for and inſtead of all, and gladly cloſe with him, as he offereth himſelf in the goſpel, John iv. 10. Pſal. ix. 10. Matth. xiii. 44, 45, 46. Do they know what ſin is, who hug the ſerpent in their boſom, hold faſt deceit, and refuſe to let it go? I own indeed they may have a natural knowledge of thoſe things, as the unbelieving Jews had of Chriſt, whom they ſaw and converſed with; but there was a ſpiritual glory in him, perceived by the believers only, John i. 14. and in reſpect of that glory, "the" (unbelieving) "world knew him not," ver. 10. But the ſpiritual knowledge of them they cannot have: it is above the reach of the carnal mind, 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things, of the "Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him, "neither can he know them, for they are ſpiritually "diſcerned." He may indeed diſcourſe of them, but no other way than one can talk of honey or vinegar, who never taſted the ſweetneſs of the one, nor the ſourneſs of the other. He has ſome notions of ſpiritual truths, but ſees not the things themſelves that are wrapt up in the words of truth, 1 Tim. i. 7. "Un-"derſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they "affirm." In a word, natural men fear, ſeek, confeſs, they know not what. Thus you ſee man's underſtanding

derſtanding naturally is overwhelmed with groſs darkneſs in ſpiritual things.

Thirdly, There is in the mind of man a natural bias to evil, whereby it comes to paſs, that whatever difficulty it finds while occupied about things truly good, it acts with a great deal of eaſe in evil; as being in that caſe in its own element, Jer. iv. 22. The carnal mind drives heavily in the thoughts of good, but furiouſly in the thoughts of evil. While holineſs is before it, fetters are upon it: but when once it has got over the hedge, it is as a bird got out of the cage, and becomes a free-thinker indeed. Let us reflect a little on the apprehenſion and imagination of the carnal mind; and we ſhall find inconteſtible evidence of this woful bias to evil.

Evidence 1. As when a man, by a violent ſtroke on the head, loſeth his ſight, there ariſeth to him a kind of falſe light, whereby he perceives a thouſand airy nothings; ſo man being ſtruck blind to all that is truly good, and for his eternal intereſt, has a light of another ſort brought into his mind; his "eyes are "opened, knowing evil;" and ſo are the words of the tempter verified, Gen. iii. 5. The words of the prophet are plain, "They are wiſe to do evil, "but to do good they have no knowledge," Jer. iv. 22. The mind of man has a natural dexterity to deviſe miſchief: none are ſo ſimple as to want ſkill to contrive ways to gratify their luſts, and ruin their ſouls; though the power of every one's hand cannot reach to put their devices in execution. None needs to be taught this black art; but as weeds grow up of their own accord in the neglected ground, ſo doth this wiſdom (which is "earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh," James iii. 15.) grow up in the minds of men, by virtue of the corruption of their nature. Why ſhould we be ſurpriſed with the product of corrupt wits; their cunning devices to affront Heaven, to oppoſe and run down truth and holineſs, and to gratify their own and other men's luſts? They row with the ſtream;

ſtream; no wonder they make great progreſs, their ſtock is within them, and increaſeth by uſing of it: and the works of darkneſs are contrived with the greater advantage, that the mind is wholly deſtitute of ſpiritual light; which, if it were in them, in any meaſure, would ſo far marr the work, 1 John iii. 9. "Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin;" he does it not by art, for "his ſeed remaineth in "him." But, on the other hand, "it is as a ſport "to a fool to do miſchief; but a man of underſtand-"ing hath wiſdom," Prov. x. 23. "To do witty "wickedneſs nicely," (as the words import), "is as "a ſport or a play to a fool;" it comes off with him eaſily, and why, but becauſe he is a fool, and hath not wiſdom, which would marr the contrivances of darkneſs? The more natural a thing is, it is done the more eaſily.

Evid. 2. Let the corrupt mind have but the advantage of one's being employed in, or preſent at ſome piece of ſervice to God; that ſo the device, if not in itſelf ſinful, yet may become ſinful, by its unſeaſonableneſs; it ſhall quickly fall on ſome device or expedient, by its ſtarting aſide; which deliberation, in ſeaſon, could not produce. Thus Saul, who wiſt not what to do before the prieſt began to conſult God, is quickly determined when once the prieſt's hand was in; his own heart then gave him an anſwer, and would not allow him to wait an anſwer from the Lord, 1 Sam. xiv. 18, 19. Such a deviliſh dexterity hath the carnal mind, in deviſing what may moſt effectually divert men from their duty to God.

Evid. 3. Doth not the carnal mind naturally ſtrive to graſp ſpiritual things in imagination; as if the ſoul were quite immerſed in fleſh and blood, and would turn every thing into its own ſhape? Let men, who are uſed to the forming of the moſt abſtracted notions, look into their own ſouls, and they ſhall find this bias in their minds; whereof the idolatry, which did of old, and ſtill doth, ſo much prevail in the world,

is an inconteſtible evidence: for it plainly diſcovers, that men naturally would have a viſible deity, and ſee what they worſhip: and therefore they "changed the "glory of the uncorruptible God into an image," &c. Rom. i. 23. The reformation of theſe nations (bleſſed be the Lord for it!) hath baniſhed idolatry and images too, out of our churches; but heart-reformation only can break down mental idolatry, and baniſh the more ſubtile and refined image-worſhip, and repreſentations of the Deity, out of the minds of men. The world, in the times of its darkneſs, was never more prone to the former, than the unſanctified mind is to the latter. And hence are horrible, monſtrous, and miſhapen thoughts of God, Chriſt, the glory above, and all ſpiritual things.

Evid. 4. What a difficult taſk is it to detain the carnal mind before the Lord! how averſe is it to the entertaining of good thoughts, and dwelling in the meditation of ſpiritual things! If one be driven, at any time, to think of the great concerns of his ſoul, it is no harder work to hold in an unruly hungry beaſt, than to hedge in the carnal mind, that it get not away to the vanities of the world again. When God is ſpeaking to men by his word, or they are ſpeaking to him in prayer, doth not the mind often leave them before the Lord, like ſo many "idols, that have eyes, "but ſee not, and ears, but hear not?" The carcaſe is laid down before God, but the world gets away the heart: though the eyes be cloſed, and man ſees a thouſand vanities, the mind, in the mean time, is like a bird got out looſe of the cage, ſkipping from buſh to buſh; ſo that, in effect, the man never "comes to "himſelf," till he be "gone from the preſence of the "Lord." Say not, it is impoſſible to get the mind fixed. It is hard indeed, but not impoſſible: grace from the Lord can do it, Pſal. cviii. 1. agreeable objects will do it. A pleaſant ſpeculation will arreſt the minds of the inquiſitive: the worldly man's mind is in little hazard of wandering, when he is contriving

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of buſineſs, caſting up his accounts, or telling his money: if he anſwer you not at firſt, he tells you, he did not hear you, he was buſy; his mind was fixed. Were we admitted into the preſence of a king, to petition for our lives, we would be in no hazard of gazing through the chamber of preſence. But here lies the caſe; the carnal mind, employed about any ſpiritual good, is out of its element, and therefore cannot fix.

Evid. 5. But however hard it is to keep the mind on good thoughts, it ſticks as glue to what is evil and corrupt like itſelf, 2 Pet. ii. 14. "Having eyes full "of adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin." Their eyes cannot ceaſe from ſin, (ſo the words are conſtructed), that is, their hearts and minds, venting by the eyes what is within, are like a furious beaſt, which cannot be held in when once it has got out its head. Let the corrupt imagination once be let looſe on its proper object, it will be found hard work to call it back again, though both reaſon and will be for its retreat. For then it is in its own element; and to draw it off from its impurities, is as the drawing of a fiſh out of the water, or the renting of a limb from a man. It runs like fire ſet to a train of powder, that reſteth not till it can get no further.

Evid. 6. Conſider how the carnal imagination ſupplies the want of real objects to the corrupt heart; that it may make ſinners happy, at leaſt, in the imaginary enjoyment of their luſts. Thus the corrupt heart feeds itſelf with imagination-ſins; the unclean perſon is filled with ſpeculative impurities, "having "eyes full of adultery;" the covetous man fills his heart with the world, though he cannot get his hands full of it; the malicious perſon, with delight, acts his revenge within his own breaſt; the envious, within his own narrow ſoul, beholds with ſatisfaction his neighbour laid low enough; and every luſt finds the corrupt imagination a friend to it in time of need. And this it doth, not only when people are awake,

but ſometimes even when they are aſleep; whereby it comes to paſs, that theſe ſins are acted in dreams, which their hearts were carried out after while they were awake. I know, ſome do queſtion the ſinfulneſs of theſe things; but can it be thought they are conſiſtent with that holy nature and frame of ſpirit which was in innocent Adam, and in Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhould be in every man? It is the corruption of nature, then, that makes "filthy dreamers" condemned, Jude 8. Solomon had experience of the exerciſe of grace in ſleep: in a dream he prayed, in a dream he made the beſt choice; both were accepted of God, 1 Kings iii. 5,—15. And if a man may, in his ſleep, do what is good and acceptable to God, why may he not alſo, when aſleep, do what is evil and diſpleaſing to God? The ſame Solomon would have men aware of this; and preſcribes the beſt remedy againſt it, namely, the law upon the heart, Prov. vi. 20, 21. "When "thou ſleepeſt (ſays he, ver. 22.) it ſhall keep thee," to wit, from ſinning in thy ſleep; that is, from ſinful dreams: for one's being kept from ſin (not his being kept from affliction) is the immediate proper effect of the law of God impreſſed upon the heart, Pſal. cxix. 11. And thus the whole verſe is to be underſtood, as appears from ver. 23. "For the commandment "is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of in-"ſtruction are the way of life." Now, the law is a lamp and light, as it guides in the way of duty; and inſtructing reproofs from the law are the way of life, as they keep from ſin: neither do they guide into the way of peace, but as they lead into the way of duty; nor do they keep a man out of trouble, but as they keep him from ſin. And remarkable is the particular in which Solomon inſtanceth, namely, the ſin of uncleanneſs, "to keep thee from the evil woman," &c. ver. 24. which is to be joined with ver. 22. incloſing the 23d in a parentheſis, as ſome verſions have it. Theſe things may ſuffice to convince us of the nature of bias of the mind to evil.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, There is in the carnal mind, an oppoſition to ſpiritual truths, and an averſion to the receiving of them. It is as little a friend to divine truths, as it is to holineſs. The truths of natural religion, which do, as it were, force their entry into the minds of natural men, they "hold priſoners in unrighteouſ-"neſs," Rom. i. 18. And as for the truths of revealed religion, there is "an evil heart of unbelief" in them, which oppoſeth their entry: and there is an armed force neceſſary to captivate the mind to the belief of them, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. God has made a revelation of his mind and will to ſinners, touching the way of ſalvation; he has given us the doctrine of his holy word: but do natural men believe it indeed? No, they do not; "for he that believeth not on the "Son of God, believeth not God," as is plain from 1 John v. 10. They believe not the promiſes of the word: They look on them, in effect, only as fair words; for thoſe that receive them are thereby made "partakers of the divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 14. The promiſes are as ſilver cords let down from heaven to draw ſinners unto God, and to waft them over into the promiſed land; but they caſt them from them. They believe not the threatenings of the word. For, as men travelling in deſerts carry fire about with them, to fright away wild beaſts; ſo God has made his law a fiery law, Deut. xxxiii. 2. hedging it about with threats of wrath; but men naturally are more brutiſh than beaſts themſelves; and will need "touch "the" fiery, ſmoaking "mountain," though they ſhould be "thruſt thro' with a dart." I doubt not but moſt, if not all of you who are yet in the black ſtate of nature, will here plead, "Not guilty;" but remember, the carnal Jews in Chriſt's time were as confident as you are, that they believed Moſes, John ix. 28, 29. But he confutes their confidence, roundly telling them, John v. 46. "Had ye "believed Moſes, ye would have believed me." Did ye believe the truths of God, ye durſt not reject,

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as ye do, him who is truth itſelf. The very difficulty you find in aſſenting to this truth, bewrays that unbelief I am charging you with. Has it not proceeded ſo far with ſome at this day, that it has ſteeled their foreheads, with the impudence and impiety, openly to reject all revealed religion? Surely "it is out of "the abundance of the heart their mouth ſpeaketh." But though ye ſet not your mouths againſt the heavens, as they do, the ſame bitter root of unbelief is in all men by nature, and reigns in you, and will reign, till overcoming grace captivate your minds to the belief of the truth. To convince you in this point, conſider theſe three things:

Evidence 1. How few are there who have been bleſſed with an inward illumination, by the ſpecial operation of the Spirit of Chriſt, letting them into a view of divine truths in their ſpiritual and heavenly luſtre? How have you learned the truths of religion, which ye pretend to believe? Ye have them merely by the benefit of external revelation, and of your education; ſo that you are Chriſtians, juſt becauſe you were not born and bred in a Pagan, but in a Chriſtian country. Ye are ſtrangers to the inward work of the holy Spirit, bearing witneſs by and with the word in your hearts; and ſo you cannot have the aſſurance of faith, with reſpect to that outward divine revelation made in the word, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, 12. and therefore ye are ſtill unbelievers. "It is written in the prophets, "And they ſhall be all taught of God.—Every man "therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the "Father, cometh unto me," ſays our Lord, John vi. 45. Now ye have not come to Chriſt, therefore ye have not been "taught of God:" ye have not been ſo taught, and therefore ye have not come; ye believe not. Behold the revelation, from which the faith even of the fundamental principles in religion doth ſpring, Mat. xvi. 16, 17. "Thou art Chriſt, "the Son of the living God.—Bleſſed art thou, Si-"mon Barjona: for fleſh and blood hath not reveal-

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" ed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." If ever the Spirit of the Lord take a dealing with thee, to work in thee that faith which is of the " o- " peration of God," it may be, as much time may be ſpent in the razing the old foundation, as will make thee find a neceſſity of the " working of his mighty " power," to enable thee to believe the very " foun- " dation principles," which now thou thinkeſt thou makeſt no doubt of, Eph. i. 19.

Evidence 2. How many profeſſors have made ſhipwreck of their faith (ſuch as it was) in the time of temptation and trial! See how they fall, like ſtars from heaven, when Antichriſt prevails! 2 Theſſ. ii. 11, 12. " God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that " they ſhould believe a lie; that they all might be " damned, who believed not the truth." They fall into damning deluſions; becauſe they never really believed the truth, though they themſelves, and others too, thought they did believe it. That houſe is built on the ſand, and that faith is but ill founded, that cannot bear out, but is quite overthrown, when the ſtorm comes.

Evidence 3. Conſider the utter inconſiſtency of moſt mens lives with the principles of religion which they profeſs; ye may as ſoon bring eaſt and weſt together, as their principles and practice. Men believe that fire will burn them; and therefore they will not throw themſelves into it: but the truth is, moſt men live as if they thought the goſpel a mere fable, and the wrath of God revealed in his word againſt their unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs, a mere ſcarecrow. If ye believe the doctrines of the word, how is it that ye are ſo unconcerned about the ſtate of your ſouls before the Lord? how is it that ye are ſo little concerned with that weighty point, whether ye be born again or not? Many live as they were born, and are like to die as they live, and yet live in peace. Do ſuch believe the ſinfulneſs and miſery of a natural ſtate? do they believe they are the children of wrath?

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Do they believe there is no falvation without regeneration, and no regeneration but what makes one a new creature? If you believe the promifes of the word, why do you not embrace them, and labour to enter into the promifed reft? What fluggard would not dig for a hid treafure, if he really believed he might fo obtain it? Men will work and fweat for a maintenance, becaufe they believe that by fo doing they will get it; yet they will be at no tolerable pains for "the eternal weight of glory;" why, but becaufe they do not believe the word of promife? Heb. iv. 1, 2. If ye believe the threatenings, how is it that ye live in your fins, live out of Chrift, and yet hope for mercy? Do fuch believe God to be the holy and juft One, who will "by no means clear the "guilty?" No, no; "none believe, none (or next "to none) believe what a juft God the Lord is, and "how feverely he punifheth."

Fifthly, There is in the mind of man a natural pronenefs to lies and falfehood, which makes for the fafety of him. "They go aftray as foon as they be "born, fpeaking lies," Pfal. lviii. 3. We have this with the reft of the corruption of our nature, from our firft parents. God revealed the truth to them; but through the folicitation of the tempter, they firft doubted of it, then difbelieved it, and embraced a lie inftead of it. And for an inconteftible evidence hereof, we may fee that firft article of the devil's creed, "Ye fhall not furely die," Gen. iii. 4.; which was obtruded by him on our firft parents, and by them received, naturally embraced by their pofterity, and held faft, till a light from heaven oblige them to quit it. It fpreads itfelf through the lives of natural men, who, till their confciences be awakened, walk after their own lufts, ftill retaining the principle, "That "they fhall not furely die:" and this is often improved to that perfection, that the man can fay, over the belly of the denounced curfe, "I fhall have peace, "though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to

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" add drunkenneſs to thirſt," Deut. xix. 19. Whatever advantage the truths of God have over error, by means of education, or otherwiſe; error has always, with the natural man, this advantage againſt truth, namely, that there is ſomething within him which ſays, " O that it were true:" ſo that the mind lies fair for aſſenting to it. And here is the reaſon of it. The true doctrine is, " the doctrine that is ac- " cording to godlineſs," 1 Tim. vi. 3. and " the truth " which is after godlineſs," Tit. i. 1. Error is the doctrine which is according to ungodlineſs, for there is never an error in the mind, nor an untruth vented in the world, (in matters of religion), but what has an affinity with one corruption of the heart or other; according to that of the apoſtle, 2 Theſſ. ii. 1. " They " believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrigh- " teouſneſs." So that truth and error being otherwiſe attended with equal advantages for their reception, error, by this means has moſt ready acceſs into the minds of men in their natural ſtate. Wherefore, it is nothing ſtrange that men reject the ſimplicity of goſpel truths and inſtitutions, and greedily embrace error and external pomp in religion; ſeeing they are ſo agreeable to the luſts of the heart, and the vanity of the mind of the natural man. And from hence alſo it is, that ſo many embrace atheiſtical principles: for none do it but in compliance with their irregular paſſions; none but thoſe whoſe advantage it would be, that there were no God.

Laſtly, Man naturally is high minded: for when the goſpel comes in power to him, it is employed in " caſting down imaginations, and every high thing " that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God," 2 Cor. x. 5. Lowlineſs of mind is not a flower that grows in the field of nature; but it is planted by the finger of God in a renewed heart, and learned of the lowly Jeſus. It is natural to man to think highly of himſelf, and what is his own: for the ſtroke he has got by his fall in Adam, has produced a falſe light whereby mole-hills about him appear like mountains;

and a thouſand airy beauties preſent themſelves to his deluded fancy. "Vain man would be wiſe," (ſo he accounts himſelf, and ſo he would be accounted of by others), "though man be born like a wild aſs's "colt," Job xi. 12. His way is right, becauſe it is his own: "for every way of a man is right in his "own eyes," Prov. xxi. 2. His ſtate is good, becauſe he knows none better; he is "alive without "the law," Rom. vii. 9. and therefore his hope is ſtrong, and his confidence firm. It is another tower of Babel, reared up againſt heaven; and ſhall not fall, while the power of darkneſs can hold it up. The word batters it, yet it ſtands; one while, breaches are made in it, but they are quickly repaired; at another time, it is all made to ſhake, but ſtill it is kept up; till either God himſelf by his Spirit raiſe an heart-quake within the man, which tumbles it down, and leaves not one ſtone upon another, (2 Cor. 4, 5.) or death batter it down, and raze the foundations of it, Luke xvi. 23. And as the natural man thinks highly of himſelf, ſo he thinks meanly of God, whatever he pretends, Pſal. l. 21. "Thou thoughteſt that "I was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf." The doctrine of the goſpel, and the myſtery of Chriſt, are fooliſhneſs to him; and in his practice he treats them as ſuch, 1 Cor. i. 18. and ii. 14. He brings the word and the works of God, in the government of the world, before the bar of his carnal reaſon; and there they are preſumptuouſly cenſured and condemned, Hoſ. xiv. 9. Sometimes the ordinary reſtraint of providence is taken off, and Satan is permitted to ſtir up the carnal mind: and, in that caſe, it is like an ant's neſt, uncovered and diſturbed: doubts, denials, and helliſh reaſonings croud in it, and cannot be laid by all the arguments brought againſt them, till a power from on high captivate the mind, and ſtill the mutiny of the corrupt principles.

This much of the corruption of the underſtanding; which, although the half be not told, may diſcover

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to you the abſolute neceſſity of regenerating grace. Call the underſtanding now, "Ichabod;" for "the "glory is departed from it." Conſider this, ye that are yet in the ſtate of nature, and groan ye out your caſe before the Lord, that the Sun of Righteouſneſs may ariſe upon you, before you be ſhut up in everlaſting darkneſs. What avails your worldly wiſdom? what do your attainments in religion avail, while your underſtanding lies yet wrapt up in its natural darkneſs and confuſion, utterly void of the light of life? Whatever be the natural man's gifts or attainments, we muſt, as in the caſe of the leper, (Lev. xiii. 24.) "pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in "his head." But that is not all; it is in his heart too; his will is corrupted, as I ſhall ſhew anon.

Of the corruption of the will.

II. The will, that commanding faculty, which ſometimes was faithful, and ruled with God, is now turned traitor, and rules with and for the devil. God planted it in man "wholly a right ſeed;" but now it is "turned into the degenerate plant of a ſtrange "vine." It was originally placed in a due ſubordination to the will of God, as was ſhown before; but now it is gone wholly aſide. However ſome do magnify the power of free-will, a view of the ſpirituality of the law, to which acts of moral diſcipline do in no wiſe anſwer, and a deep inſight into the corruption of nature, given by the inward operation of the Spirit, convincing of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment, would make men find an abſolute need of the power of free grace, to remove the bands of wickedneſs from off their free-will. To open up this plague of the heart, I offer theſe following things to be conſidered.

Firſt, There is in the unrenewed will, an utter inability for what is truly good and acceptable in the ſight of God. The natural man's will is in Satan's

fetters: hemmed in within the circle of evil, and cannot move beyond it, more than a dead man can raiſe himſelf out of his grave, Eph. ii. 1. We deny him not a power to chuſe, purſue, and act what on the matter is good; but though he can will what is good and right, he can will nothing aright and well, John xv. 5. "Without me," i. e. ſeparate from me, as a branch from the ſtock, (as both the word and context do carry it,) "ye can do nothing;" viz. nothing truly and ſpiritually good. His very choice and deſire of ſpiritual things is carnal and ſelfiſh, John vi. 26. "Ye ſeek me becauſe ye did eat of the loaves "and were filled." He not only comes not to Chriſt, but he cannot come, John vi. 44. And what can one do acceptable to God, who believeth not on him whom the Father hath ſent? To evidence this inability for good in the unregenerate, conſider theſe two things:

Evid. 1. How often does the light ſo ſhine before mens eyes, that they cannot but ſee the good they ſhould chuſe, and the evil they ſhould refuſe; and yet their hearts have no more power to comply with that light, than if they were arreſted by ſome inviſible hand? They ſee what is right, yet they follow, and cannot but follow what is wrong. Their conſciences tell them the right way, and approve of it too; yet cannot their will be brought up to it; their corruption ſo chains them, that they cannot embrace it; ſo they ſigh, and go back over the belly of their light. And, if it be not thus, how is it that the word and way of holineſs meet with ſuch entertainment in the world? How is it that clear arguments and reaſon on the ſide of piety and a holy life, which bear in themſelves even on the carnal mind, do not bring men over to that ſide? Although the being of a heaven and a hell were but a may-be, it were ſufficient to determine the will to the choice of holineſs, were it capable to be determined thereto by mere reaſon: but men "knowing the judgment of God (that they "which

" which commit ſuch things are worthy of death,) " not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them " that do them," Rom. i. 32. And how is it that thoſe who magnify the power of free-will do not confirm their opinion before the world by an ocular demonſtration, in a practice as far above others in holineſs, as the opinion of their natural ability is above that of others? or is it maintained only for the protection of luſts, which men may hold faſt as long as they pleaſe; and when they have no more uſe for them, can throw them off in a moment, and leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's boſom? Whatever uſe ſome make of that principle, it does of itſelf, and in its own nature, caſt a broad ſhadow for a ſhelter to wickedneſs of heart and life. And it may be obſerved, that the generality of the hearers of the goſpel, of all denominations are plagued with it; for it is a root of bitterneſs natural to all men; from whence doth ſpring ſo much fearleſſneſs about the ſoul's eternal ſtate, ſo many delays and off-puts in that weighty matter, whereby much work is laid up for a death-bed by ſome; while others are ruined by a legal walk, and unacquaintedneſs with the life of faith, and the making uſe of Chriſt for ſanctification; all flowing from the perſuaſion of ſufficient natural abilities. So agreeable is it to corrupt nature.

Evid. 2. Let thoſe, who, by the power of the ſpirit of bondage, have had the law laid out before them in its ſpirituality, for their conviction, ſpeak and tell, if they found themſelves able to incline their hearts towards it, in that caſe; nay, if the more that light ſhone into their ſouls, they did not find their hearts more and more unable to comply with it. There are ſome, who have been brought into " the place " of the breaking forth," who are yet in the devil's camp, that from their experience can tell, light let into the mind cannot give life to the will, to enable it to comply therewith; and could give their teſtimony here, if they would. But take Paul's teſtimony

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concerning it, who, in this unconverted ſtate, was far from believing his utter inability for good; but learned it by experience, Rom. vii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 13. I own, the natural man may have a kind of love to the law: but here lies the ſtreſs of the matter, he looks on the holy law in a carnal dreſs; and ſo, while he hugs a creature of his own fancy, he thinks he has the law, but in very deed he is without the law; for as yet he ſees it not in its ſpirituality; if he did, he would find it the very reverſe of his own nature; and what his will could not fall in with, till changed by the power of grace.

Secondly, There is in the unrenewed will an averſeneſs to good. Sin is the natural man's element; he is as loth to part with it, as the fiſhes are to come out of the water into dry land. He not only cannot come to Chriſt, but he "will not come," John v. 40. He is polluted, and hates to be waſhen, Jer. xiii. 27. "Wilt thou not be made clean? when ſhall it "once be?" He is ſick, but utterly averſe to the remedy: he loves his diſeaſe ſo, that he lothes the phyſician. He is a captive, a priſoner, and a ſlave; but he loves his conqueror, his jailor and maſter; he is fond of his fetters, priſon, and drudgery, and has no liking to his liberty. For evidence of this averſeneſs to good, in the will of man, I ſhall inſtance in ſome particulars.

Evidence 1. The untowardneſs of children. Do we not ſee them naturally lovers of ſinful liberty? How unwilling are they to be hedged in? how averſe to reſtraint? The world can bear witneſs, that they are "as bullocks unaccuſtomed to the yoke:" and more, that is far eaſier to bring young bullocks tamely to bear the yoke, than to bring young children under diſcipline, and make them tamely ſubmit to the reſtraint of ſinful liberty. Every body may ſee in this, as in a glaſs, that man it naturally wild and wilful, according to Zophar's obſerve, (Job. xi. 12.), that "man is born like a wild aſs's colt." What

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can be ſaid more? He is like a colt, the colt of an aſs, the colt of a wild aſs. Compare Jer. ii. 24. A "wild aſs uſed to the wilderneſs, that ſnuffeth up the "wind at her pleaſure; in her occaſion who can turn "her away:"

Evid. 2. What pain and difficulty do men often find in bringing their hearts to religious duties? and what a taſk is it to the carnal heart to abide at them? It is a pain to it, to leave the world but a little to converſe with God. It is not eaſy to borrow time from the many things to beſtow upon the "one "thing needful." Men often go to God in duties, with their faces towards the world; and when their bodies are on the mount of ordinances, their hearts will be found at the foot of the hill, "going after "their covetouſneſs," Ezek. xxxiii. 31. They are ſoon wearied of well-doing; for holy duties are not agreeable to their corrupt nature. Take notice of them at their worldly buſineſs, ſet them down with their carnal company, or let them be ſucking the breaſts of a luſt; time ſeems to them to fly, and drive furiouſly, ſo that it is gone ere they are aware. But how heavily does it drive, while a prayer, a ſermon, or a Sabbath laſts? The Lord's day is the longeſt day of all the week with many; and therefore they muſt ſleep longer that morning, and go ſooner to bed that night, than ordinarily they do; that the day may be made of a tolerable length; for their hearts ſay within them, "When will the Sab-"bath be gone?" Amos viii. 5. The hours of worſhip are the longeſt hours of that day: hence, when duty is over, they are like men eaſed of a burden; and when ſermon is ended, many have neither the grace nor good manners to ſtay till the bleſſing be pronounced, but like the beaſts, their head is away as ſoon as one puts hand to looſe them; why, but becauſe, while they are at ordinances, they are, as Doeg, "detained before the Lord?" 1 Sam. xxii. 7.

Evid.

Evid. 3. Conſider how the will of the natural man doth rebel againſt the light, Job xxiv. 13. Light ſometimes entereth in, becauſe he is not able to hold it out: but he "loveth darkneſs rather than light." Sometimes, by the force of truth, the outer-door of the underſtanding is broken up; but the inner door of the will remains faſt bolted. Then luſts riſe againſt light: corruption and conſcience encounter, and fight as in the field of battle, till corruption getting the upper-hand, conſcience is forced to give the back; convictions are murdered, and truth is made and held priſoner, ſo that it can create no more diſturbance. While the word is preached or read, or the rod of God is upon the natural man, ſometimes convictions are darted in on him, and his ſpirit is wounded, in greater or leſſer meaſure: but theſe convictions not being able to make him fall, he runs away with the arrows ſticking in his conſcience; and at length, one way or other, gets them out, and licks himſelf whole again. Thus, while the light ſhines, men, naturally averſe to it, wilfully ſhut their eyes, till God is provoked to blind them judicially, and they become proof againſt the word and providence too; ſo they may go where they will, they can ſit at eaſe: there is never a word from heaven to them, that goeth deeper than into their ears, Hoſ. iv. 17. "Ephraim is "joined to his idols, let him alone."

Evid. 4. Let us obſerve the reſiſtance made by elect ſouls, when the Spirit of the Lord is at work, to bring them from "the power of Satan unto God." Zion's King gets no ſubjects but by ſtroke of ſword, "in the day of his power," Pſal. cx. 2, 3. None come to him, but ſuch as are drawn by a divine hand, John vi. 44. When the Lord comes to the ſoul, he finds the ſtrong man keeping the houſe, and a deep peace and ſecurity there, while the ſoul is faſt aſleep in the devil's arms. But "the prey muſt be "taken from the mighty, and the captive delivered." Therefore the Lord awakens the ſinner, opens his eyes,

eyes, and ſtrikes him with terror, while the clouds are black above his head, and the ſword of vengeance is held to his breaſt. Now he is at no ſmall pains to put a fair face on a black heart; to ſhake off his fears, to make head againſt them, and to divert himſelf from thinking on the unpleaſant and ungrateful ſubject of his ſoul's caſe. If he cannot ſo rid himſelf from them, carnal reaſon is called in to help, and urgeth, that there is no ground for ſo great fear; all may be well enough yet; and if it be ill with him, it will be ill with many. When the ſinner is beat from this, and ſees no advantage in going to hell with company, he reſolves to leave his ſins, but cannot think of breaking off ſo ſoon; there is time enough, and he will do it afterwards. Conſcience ſays, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your "hearts:" but he cries, "To-morrow, Lord, to-"morrow, Lord;" and "juſt now, Lord," till that "now" is never like to come. And thus many times he comes from his prayers and confeſſions, with nothing but a breaſt full of ſharper convictions; for the heart doth not always caſt up the ſweet morſel, as ſoon as confeſſion is made with the mouth, Judges x. 10,—16. And when conſcience obligeth him to part with ſome luſts, others are kept as right eyes and right hands; and there are rueful looks after thoſe that are put away; as it was with the Iſraelites, who with bitter hearts did remember "the fiſh they did "eat in Egypt freely," Num. iii. 5. Nay, when he is ſo preſſed, that he muſt needs ſay before the Lord, that he is content to part with all his idols; the heart will be giving the tongue the lie. In a word, the ſoul, in this caſe, will ſhift from one thing to another; like a fiſh with the hook in his jaws, till it can do no more, and power come to make it ſuccumb, as "the wild aſs in her month," Jer. ii. 24.

Thirdly, There is in the will of man a natural pronenefs to evil, a woful bent towards ſin. Men naturally are "bent to backſliding from God," Hoſ.

ii. 7. They hang (as the word is) towards backſliding; even as a hanging wall, whoſe "breaking com-"eth ſuddenly at an inſtant." Set holineſs and life upon the one ſide, ſin and death upon the other; leave the unrenewed will to itſelf, it will chuſe ſin, and reject holineſs. This is no more to be doubted, than that water, poured on the ſide of a hill, will run downward, and not upward, or that a flame will aſcend, and not deſcend.

Evid. 1. Is not the way of evil the firſt way the children of men do go? do not their inclinations plainly appear on the wrong ſide, while yet they have no cunning to hide them? In the firſt opening of our eyes in the world, we look a-ſquint, hell-ward, not heaven-ward. As ſoon as it appears we are reaſonable creatures, it appears we are ſinful creatures, Pſal. lviii. 3. "The wicked are eſtranged from the womb, "they go aſtray, as ſoon as they be born," Prov. xxii. 15. "Fooliſhneſs is bound in the heart of a "child: but the rod of correction ſhall drive it far "from him." Folly is bound in the heart, it is woven into our very nature. The knot will not looſe; it muſt be broke aſunder by ſtrokes. Words will not do it, the rod muſt be taken to drive it away: and if it be not driven far away, the heart and it will meet and knit again. Not that the rod of itſelf will do this: the ſad experience of many parents teſtifies the contrary; and Solomon himſelf tells you, Prov. xxvii. 22. "Though thou ſhouldſt bray a fool in a "mortar, among wheat, with a peſtil, yet will not "his fooliſhneſs depart from him;" it is ſo bound in his heart. But the rod is an ordinance of God, appointed for that end; which, like the word, is made effectual, by the Spirit's accompanying his own ordinance. And this, by the way, ſhews that parents, in adminiſtering correction to their children, have need, firſt of all, to correct their own irregular paſſions, and look upon it as a matter of awful ſolemnity, ſetting about it with much dependence on the Lord,

Lord, and following it with prayer for the bleſſing, if they would have it effectual.

Evid. 2. How eaſily are men led aſide to ſin! The children, who are not perſuaded to good, are otherwiſe ſimple ones, eaſily wrought upon: thoſe whom the word cannot draw to holineſs, are "led by Sa-"tan at his pleaſure." Profane Eſau, that cunning man, (Gen. xxv. 27.) was as eaſily cheated of the bleſſing, as if he had been a fool or an idiot. The more natural a thing is, it is the more eaſy: ſo Chriſt's "yoke is eaſy" to the ſaints, in ſo far as they are "partakers of the divine nature:" and ſin is eaſy to the unrenewed man; but to learn to do good, as difficult as for "the Ethiopian to change his ſkin;" becauſe the will naturally hangs towards evil, but is averſe to good. A child can cauſe a round thing to run, while he cannot move a ſquare thing of the ſame weight; for the roundneſs makes it fit for motion, ſo that it goes with a touch. Even ſo, when men find the heart eaſily carried towards ſin, while it is as a dead weight in the way of holineſs; we muſt bring the reaſon of this from the natural ſet and diſpoſition of the heart, whereby it is prone and bent to evil. Were man's will, naturally, put in equal balance to good and evil, the one might be embraced with as little difficulty as the other; but experience teſtifies it is not ſo. In the ſacred hiſtory of the Iſraelites, eſpecially in the book of Judges, how often do we find them forſaking JEHOVAH, the mighty God, and doting upon the idols of the nations about them? But did ever one of theſe nations grow fond of Iſrael's God, and forſake their own idols? No, no; though man is naturally given to changes, it is but from evil to evil, not from evil to good, Jer. ii. 10, 11. "Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are "no gods? but my people have changed their glory, "for that which doth not profit." Surely the will of man ſtands not in equal balance, but has a caſt to the wrong ſide.

Evid. 3. Conſider how men go on ſtill in the way of ſin, till they meet with a ſtop, and that from another hand than their own: Iſ. lvii. 17. "I hid me, "and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." If God withdraw his reſtraining hand, and lay the reins on the ſinner's neck, he is in no doubt what way to chuſe: for (obſerve it) the way of ſin is the way of his heart; his heart naturally lies that way; it hath a natural propenſity to ſin. As long as God ſuffereth them, they walk in their own way, Acts xiv. 16. The natural man is ſo fixed in his woful choice, that there needs no more to ſhew he is off from God's way, but to tell him he is upon his own.

Evid. 4. Whatever good impreſſions are made upon him, they do not laſt. Though his heart be firm as a ſtone, yea, harder than the nether-milſtone, in point of receiving of them; it is otherwiſe unſtable as water, and cannot keep them. It works againſt the receiving of them; and, when they are made, it works them off, and returns to its natural bias; Hoſ. vi. 4. "Your goodneſs is as a morning-cloud, and "as the early dew, it goeth away." The morning cloud promiſeth a hearty ſhower; but, when the ſun ariſeth it evaniſheth; the ſun beats upon the early dew, and it evaporates; ſo the huſbandman's expectation is diſappointed. Such is the goodneſs of the natural man. Some ſharp affliction, or piercing conviction, obligeth him, in ſome ſort, to turn from his evil courſe; but his will not being renewed, religion is ſtill againſt the grain with him, and therefore this goes off again, Pſal. lxxviii. 34, 36, 37. Though a ſtone thrown up into the air, may abide there a little while; yet its natural heavineſs will bring it down to the earth again; and ſo do unrenewed men return to "the wallowing in the mire;" becauſe, although they were waſhed, yet their ſwiniſh nature was not changed. It is hard to cauſe wet wood take fire, hard to make it keep fire; but it is harder than either of theſe, to make the unrenewed will retain attained goodneſs;

goodneſs; which is a plain evidence of the natural bent of the will to evil.

Evid. laſt. Do the ſaints ſerve the Lord now, as they were wont to ſerve ſin in their unconverted ſtate? Very far from it. Rom. vi. 20. "When ye were "the ſervants of ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs." Sin got all and admitted no partner: but now, when they are the ſervants of Chriſt, are they free from ſin? Nay, there are ſtill with them ſome deeds of the old man, ſhewing that he is but dying in them. And hence their hearts often miſgive them, and ſlip aſide unto evil, "when they would do good," Rom. vii. 21. They need to watch, and keep their hearts with all diligence; and their ſad experience teacheth them, "That he that truſteth in his own heart is a fool," Prov. xxviii. 26. If it be thus in the green tree, how muſt it be in the dry?

Fourthly, There is a natural contrariety, direct oppoſition and enmity, in the will of man to God himſelf, and his holy will, Rom. viii. 7. "The carnal "mind is enmity againſt God; for it is not ſubject "to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The will was once God's deputy in the ſoul, ſet to command there for him; but now it is ſet up againſt him. If you would have the picture of it, in its natural ſtate, the very reverſe of the will of God repreſents it. If the fruit hanging before one's eyes be but forbidden, that is ſufficient to draw the heart after it. Let me inſtance in the ſin of profane ſwearing and curſing, to which ſome are ſo abandoned, that they take a pride in them; belching out horrid oaths and curſes, as if hell opened with the opening of their mouths; or larding their ſpeeches with minced oaths, as *faith*, *baith*, *fai'd'ye*, *hai'd'ye*, and ſuch like; and all this without any manner of provocation, though even that would not excuſe them. Pray tell, me, (1.) What profit is there here? A thief gets ſomething in his hand for his pains; a drunkard gets a belly full; but what do ye get? Others ſerve the devil for pay; but

but ye are volunteers, that expect no reward but your work itself, in affronting of Heaven. And if you repent not, you will get your reward in full tale, when you go to hell, "your work will follow you." The drunkard shall not have a drop of "water to cool his "tongue" there; nor will the covetous man's wealth follow him into the other world: but ye shall drive on your old trade there; and an eternity will be long enough to give you your heart's fill of it. (2.) What pleasure is there here, but what flows from your trampling upon the holy law? Which of your senses doth swearing or cursing gratify? If it gratify your ears, it can only be by the noise it makes against the heavens. Though you had a mind to give up yourselves to all manner of profanity and sensuality, there is so little pleasure can be strained out of these sins, that we must needs conclude, your love to them, in this case, is a love to them for themselves; a devilish unhired love, without any prospect of profit or pleasure from them otherwise. If any shall say, these are monsters of men. Be it so; yet, alas! the world is fruitful of such monsters; they are to be found almost every where. And allow me to say, they must be admitted as the mouth of the whole unregenerate world against Heaven, Rom. iii. 14. "Whose mouth "is full of cursing and bitterness," ver. 19. "Now "we know, that what things soever the law saith, it "saith to them who are under the law, that every "mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be-"come guilty before God."

I have a charge against every unregenerate man and woman, young or old, to be verified by the testimonies of the scriptures of truth, and the testimony of their own consciences; namely, that whether they be professors or profane, whatever they be, seeing they are not born again, they are heart-enemies to God; to the Son of God, to the Spirit of God, and to the law of God. Hear this, ye careless souls, that live at ease in your natural state.

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1ſt, Ye are "enemies to God in your mind," Col. i. 21. Ye are not as yet reconciled to him: the natural enmity is not as yet ſlain, though perhaps it lies hid, and ye do not perceive it. (1.) Ye are enemies to the very being of God, Pſal. xiv. 1. "The fool "hath ſaid in his heart, There is no God." The proud man would that none were above himſelf; the rebel, that there were no king: and the unrenewed man, who is a maſs of pride and rebellion, that there were no God. He ſaith it in his heart, he wiſheth it were ſo, though he be aſhamed and afraid to ſpeak it out. And that all natural men are ſuch fools, appears from the apoſtle's quoting a part of this pſalm, "That every mouth may be ſtopped," Rom. iii. 10, 11, 12, 19. I own, indeed, that while the natural man looks on God as the Creator and Preſerver of the world, becauſe he loves his own ſelf, therefore his heart riſeth not againſt the being of his Benefactor: but this enmity will quickly appear when he looks on God as the Rector and Judge of this world, binding him, under the pain of the curſe, to exact holineſs, and girding him with the cords of death, becauſe of ſin. Liſten in this caſe to the voice of thy heart, and thou wilt find it to be "No God." (2.) Ye are enemies to the nature of God, Job xxi. 14. "They ſay unto God, Depart from us, for we "deſire not the knowledge of thy ways." Men ſet up to themſelves an idol of their own fancy, inſtead of God; and then fall down and worſhip it. They love him no other way, than Jacob loved Leah, while he took her for Rachel. Every natural man is an enemy to God, as he is revealed in his word. An infinitely holy, juſt, powerful, and true Being, is not the God whom he loves, but the God whom he lothes. In effect, men naturally are "haters of God," Rom. i. 30. and if they could, they certainly would make him another than what he is. For, conſider it is a certain truth, "That whatſoever is in God, is God;" and therefore his attributes or perfections are not any

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thing really distinct from himself. If God's attributes be not God himself, he is a compound being, and so not the first Being, (which to say is blasphemous), for the parts compounding are before the compound itself; but he is "Alpha and Omega, the "first and the last."

Now, upon this, I would, for your conviction, propose to your consciences a few queries. (1.) "How stand your hearts affected to the infinite puri-"ty and holiness of God?" Conscience will give an answer to this, which the tongue will not speak out. If ye be not partakers of his holiness, ye cannot be reconciled to it. The Pagans finding they could not be like God in holiness, made their gods like themselves in filthiness; and thereby discovered what sort of a god the natural man would have. God is holy; can an unholy creature love his unspotted holiness? Nay, it is the righteous only that can "give thanks "at the remembrance of his holiness," Psal. xcvii. 12. God is light; can creatures of darkness rejoice therein? Nay, "every one that doth evil hateth the "light," John iii. 20. "For what communion hath "light with darkness?" 2 Cor. vi. 14. (2.) "How "stand your hearts affected to the justice of God." There is not a man, who is wedded to his lusts, as all the unregenerate are, but would be content, with the blood of his body, to blot that letter out of the name of God. Can the malefactor love his condemning judge? or an unjustified sinner, a just God? No, he cannot, Luke vii. 47. "To whom little is for-"given, the same loveth little." Hence, seeing men cannot get the doctrine of his justice blotted out of the Bible, yet it is such an eye-sore to them, that they strive to blot it out of their minds: and they ruin themselves by presuming on his mercy, while they are not careful to get a righteousness, wherein they may stand before his justice; but "say in their heart, "The Lord will not do good neither will he do evil," Zeph. i. 12. (3.) "How stand ye affected to the

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" omniſcience and omnipreſence of God?" Men naturally would rather have a blind idol, than an all-ſeeing God; and therefore do what they can, as Adam did, to hide themſelves from the preſence of the Lord. They no more love the all-ſeeing, every-where preſent God, than the thief loves to have the judge witneſs to his evil deeds. If it could be carried by votes, God would be voted out of the world, and cloſed up in heaven; for the language of the carnal heart is, " The Lord ſeeth us not: The Lord hath forſak-" en the earth," Ezek. viii. 12. (4.) " How ſtand " ye affected to the truth and veracity of God?" There are but few in the world that can heartily ſubſcribe to that ſentence of the apoſtle, Rom. iii. 4. " Let God be true, but every man a liar." Nay truly, there are many, who in effect, do hope that God will not be true to his word. There are thouſands who hear the goſpel, that hope to be ſaved, and think all ſafe with them for eternity, who never had any experience of the new birth, nor do at all concern themſelves in that queſtion, " Whether they are born " again, or not?" a queſtion that is like to wear out from among us at this day. Our Lord's words are plain and peremptory, " Except a man be born again, " he cannot ſee the kingdom of God." What are ſuch hopes then, but real hopes that God (with profoundeſt reverence be it ſpoken) will recal his word, and that Chriſt will prove a falſe prophet? What elſe means the ſinner, who, " when he heareth the words " of the curſe, bleſſeth himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I " ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination " of mine heart?" Deut. xxix. 19. Laſtly, " How " ſtand ye affected to the power of God?" None but new creatures will love him for it, on a fair view thereof; though others may ſlaviſhly fear him upon the account of it. There is not a natural man, but would contribute to the utmoſt of his power to the building of another tower of Babel, to hem it in. On theſe

grounds I declare every unrenewed man an enemy to God.

2dly, Ye are enemies to the Son of God. That enmity to Chrift is in your hearts, which would have made you join the hufbandmen who " killed the heir, " and caft him out of the vineyard;" if ye had been befet with their temptations, and no more reftrained than they were. " Am I a dog," (you will fay), to have fo treated my fweet Saviour? So did Hazael in another cafe; but when he had the temptation, he was a dog to do it. Many call Chrift their fweet Saviour, whofe confciences can bear witnefs, they never fucked as much fweetnefs from him, as from their fweet lufts, which are ten times fweeter to them than their Saviour. He is no other way fweet to them than as they abufe his death and fufferings, for the peaceable enjoyment of their lufts; that they may live as they lift in the world; and when they die, may be kept out of hell. Alas! it is but a miftaken Chrift that is fweet to you, whofe fouls lothe that Chrift, who " is " the brightnefs of the Father's glory, and the ex- " prefs image of his perfon." It is with you as it was with the carnal Jews, who delighted in him, while they miftook his errand into the world, fancying that he would be a temporal deliverer to them, Mal. iii. 1. But when he was come, and " fat as a refiner and pu- " rifier of filver," ver. 2, 3. and caft them as " re- " probate filver," who thought to have had no fmall honour in the kingdom of the Meffiah; his doctrine galled their confciences, and they refted not till they had imbrued their hands in his blood. To open your eyes in this point, which ye are fo loth to believe, I will lay before you the enmity of your hearts againft Chrift in all his offices.

1. Every unregenerate man is an enemy to Chrift in his prophetical office. He is appointed of the Father the great Prophet and Teacher; but not upon the world's call, who, in their natural ftate, would

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have unanimouſly voted againſt him: and therefore when he came, he was condemned as a ſeducer and blaſphemer. For evidence of this enmity, I ſhall inſtance in two things.

Evidence 1. Conſider the entertainment he meets with, when he comes to teach ſouls inwardly by his Spirit. Men do what they can to ſtop their ears, like the deaf adder, that they may not hear his voice. They "always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt: they deſire not "the knowledge of his ways;" and therefore bid him "depart from them." The old calumny is often raiſed upon him on that occaſion, John x. 20. "He is "mad, why hear ye him?" Soul-exerciſe, raiſed by the ſpirit of bondage, is accounted, by many, nothing elſe but diſtraction, and melancholy fits; men thus blaſpheming the Lord's work, becauſe they themſelves are beſide themſelves, and cannot judge of thoſe matters.

Evid. 2. Conſider the entertainment he meets with, when he comes to teach men outwardly by his word.

(1.) His written word, the Bible, is ſlighted. Chriſt hath left it to us, as the book of our inſtructions, to ſhow us what way we muſt ſteer our courſe, if we would come to Immanuel's land. It is a lamp to light us through a dark world, to eternal light. And he hath left it upon us to ſearch it with that diligence wherewith men dig into mines for ſilver or gold, John v. 39. But, ah! how is this ſacred treaſure profaned by many! They ridicule that holy word by which they muſt be judged at the laſt day; and will rather loſe their ſouls than their jeſt, dreſſing up the conceits of their wanton wits in ſcripture-phraſes: in which they act as mad a part, as one who would dig into a mine, to procure metal to melt and pour down his own and his neighbour's throat. Many exhauſt their ſpirits in reading romances, and their minds purſue them as the flame doth the dry ſtubble; while they have no heart for, nor reliſh of the holy

word; and therefore ſeldom take a Bible in their hands. What is agreeable to the vanity of their minds is pleaſant and taking; but what recommends holineſs to their unholy hearts, makes their ſpirits dull and flat. What pleaſure will they find in reading of a profane ballad, or ſtory-book, to whom the Bible is taſteleſs as the white of an egg? many lay by their Bibles with their Sabbath-days clothes; and whatever uſe they have for their clothes, they have none for their Bibles till the return of the Sabbath. Alas! the duſt or finery about your Bibles is a witneſs now, and will, at the laſt day, be a witneſs of the enmity of your hearts againſt Chriſt as a prophet. Beſides all this, among theſe who ordinarily read the ſcriptures, how few are there that read it as the word of the Lord to their ſouls, and keep up communion with him in it! They do not make his ſtatutes their counſellors, nor doth their particular caſe ſend them to their Bibles. They are ſtrangers to the ſolid comfort of the ſcriptures. And if at any time they be dejected, it is ſomething elſe than the word that revives them; as Achab was cured of his ſullen fit, by the ſecuring of Naboth's vineyard for him.

(2.) Chriſt's word preached is deſpiſed. The entertainment moſt of the world to whom it has come, have always given it, is that which is mentioned, Mat. xxii. 5. "They made light of it;" and for its ſake they are deſpiſed whom he has employed to preach it; whatever other face men put upon their contempt of the miniſtry, John xv. 20, 21. "The ſervant is not "greater than the Lord: if they have perſecuted me, "they will alſo perſecute you: if they have kept my "ſaying, they will keep yours alſo. But all theſe "things will they do unto you for my name's ſake." That Levi was the ſon of the hated, ſeems not to have been without a myſtery, which the world in all ages hath unriddled. But though "the earthen veſſels," wherein God has put "the treaſure," be turned, with many, into "veſſels wherein there is no pleaſure,"

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yet why is the treaſure itſelf ſlighted? But ſlighted it is, and that with a witneſs this day. "Lord, who "hath believed our report? To whom ſhall we "ſpeak?" Men can, without remorſe, make to themſelves ſilent Sabbaths, one after another. And, alas! when they come to ordinances, for the moſt part, it is but "to appear" (or as the word is, "to be ſeen") before the Lord; and to "tread his courts," namely, as a company of beaſts would do, if they were driven into them, Iſa. i. 12. ſo little reverence and awe of God appears on their ſpirits. Many ſtand like brazen walls before the word, in whoſe corrupt converſation the preaching of the word makes no breach. Nay, not a few are growing worſe and worſe, under "pre-"cept upon precept;" and the reſult of all is, "They "go and fall backward, and be broken, and ſnared, "and taken," Iſa. xxviii. 13. What tears of blood are ſufficient to lament that (the goſpel) "the grace "of God" is thus "received in vain!" We are but the voice of one crying; the ſpeaker is in heaven; and ſpeaks to you from heaven by men: why do ye "refuſe him that ſpeaketh?" Heb. xii. 25. God has made our Maſter "Heir of all things," and we are ſent to court a ſpouſe for him. There is none ſo worthy as he; none more unworthy than they to whom this match is propoſed: but the "prince of "darkneſs" is preferred before the "PRINCE OF "PEACE." A diſmal darkneſs overclouded the world by Adam's fall, more terrible than if the ſun, moon, and ſtars had been for ever wrapt up in blackneſs of darkneſs; and there we ſhould have eternally lain, had not this grace of the goſpel, as a ſhining ſun, appeared to diſpel it, Tit. ii. 11. But yet we fly like night-owls from it; and, like the wild beaſts, "lay ourſelves down in our dens:" when "the ſun "ariſeth," we are ſtruck blind with the light thereof; and, as creatures of darkneſs, love darkneſs rather than light. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men againſt Chriſt in his prophetical office.

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2. The natural man is an enemy to Chriſt in his prieſtly office. He is appointed of the Father a prieſt for ever; that, by his alone ſacrifice and interceſſion, ſinners may have peace with, and acceſs to God: But Chriſt crucified, is a ſtumbling-block, and fooliſhneſs to the unrenewed part of mankind, to whom he is preached, 1 Cor. i. 23. They are not for him, as the new and living way. Nor is he, by the voice of the world, an high prieſt over the houſe of God. Corrupt nature goes quite another way to work.

Evid. 1. None of Adam's children naturally incline to receive the bleſſing in borrowed robes; but would always, according to the ſpider's motto, owe all to themſelves: And ſo climb up to heaven on a thread ſpun out of their own bowels. For they "deſire to be under the law," Gal. iv. 21. And "go "about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs," Rom. x. 3. Man, naturally, looks on God as a great Maſter; and himſelf as his ſervant, that muſt work and win heaven as his wages. Hence, when conſcience is awakened, he thinks, that, to the end he may be be ſaved, he muſt anſwer the demands of the law; ſerve God as well as he can, and pray for mercy, wherein he comes ſhort. And thus many come to duties, that never come out of them to Jeſus Chriſt.

Evid. 2. As men, naturally, think highly of their duties, that ſeem, to them, to be well done; ſo they look for acceptance with God, according to their work is done, not according to the ſhare they have in the blood of Chriſt. Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not? They will value themſelves on their performances and attainments, yea, their very opinions in religion (Phil. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7.) taking to themſelves what they rob from Chriſt the great high prieſt.

Evid. 3. The natural man going to God, in duties, will always be found either to go without a mediator, or with more than the one only Mediator, Jeſus Chriſt. Nature is blind and therefore venturous:

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It ſets men a-going immediately to God, without Chriſt; to ruſh into his preſence, and put their petitions in his hand, without being introduced by the ſecretary of heaven, or putting their requeſts into his hand. So fixed is this diſpoſition in the unrenewed heart, that when many hearers of the goſpel are converſed with upon the point of their hopes of ſalvation, the name of Chriſt will ſcarcely be heard from their mouths. Aſk them, how they think to obtain the pardon of ſin? they will tell you, they beg and look for mercy, becauſe God is a merciful God; and that is all they have to confide in. Others look for mercy for Chriſt's ſake; but how do they know that Chriſt will take their plea in hand? Why as the Papiſts have their mediators with the Mediator, ſo have they. They know he cannot but do it; for they pray, confeſs, mourn, and have great deſires, and the like; and ſo having ſomething of their own to commend them unto him; they were never made poor in ſpirit, and brought empty-handed to Chriſt, to lay the ſtreſs of all on his atoning blood.

3. The natural man is an enemy to Chriſt in his kingly office. The Father has appointed the Mediator, King in Zion, Pſal. ii. 6. And all to whom the goſpel comes are commanded, on their higheſt peril, to "kiſs the Son," and ſubmit themſelves unto him, ver. 12. But the natural voice of mankind is, "Away with him:" as you may ſee, ver. 2, 3. "They will not have him to reign over them," Luke xix. 14.

Exid. 1. The workings of corrupt nature, to wreſt the government out of his hands. No ſooner was he born, but being born a King, Herod perſecuted him, Matth. ii. And when he was crucified, they "ſet up over his head his accuſation written, This is Jeſus, the "King of the Jews," Matth. xxvii. 37. Though his kingdom be a ſpiritual kingdom, and not of this world, yet they cannot allow him a kingdom within a kingdom, which acknowledgeth no other head or ſupreme, but

but the Royal Mediator. They make bold with his royal prerogatives, changing his laws, inſtitutions, and ordinances; modelling his worſhip according to the devices of their own hearts, introducing new offices and officers into his kingdom, not to be found in "the book of the manner of his kingdom:" diſpoſing of the external government thereof, as may beſt ſuit their carnal deſigns. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men againſt Zion's King.

Evid. 2. How unwilling are men, naturally, to ſubmit unto, and be hedged in by the laws and diſcipline of his kingdom! As a king, he is a law-giver, (Iſa. xxxiii. 22.) and has appointed an external government, diſcipline and cenſures, to controul the unruly, and to keep his profeſſed ſubjects in order, to be exerciſed by officers of his own appointment, Mat. xviii. 17, 18. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 1 Tim. v. 17 Heb. xiii. 17. But theſe are the great eye-ſores of the carnal world, who love ſinful liberty, and therefore cry out, "Let us break their bands aſunder, and caſt away "their cords from us," Pſal. ii. 3. Hence this work is found to be, in a ſpecial manner, a ſtriving againſt the ſtream of corrupt nature, which for the moſt part puts ſuch a face on the church, as if there were no "king in Iſrael," every one doing that which is "right in his own eyes."

Evid. 3. However natural men may be brought to feign ſubmiſſion to the King of ſaints, yet luſts always retain the throne and dominion in their hearts, and they are "ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures," Tit. iii. 3. None, but theſe in whom Chriſt is formed, do really put the crown on his head, and receive the kingdom of Chriſt within them. His crown is "the "crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the "day of his eſpouſals." Who are they, whom the power of grace has not ſubdued, that will allow him to ſet up, and to put down, in their ſouls, as he will? Nay, as for others, any lord ſhall ſooner get the rule over them, than the Lord of glory: they kindly entertain

tertain his enemies, and will never abſolutely reſign themſelves to his government, till conquered in a day of power. Thus ye may ſee, that the natural man is an enemy to Jeſus Chriſt in all his offices.

But O how hard is it to convince men in this point? They are very loth to take with it. And, in a ſpecial manner, the enmity of the heart againſt Chriſt in his prieſtly office ſeems to be hid from the view of moſt of the hearers of the goſpel. Yet there appears to be a peculiar malignity in corrupt nature againſt that office of his. It may be obſerved, that the Socinians, theſe enemies of our bleſſed Lord, allow him to be properly a Prophet and a King, but deny him to be properly a Prieſt. And this is agreeable enough to the corruption of our nature; for under the covenant of works, the Lord was known as a Prophet or Teacher, and alſo as a King or Ruler; but not at all as a Prieſt: ſo man knows nothing of the myſtery of Chriſt, as the way to the Father, till it be revealed to him; and when it is revealed, the will riſeth up againſt it; for corrupt nature lies croſs to the myſtery of Chriſt, and the great contrivance of ſalvation through a crucified Saviour, revealed in the goſpel. For clearing of which weighty truth, let theſe four things be conſidered.

Firſt, The ſoul's falling in with the grand device of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, and ſetting the matters of ſalvation on that footing before the Lord, is declared by the ſcriptures of truth to be an undoubted mark of a real ſaint who is happy here, and ſhall be happy hereafter. Matth. xi. 6. "And bleſſed is "he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me," 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. "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," Phil. iii. 3. "For we are the "circumciſion, which worſhip God in the Spirit, and "rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in

" the flesh." Now, how could this be, if nature could comply with that grand device?

Secondly, Corrupt nature is the very reverse of the gospel-contrivance. In the gospel, God proposeth Jesus Christ as the great means of reuniting man to himself: He has named him as the Mediator, one " in " whom he is well pleased," and will have none but him, Matth. xvii. 5.; but nature " will have none of " him," Psal. lxxxi. 11. God appointed the place of meeting for the reconciliation, namely, the flesh of Christ; accordingly God " was in Christ," (2 Cor. v. 19.) as the tabernacle of meeting, to make up the peace with sinners: but natural men, though they should die for ever, will not come thither, John v. 40. " And ye will not come to me, that ye might " have life." In the way of the gospel, the sinner must stand before the Lord in an imputed righteousness: but corrupt nature is for an inherent righteousness; and therefore, so far as natural men follow after righteousness; they follow after " the " law of righteousness," Rom. ix. 31, 32. and not after " the Lord of righteousness." Nature is always for building up itself, and to have some ground for boasting: but the great design of the gospel is to exalt grace, to depress nature, and exclude boasting, Rom. iii. 27. The sum of our natural religion is, to do good from and for ourselves, John v. 44.; the sum of gospel-religion is, to deny ourselves, and to do good from and for Christ, Philip. i. 21.

Thirdly, Every thing in nature is against believing in Jesus Christ. What beauty can the blind mind discern in a crucified Saviour, for which he is to be desired? How can the will, naturally impotent, yea and averse to good, make choice of him? Well may the soul then say to him in the day of the spiritual siege, as the Jebusites said to David in another case, " Except thou take away the blind and the lame, " thou shalt not come in hither," 2 Sam. v. 6. The way of nature is to go into one's self for all; according

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ing to the fundamental maxim of unſanctified morality, 'That a man ſhould truſt in himſelf;' which, according to the doctrine of faith, is mere fooliſhneſs: for ſo it is determined, Prov. xviii. 26. "He "that truſteth in his own heart is a fool." Now faith is the ſoul's going out of itſelf for all: and this, nature, on the other hand, determines to be fooliſhneſs, 1 Cor. i. 18, 23. Wherefore there is need of "the working of mighty power," to cauſe ſinners "to believe," Eph. i. 19. Iſa. liii. 1. We ſee the promiſes of welcome to ſinners, in the goſpel-covenant, are ample, large and free, clogged with no conditions, Iſa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. If they cannot believe his bare word, he has given them his oath upon it. Ezek. xxxiii. 11.; and, for their greater aſſurance, he has appended ſeals to his ſworn covenant, namely, the holy ſacraments: ſo that no more could be demanded of the moſt faithleſs perſon in the world, to make us believe him, than the Lord hath condeſcended to give us, to make us believe himſelf. This plainly ſpeaks nature to be againſt believing, and theſe who flee to Chriſt for a refuge, to have need of "ſtrong conſolation," (Heb. vi. 18.) to balance their ſtrong doubts, and propenſity to unbelief. Farther, alſo it may be obſerved, how, in the word ſent to a ſecure, graceleſs generation, their objections are anſwered aforehand; and words of grace are heaped one upon another, as ye may read, Iſa. lv. 7, 8, 9. Joel ii. 13. Why? Becauſe the Lord knows, that when theſe ſecure ſinners are thoroughly awakened, doubts, fears, and carnal reaſonings againſt believing, will be going within their breaſts, as thick as duſt in a houſe, raiſed by ſweeping a dry floor.

Laſtly, Corrupt nature is bent towards the way of the law, or covenant of works; and every natural man, ſo far as he ſets himſelf to ſeek after ſalvation, is engaged in that way; and will not quit it, till beat from it by a divine power. Now the way of ſalvation by works, and that of free grace in Jeſus Chriſt,

are inconſiſtent, Rom. xi. 6. "And if by grace, "then it is no more of works; otherwiſe grace is no "more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no "more grace; otherwiſe work is no more work," Gal. iii. 12. "And the law is not of FAITH; but "the man that DOTH them ſhall live in them." Wherefore, if the will of man naturally incline to the way of ſalvation by the law, it lies croſs to the goſpel-contrivance. And that ſuch is the natural bent of our hearts, will appear if theſe following things be conſidered.

1. The law was Adam's covenant; and he knew no other, as he was the head and repreſentative of all mankind, that were brought into it with him, and left under it by him, though without ſtrength to perform the condition thereof. Hence this covenant is ingrained in our nature; and though we have loſt our father's ſtrength, yet we ſtill incline to the way he was ſet upon, as our head and repreſentative, in that covenant; that is by doing, to live. This is our natural religion, and the principle which men naturally take for granted, Matth. xix. 16. "What good "thing ſhall I do that I may have eternal life?"

2. Conſider the oppoſition that has always been made in the world, againſt the doctrine of free grace in Jeſus Chriſt, by men ſetting up for the way of works; thereby diſcovering the natural tendency of the heart. It is manifeſt, that the great deſign of the goſpel-contrivance is to exalt the free grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. iv. 16.. "Therefore it is of "faith, that it might be by grace." See Eph. i. 6. and chap. ii. 7, 9. All goſpel-truths centre in Chriſt: So that to learn the truth, is to learn Chriſt, Eph. iv. 20. and to be truly taught it, is to be taught us "the "truth as it is in Jeſus," verſe 21. All diſpenſations of grace and favour from heaven, whether to nations or particular perſons, have ſtill had ſomething about them proclaiming a freedom of grace; as in the very firſt ſeparation made by the divine favour,

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Cain the elder brother is rejected, and Abel the younger accepted. This ſhines through the whole hiſtory of the Bible: But as true it is, this has been the point principally oppoſed by corrupt nature. One may well ſay, that of all errors in religion, ſince Chriſt, the ſeed of the woman, was preached, this of works, in oppoſition to free grace in him, was the firſt that lived; and, it is likely, will be the laſt that dies. There have been vaſt numbers of errors, which ſprung up, one after another; whereof, at length, the world became aſhamed and weary, ſo that they died out. But this has continued, from Cain, the firſt author of this hereſy, unto this day; and never wanted ſome that clave to it, even in the times of greateſt light. I do not, without ground, call Cain the author of it; when Abel brought a ſacrifice of atonement, a "bloody" offering of "the firſtlings of his flock," (like the publican "ſmiting on his breaſt," and ſaying, "God be merciful to me a ſinner") advanced with his thank-offering "of the fruit of the ground," (Gen. iv. 3, 4.) like the proud Phariſee, with his "God I thank thee." For what was the cauſe of Cain's wrath, and of his murdering of Abel? was it not that he was not accepted of God for his work? Gen. iv. 4, 5. "And wherefore ſlew he him? Be-"cauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's "righteous," (1 John iii. 12.) that is, done in faith, and accepted, when his were done without faith, and therefore rejected, as the apoſtle teacheth, Heb. xi. 4. And ſo he wrote his indignation againſt juſtification and acceptance with God through faith, in oppoſition to works, in the blood of his brother, to convey it down to poſterity. And, ſince that time, the unbloody ſacrifice has often ſwimmed in the blood of thoſe that rejected it. The promiſe made to Abraham, of the ſeed in which all nations ſhould be bleſſed, was ſo overclouded among his poſterity in Egypt, that the generality of them ſaw no need of that way of obtaining the bleſſing, till God himſelf confuted their error

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by a fiery law from mount Sinai, which "was added "because of transgressions, till the seed shall come," Gal. iii. 19. I need not insist to tell you how Moses and the prophets had still much ado, to lead the people off the conceit of their own righteousness. The 9th chapter of Deuteronomy is entirely spent on that purpose. They were very gross in that point in our Saviour's time: In the time of the apostles, when the doctrine of free grace was most clearly preached, that error lifted up its head in face of clearest light: witness the epistles to the Romans and Galatians. And since that time it has not been wanting; Popery being the common sink of former heresies, and this the heart and life of that delusion. And, finally, it may be observed, that always as the church declined from her purity otherwise, the doctrine of free grace was obscured proportionably.

3. Such is the natural propensity of man's heart to the way of the law in opposition to Christ; that, as the tainted vessel turns the taste of the purest liquor put into it, so the natural man turns the very gospel into a law; and transforms the covenant of grace into a covenant of work. The ceremonial law was to the Jews a real gospel; which held blood, death, and translation of guilt before their eyes continually, as the only way of salvation: Yet their very table (i. e. their altar, with the several ordinances pertaining thereto, Mal. i. 12.) was "a snare unto them," Rom. ii. 9. while they used it to make up the defects in their obedience to the moral law; and clave to it so, as to reject him, whom the altar and sacrifices pointed them to, as the substance of all; even as Hagar, whose it was only to serve, was, by their father, brought into her mistress's bed; not without a mystery in the purpose of God. "For these are the two co-"venants." Gal. iv. 24. Thus is the doctrine of the gospel corrupted by Papists, and other enemies to the doctrine of free grace. And indeed, however natural mens heads may be set right in this point; as surely

ſurely as they are out of Chriſt, their faith, repentance, and obedience, (ſuch as they are) are placed by them in the room of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; and ſo truſted to, as if by theſe they fulfilled a new law.

4. Great is the difficulty in Adam's ſons' parting with the law as a covenant of works. None part with it in that reſpect, but theſe whom the power of the ſpirit of grace ſeparates from it. The law is our firſt huſband, and gets every one's virgin love. When Chriſt comes to the ſoul, he finds it "married to the "law:" So as it neither can nor will be "married "to another," till it be obliged to part with the firſt huſband, as the apoſtle teacheth, Rom. vii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Now, that ye may ſee what ſort of a parting this is, conſider,

(1.) It is a death, Rom. vii. 4. Gal. ii. 19. Intreaties will not prevail with the ſoul here; it ſaith to the firſt huſband, as Ruth to Naomi, "The Lord "do ſo to me, and more alſo, if ought but death "part thee and me." And here ſinners are true to their word; they die to the law, ere they be married to Chriſt. Death is hard to every body: But what difficulty, do ye imagine, muſt a loving wife, on her death-bed, find in parting with her huſband, the huſband of her youth, and with the dear children ſhe has brought forth to him? The law is that huſband; all the duties performed by the natural man are theſe children. What a ſtruggle, as for life, will be in the heart, ere they be got parted? I may have occaſion to touch upon this afterwards: In the mean time, take the apoſtle's ſhort, but pithy deſcription of it, Rom. x. 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteouſ"neſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righ"teouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves to the "righteouſneſs of God." They go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, like an eager diſputant in ſchools, ſeeking to eſtabliſh the point in queſtion; or, like a tormentor, extorting a confeſſion from one upon

upon the rack. They go about to eſtabliſh it, to make it ſtand: Their righteouſneſs is like a houſe built upon the ſand; it cannot ſtand, but they will have it to ſtand: It falls, they ſet it up again; but ſtill it tumbles down on them; yet they ceaſe not to go about to make it ſtand. But wherefore all this pains about a tottering righteouſneſs? Becauſe, ſuch as it is, it is their own. What ails them at Chriſt's righteouſneſs? Why, that would make them free grace's debtors for all; and that is what the proud heart by no means can ſubmit to. Here lies the ſtreſs of the matter, Pſal. x. 4. "The wicked, through the pride "of his countenance, will not ſeek," (to read it without the ſupplement); that in other terms, He cannot dig, and to beg he is aſhamed. Such is the ſtruggle ere the ſoul die to the law. But what ſpeaks yet more of this woful diſpoſition of the heart, nature oft-times gets the maſtery of the diſeaſe; inſomuch that the ſoul which was like to have "died to the law," while convictions were ſharp and piercing, fatally recovers of the happy and promiſing ſickneſs: and (what is very natural), cleaves more cloſely than ever to the law, even as a wife, brought back from the gates of death, would cleave to her huſband. This is the iſſue of the exerciſe of many about their ſoul's caſe: They are indeed brought to follow duties more cloſely; but they are as far from Chriſt as ever, if not farther.

(2.) It is a violent death, Rom. vii. 4. "Ye are "become dead to the law," being killed, ſlain, or put to death, as the word bears. The law itſelf has a great hand in this; the huſband gives the wound, Gal. ii. 19. "I through the law am dead to the law." The ſoul that dies this death, is like a loving wife matched with a rigorous huſband: She does what ſhe can to pleaſe him, yet he is never pleaſed; but toſſeth, haraſſeth, and beats her, till ſhe breaks her heart, and death ſets her free, as will afterwards more fully appear. Thus it is made evident, that

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mens hearts are naturally bent to the way of the law, and lie crofs to the golpel contrivance: And the fecond article of the charge, againſt you that are unregenerate, is verified, namely, that ye are "enemies "to the Son of God."

(3.) Ye are enemies to the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of holineſs: the natural man is unholy, and loves to be ſo, and therefore "reſiſts the Holy "Ghoſt," Acts vii. 51. The work of the Spirit is to "convince the world of ſin, righteouſneſs, and "judgment," John xvii. 8. But O, how do men ſtrive to ward off theſe convictions, as ever they would ward off a blow, threatening the loſs of a right eye, or a right hand! If the Spirit of the Lord dart them in, ſo as they cannot evite them, the heart ſays, in effect, as Ahab to Elijah, whom he both hated and feared, "Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy!" And indeed they treat him as an enemy, doing their utmoſt to ſtifle convictions, and to murder theſe harbingers that come to prepare the Lord's way into the ſoul. Some fill their hands with buſineſs, to put their convictions out of their heads, as Cain, who fell a-building of a city: Some put them off with delays and fair promiſes, as Felix did: Some will ſport them away in company, and ſome ſleep them away. The holy Spirit is the Spirit of ſanctification, whoſe work it is to ſubdue luſt, and burn up corruption: How then can the natural man, whoſe luſts are to him as his limbs, yea, as his life, fail of being an enemy to him?

Laſtly, Ye are enemies to the law of God. Tho' the natural man "deſires to be under the law," as a covenant of works, chuſing that way of ſalvation in oppoſition to the "myſtery of Chriſt;" yet as it is a rule of life, requiring univerſal holineſs, and diſcharging all manner of impurity, he is an enemy to it; "is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can "be," Rom. viii. 7. 1. For (1.) There is no unrenewed man, who is not wedded to ſome one luſt or

other, which his heart can by no means part with. Now that he cannot bring up his inclinations to the holy law, he would fain have the law brought down to his inclinations: A plain evidence of the enmity of the heart againſt it. And therefore, "to delight in "the law of God after the inward man," is propoſed in the word as a mark of a gracious ſoul, Rom. vii. 22. Pſal. i. 2. It is from this natural enmity of the heart againſt the law, that all the Phariſaical gloſſes upon it have ariſen; whereby the commandment, which is in itſelf exceeding broad, has been made very narrow, to the intent it might be the more agreeable to the natural diſpoſition of the heart. (2.) The law laid home to the natural conſcience, in its ſpirituality, irritates corruption. The nearer it comes, nature riſeth the more againſt it. In that caſe it is as oil to the fire, which, inſtead of quenching it, makes it flame the more: "When the commandment came, "ſin revived," ſays the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 9. What reaſon can be aſſigned for this, but the natural enmity of the heart againſt the holy law? Unmortified corruption, the more it is oppoſed, the more it rageth. Let us conclude then that the unregenerate are heart enemies to God, his Son, his Spirit, and his law; that there is a natural contrariety, oppoſition, and enmity in the will of man to God himſelf and his holy will.

Fifthly, There is in the will of man contumacy againſt the Lord. Man's will is naturally wilful in an evil courſe; he will have his will though it ſhould ruin him: It is with him as with the leviathan, Job xli. 29. "Darts are counted as ſtubble: He laugheth "at the ſhaking of a ſpear." The Lord calls to him by his word, ſays to him, (as Paul to the jailor, when he was about to kill himſelf), "Do thyſelf no harm;" ſinners, "why will ye die?" Ezek. xviii. 31. But they will not hearken, "Every one turneth to his "courſe, as the horſe ruſheth into the battle," Jer. viii. 6. We have a promiſe of life, in form of a command,

command, Prov. iv. 4. "Keep my commandments "and live," it ſpeaks impenitent ſinners to be ſelf-deſtroyers, wilful ſelf-murderers. They tranſgreſs the command of living, as if one's ſervant ſhould wilfully ſtarve himſelf to death, or greedily drink up a cup of poiſon, which his maſter commands him to forbear: Even ſo do they; they will not live, they will die, Prov. viii. 36. "All they that hate me, "love death." O what heart is this! It is "a ſtony "heart," Ezek. xxxvi. 26. hard and inflexible, as a ſtone: Mercies melt it not, judgments break it not; yet it will break, ere it bow. It is an inſenſible heart: though there be upon the ſinner a weight of ſin, which makes the earth to ſtagger; although there is a weight of wrath on him, which makes the devils to tremble, yet he goes lightly under the burden; he feels not the weight more than a ſtone, till the Spirit of the Lord quicken him ſo far as to feel it.

Laſtly, The unrenewed will is wholly perverſe, in reference to man's chief and higheſt end. The natural man's chief end is not his God, but his ſelf. Man is a mere relative, dependent, borrowed being: He has no being nor goodneſs originally from himſelf; but all he hath is from God, as the firſt cauſe and ſpring of all perfection, natural or moral: Dependency is woven into his very nature; ſo that if God ſhould totally withdraw from him, he would dwindle into a mere nothing. Seeing then whatever man is, he is of him; ſurely in whatever he is, he ſhould be to him: As the waters which came from the ſea do of courſe return thither again. And thus man was created, directly looking to God as his chief end: But falling into ſin, he fell off from God, and turned into himſelf; and like a traitor uſurping the throne, he gathers in the rents of the crown to himſelf. Now, this infers a total apoſtacy, and univerſal corruption in man; for where the chief and laſt end is changed, there can be no goodneſs there. This is the caſe with all men in their natural ſtate, Pſal. xiv. 2, 3.

" The Lord looked down—to ſee if there were any " that did—ſeek God. They are all gone aſide," to wit, from God; they ſeek not God but themſelves. And though many fair ſhreds of morality are to be found amongſt them, yet " there is none that doth " good, no not one;" for though ſome of them run well, they are ſtill off the way; they never aim at the right mark. They are " lovers of their ownſelves," (2 Tim. iii. 2.) " more than God," verſe 4. Wherefore Jeſus Chriſt, having come into the world to bring men back to God again, came to bring them out of themſelves, in the firſt place, Matth. xvi. 24. The godly groan under the remains of this woful diſpoſition of the heart; they acknowledge it, and ſet themſelves againſt it, in its ſubtile and dangerous inſinuations. The unregenerate, though moſt inſenſible of it, are under the power thereof; and whitherſoever they turn themſelves, they cannot move without the circle of ſelf: they ſeek themſelves, they act for themſelves: their natural, civil, and religious actions, from whatever ſprings they come, do all run into, and meet in the dead ſea of ſelf.

Moſt men are ſo far from making God their chief end in their natural and civil actions, that, in theſe matters, God is not in all their thoughts. Their eating and drinking, and ſuch-like natural actions, are for themſelves; their own pleaſure or neceſſity, without any higher end, Zech. vii. 6. " Did ye not " eat for yourſelves?" They have no eye to the glory of God in theſe things, as they ought to have, 1 Cor. x. 31. They do not eat and drink to keep up their bodies for the Lord's ſervice; they do them not, becauſe God has ſaid, " Thou ſhalt not kill;" neither do thoſe drops of ſweetneſs God has put into the creature, raiſe up their ſouls towards that ocean of delights that are in the Creator; though they are indeed a ſign hung out at heaven's door, to tell men of the fulneſs of goodneſs that is in God himſelf, Acts xiv. 17. But it is ſelf, and not God, that is ſought

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in them, by natural men. And what are the unrenewed man's civil actions, ſuch as buying, ſelling, working, &c. but fruit to himſelf? Hoſ. x. 1. "So marrying and giving in marriage," are reckoned amongſt the ſins of the old world, (Matth. xxiv. 38.): For they had no eye to God therein, to pleaſe him; but all they had in view, was to pleaſe themſelves, Gen. vi. 3. Finally, ſelf is natural mens higheſt end, in their religious actions. They perform duties for a name, (Matth. vi. 1, 2.), or ſome other worldly intereſt, John vi. 26. Or if they be more refined, it is their peace, and at moſt their ſalvation from hell and wrath, or their own eternal happineſs, that is their chief and higheſt end, Matth. xix. 16,—22. Their eyes are held, that they ſee not the glory of God. They ſeek God indeed, but not for himſelf, but for themſelves. They ſeek him not at all, but for their own welfare: ſo their whole life is woven into one web of practical blaſphemy; making God the means, and ſelf their end, yea, their chief end.

And thus have I given you ſome rude draughts of man's will, in his natural ſtate, drawn by ſcripture and men's own experience. Call it no more Naomi, but Marah; for bitter it is, and a root of bitterneſs. Call it no more free-will, but ſlaviſh luſt; free to evil, but free from good, till regenerating grace looſe the bands of wickedneſs. Now ſince all muſt be wrong, and nothing can be right, where the underſtanding and will are ſo corrupt; I ſhall briefly diſpatch what remains, as following of courſe, on the corruption of theſe prime faculties of the ſoul.

The corruption of the affections, the conſcience, and the memory. The body partaker of this corruption.

III. The affections are corrupted. The unrenewed man's affections are wholly diſordered and diſtempered:

ed: they are as the unruly horſe, that either will not receive, or violently runs away with the rider. So man's heart naturally is a mother of abominations, Mark vii. 21, 22. "For from within, out of the heart "of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornica- "tions, murders, thefts, covetouſneſs," &c. The natural man's affections are wretchedly miſplaced; he is a ſpiritual monſter. His heart is there, where his feet ſhould be, fixed on the earth; his heels are lifted up againſt heaven, which his heart ſhould be ſet on, Acts ix. 5. His face is towards hell, his back towards heaven; and therefore God calls him to turn. He loves what he ſhould hate, and hates what he ſhould love; joys in what he ought to mourn for, and mourns for what he ſhould rejoice in; glorieth in his ſhame, and is aſhamed of his glory; abhors what he ſhould deſire, and deſires what he ſhould abhor, Prov. ii. 13, 14, 15. They hit the point indeed, (as Caiaphas did in another caſe,) who cried out on the apoſtles, as men that "turned the world upſide down," Acts xvii. 6.; for that is the work the goſpel has to do in the world, where ſin has put all things ſo out of order, that heaven lies under, and earth a top. If the unrenewed man's affections be ſet on lawful objects, then they are either exceſſive or defective. Lawful enjoyments of the world have ſometimes too little, but moſtly too much of them; either they get not their due, or, if they do, it is meaſure preſſed down, and running over. Spiritual things have always too little of them. In a word, they are always in, or over, never right, only evil.

Now here is a threefold cord againſt heaven and holineſs, not eaſily broken: a blind man, a perverſe will, and diſorderly diſtempered affections. The mind ſwelled with ſelf-conceit ſays, The man ſhould not ſtoop; the will, oppoſite to the will of God, ſays, He will not; and the corrupt affections, riſing againſt the Lord, in defence of the corrupt will, ſay, He ſhall not. Thus the poor creature ſtands out againſt God

God and goodneſs; till a day of power come, in which he is made a new creature.

IV. The conſcience is corrupt and defiled, Tit. i. 15. It is an evil eye, that fills one's converſation with much darkneſs and confuſion, being naturally unable to do its office: till the Lord, by letting in a new light to the ſoul, awaken the conſcience, it remains ſleepy and unactive. Conſcience can never do its work, but according to the light it hath to work by. Wherefore, ſeeing the natural man cannot ſpiritually decern ſpiritual things, (1 Cor. ii. 14) the conſcience naturally is quite uſeleſs in that point; being caſt into ſuch a deep ſleep, that nothing but a ſaving illumination from the Lord can ſet it on work in that matter. The light of the natural conſcience in good and evil, ſin and duty, is very defective: therefore, though it may check for groſſer ſins, yet as to the more ſubtile workings of ſin, it cannot check for them, becauſe it decerns them not. Thus conſcience will fly in the face of many, if at any time they be drunk, ſwear, neglect prayer, or be guilty of any groſs ſin; who otherwiſe have a profound peace, though they live in the ſin of unbelief, are ſtrangers to ſpiritual worſhip, and the life of faith. And natural light being but faint and languiſhing in many things which it doth reach, conſcience in that caſe ſhoots like a ſtitch in one's ſide, which quickly goes off: its incitements to duty, and checks for and ſtruggles againſt ſin, are very remiſs, which the natural man eaſily gets over. But becauſe there is a falſe light in the dark mind, the natural conſcience, following the ſame, will call "evil good, and good evil," Iſa. v. 20. And ſo it is often found like a blind and furious horſe, which doth violently run down himſelf, his rider, and all that doth come in his way, John xvi. 2. "Whoſo-"ever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſer-"vice." When the natural conſcience is awakened by the ſpirit of conviction, it will indeed rage and roar, and put the whole man in a dreadful conſter-

nation;

nation; awfully ſummon all the powers of the ſoul to help in a ſtrait; make the ſtiff heart to tremble, and the knees to bow; ſet the eyes a-weeping, the tongue a-confeſſing; and oblige the man to caſt out the goods into the ſea, which it apprehends are like to ſink the ſhip of the ſoul, though the heart ſtill goes after them. But yet it is an evil conſcience, which natively leads to deſpair, and will do it effectually, as in Judas's caſe; unleſs either luſts prevail over it, to lull it aſleep, as in the caſe of Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. or the blood of Chriſt prevail over it, ſprinkling and purging it from dead works, as in the caſe of all true converts, Heb. ix. 14. and x. 22.

Laſtly, Even the memory bears evident marks of corruption. What is good and worthy to be minded as it makes but ſlender impreſſion, ſo that impreſſion eaſily wears off; the memory, as a leaking veſſel, lets it ſlip, Heb. ii. 1. As a ſieve that is full, when in the water, lets all go when it is taken out; ſo is the memory with reſpect to ſpiritual things. But how does it retain what ought to be forgotten? Naughty things ſo bear in themſelves upon it, that though men would fain have them out of mind, yet they ſtick there like glue. However forgetful men be in other things, it is hard to forget an injury. So the memory often furniſhes new fuel to old luſts; makes men in old age re-act the ſins of their youth, while it preſents them again to the mind with delight, which thereupon licks up the former vomit. And thus it is like the riddle, that lets through the pure grain, and keeps the refuſe. Thus far of the "corruption of the "ſoul."

The body itſelf alſo is partaker of this corruption and defilement, ſo far as it is capable thereof. Wherefore the ſcripture calls it "ſinful fleſh," Rom. viii. 3. We may take this up in two things, (1.) The natural temper, or rather diſtemper of the bodies of Adam's children, as it is an effect of original ſin, ſo it hath a natural tendency to ſin, incites to ſin, leads the ſoul into

into ſnares, yea is itſelf a ſnare to the ſoul. The body is a furious beaſt, of ſuch metal, that if it be not beat down, "kept under, and brought into ſub- "jection," it will caſt the ſoul into much ſin and miſery, 1 Cor. ix. 27. There is a vileneſs in the body, (Phil. iii. 21.), which, as to the ſaints, will never be removed, until it be melted down in a grave, and caſt into a new mould at the reſurrection, to come forth a ſpiritual body; and will never be carried off from the bodies of thoſe who are not partakers of the reſurrection to life. (2.) It ſerves the ſoul in many ſins. Its members are inſtruments or weapons of unrighteouſneſs, whereby men fight againſt God, Rom. vi. 13. The eyes and ears are open doors, by which impure motions and ſinful deſires enter the ſoul: The tongue is "a world of iniquity," James iii. 6. "an "unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon," ver. 8. by it the impure heart vents a great deal of its filthineſs. "The throat is an open ſepulchre," Rom. iii. 13. The feet runs the devil's errands, ver. 15. The belly is made a god, Phil. iii. 19. not only by drunkards and riotous livers, but by every natural man, Zech. vii. 6. So the body naturally is an agent for the devil, and a magazine of armour againſt the Lord.

To conclude, man by nature is wholly corrupted: "From the ſole of the foot, even unto the head, there "is no ſoundneſs in him." And, as in a dunghill, every part contributes to the corruption of the whole; ſo the natural man, while in that ſtate, grows ſtill worſe and worſe: The ſoul is made worſe by the body, and the body by the ſoul; and every faculty of the ſoul ſerves to corrupt another more and more. Thus much for the ſecond general head.

How man's nature was corrupted.

THIRDLY, I ſhall ſhew how man's nature comes to be thus corrupted. The Heathens perceived that man's nature was corrupted; but how ſin had enter-

ed, they could not tell. But the ſcripture is very plain in that point, Rom. v. 12. "By one man ſin "entered into the world," ver. 19. "By one man's "diſobedience, many were made ſinners." Adam's ſin corrupted man's nature, and leavened the whole lump of mankind. We putrified in Adam, as our root. The root was poiſoned, and ſo the branches were envenomed: The vine turned the vine of Sodom, and ſo the grapes became grapes of gall. Adam, by his ſin, became not only guilty, but corrupt; and ſo tranſmits guilt and corruption to his poſterity, Gen. v. 3. Job xiv. 4. By his ſin he ſtript himſelf of his original righteouſneſs, and corrupted himſelf. We were in him repreſentatively, being repreſented by him as our moral head, in the covenant of works: We were in him ſeminally, as our natural head: hence we fell in him, and by his "diſobedience were made ſinners; "as Levi, in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes," Heb. vii. 9, 10. His firſt ſin is imputed to us; therefore juſtly are we left under the want of his original righteouſneſs, which being given to him as a common perſon, he caſt off by his ſin: And this is neceſſarily followed, in him and us, by the corruption of the whole nature; righteouſneſs and corruption being two contraries, one of which muſt needs always be in man, as a ſubject capable thereof. And Adam our common father being corrupt, we are ſo too; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an un-"clean?"

Although it is ſufficient to evince the righteouſneſs of this diſpenſation, that it was from the Lord, who doth all things well; yet, to ſilence the murmurings of proud nature, let theſe few things farther be conſidered. (1.) In the covenant wherein Adam repreſented us, eternal happineſs was promiſed to him and his poſterity, upon condition of his, that is, Adam's perfect obedience, as the repreſentative for all mankind: Whereas, if there had been no covenant, they could not have pleaded eternal life upon their moſt

perfect

perfect obedience, but might have been, after all, reduced to nothing; notwithstanding, by natural justice, they would have been liable to God's eternal wrath, in case of sin. Who in that case would not have consented to that representation? (2.) Adam had a power to stand given him, being made upright. He was as capable to stand for himself, and all his posterity, as any after him could be for themselves. This trial of mankind in their head, would soon have been over, and the crown won to them all, had he stood; whereas, had his posterity been independent on him, and every one left to act for himself, the trial would have been continually a-carrying on, as men came into the world. (3.) He "had natural affection" the strongest to engage him, being our common father. (4.) His own stock was in the ship, his all lay at stake, as well as ours. He had no separate interest from ours; but if he forgot ours, he behoved to have forgot his own. (5.) If he had stood, we should have had the light of his mind, the righteousness of his will, and holiness of his affections, with entire purity transmitted unto us, we could not have fallen; the crown of glory, by his obedience, would have been for ever secured to him and his. This is evident from the nature of a federal representation: And no reason can be given why, seeing we are lost by Adam's sin, we should not have been saved by his obedience. On the other hand it is reasonable, that he falling, we should with him bear the loss. Lastly, Such as quarrel this dispensation, must renounce their part in Christ; for we are no otherwise made sinners by Adam, than we are made righteous by Christ, from whom we have both imputed and inherent righteousness. We no more made choice of the second Adam for our head and representative in the second covenant, than we did of the first Adam in the first covenant.

Let none wonder that such an horrible change could be brought on, by one sin of our first parents;

for thereby they turned away from God, as their chief end, which neceſſarily infers an univerſal depravation. Their ſin was a complication of evils, a total apoſtacy from God, a violation of the whole law: By it they broke all the ten commands at once. (1.) They choſe new gods. They made their belly their god, by their ſenſuality; ſelf their god, by their ambition; yea, and the devil their god, by believing him, and diſbelieving their Maker. (2.) Though they received, yet they obſerved not that ordinance of God, about the forbidden fruit. They contemned that ordinance ſo plainly enjoined them, and would needs carve out to themſelves, how to ſerve the Lord. (3.) They "took the name of the Lord their God in "vain;" deſpiſing his attributes, his juſtice, truth, power, &c. They groſsly profaned that ſacramental tree; abuſed his word, by not giving credit to it; abuſed that creature of his, which they ſhould not have touched; and violently miſconſtrued his providence, as if God, by forbidding them that tree, had been ſtanding in the way of their happineſs; and therefore he ſuffered them not to eſcape his righteous judgment. (4.) They "remembered not the Sabbath to "keep it holy," but put themſelves out of a condition to ſerve God aright on his own day; neither kept they that ſtate of holy reſt wherein God had put them. (5.) They caſt off their relative duties: Eve forgets herſelf, and acts without advice of her huſband, to the ruin of both; Adam, inſtead of admoniſhing her to repent, yields to the temptation, and confirms her in her wickedneſs. They forgot all duty to their poſterity. They honoured not their father in heaven; and therefore their days were not long in the land which the Lord their God gave them. (6.) They ruined themſelves, and all their poſterity. (7.) Gave up themſelves to luxury and ſenſuality. (8.) Took away what was not their own againſt the expreſs will of the great Owner. (9.) They bore falſe witneſs, and lyed againſt the Lord, before angels, devils

vils, and one another; in effect giving out, that they were hardly dealt by, and that Heaven grudged their happineſs. (10.) They were diſcontent with their lot, and coveted an evil covetouſneſs to their houſe; which ruined both them and theirs. Thus was the image of God on man defaced all at once.

The doctrine of the corruption of nature applied.

USE I. For information. Is man's nature wholly corrupted? Then,

1. No wonder the grave open its devouring mouth for us, as ſoon as the womb hath caſt us forth: and that the cradle be turned into a coffin, to receive the corrupt lump, for we are all, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, dead-born; yea, and filthy, (Pſal. xiv. 3.) noiſome, rank, and ſtinking as a corrupt thing, as the word imports. Let us not complain of the miſeries we are expoſed to at our entrance, nor of the continuance of them while we are in the world. Here is the venom that has poiſoned all the ſprings of earthly enjoyments we have to drink of. It is the corruption of man's nature, that brings forth all the miſeries of human life in churches, ſtates, families, in mens ſouls and bodies.

2. Behold here, as in a glaſs, the ſpring of all the wickedneſs, profanity, and formality in the world; the ſource of all the diſorders in thy own heart and life. Every thing acts like itſelf, agreeable to its own nature; and ſo corrupt man acts corruptly. You need not wonder at the ſinfulneſs of your own heart and life, nor at the ſinfulneſs and perverſeneſs of others? if a man be crooked, he cannot but halt; and if the clock be ſet wrong, how can it point the hour right?

3. See here, why ſin is ſo pleaſant, and religion ſuch a burden to carnal ſpirits: ſin is natural, holineſs not ſo. Oxen cannot feed in the ſea, nor fiſhes in the fruitful fields. A ſwine brought into a palace would

get

get away again to wallow in the mire; and corrupt nature tends ever to impurity.

4. Learn from this the nature and neceſſity of regeneration. Firſt, This diſcovers the nature of regeneration, in theſe two things: (1.) It is not a partial, but a total change, though imperfect in this life. Thy whole nature is corrupted, and therefore the cure muſt go through every part. Regeneration makes not only a new head for knowledge, but a new heart, and new affections for holineſs. "All things become "new," 2 Cor. v. 17. If one having received many wounds ſhould be cured of them all, ſave one only; he might bleed to death, by that one, as well as a thouſand: ſo if the change go not through the whole man, it is naught. (2.) It is not a change made by human induſtry, but by the mighty power of the Spirit of God. A man muſt be "born of the Spirit," John iii. 5. Accidental diſeaſes may be cured by men: but theſe which are natural, not without a miracle, John ix. 32. The change brought upon men by good education, or forced upon them by a natural conſcience, though it may paſs among men for a ſaving change, it is not ſo; for our nature is corrupt, and none but the God of nature can change it. Though a gardener ingrafting a pear-branch into an apple-tree, may make the apple-tree bear pears; yet the art of man cannot change the nature of the apple-tree: ſo one may pin a new life to his old heart, but he can never change the heart. Secondly, This alſo ſhews the neceſſity of regeneration. It is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to ſalvation, John iii. 3. "Except "a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of "God." No unclean thing can enter the new Jeruſalem: but thou art wholly unclean, while in thy natural ſtate. If every member of thy body were diſjointed, each joint behoved to be looſed, ere the members, could be ſet right again. This is the caſe of thy ſoul, as thou haſt heard: and therefore thou muſt be born again; elſe thou ſhalt never ſee heaven, unleſs

unleſs it be afar off, as the rich man in hell did. Deceive not thyſelf: no mercy of God, no blood of Chriſt will bring thee to heaven in thy unregenerate ſtate: For God will never open a fountain of mercy to waſh away his own holineſs and truth; nor did Chriſt ſhed his precious blood, to blot out the truths of God, or to overturn God's meaſures about the ſalvation of ſinners. Heaven! what would ye do there, that are not born again? ye that are no ways fitted for Chriſt the head? that would be a ſtrange ſight! a holy head, and members wholly corrupt! a head full of treaſures of grace, members wherein nothing but treaſures of wickedneſs! a head obedient to the death, and heels kicking againſt heaven! Ye are no ways adapted to the ſociety above, more than beaſts for converſe with men. Thou art a hater of true holineſs; and at the firſt ſight of a ſaint there, wouldſt cry out, "Haſt "thou found me, O mine enemy!" Nay, the unrenewed man, if it were poſſible he could go to heaven in that ſtate, he would no otherwiſe go to it, than now he comes to the duties of holineſs, that is, leaving his heart behind him.

USE II. For lamentation. Well may we lament thy caſe, O natural man! for it is the ſaddeſt caſe one can be in out of hell. It is time to lament for thee; for thou art dead already, dead while thou liveſt; thou carrieſt about with thee a dead ſoul in a living body: and becauſe thou art dead, thou canſt not lament thy own caſe. Thou are lothſome in the ſight of God; for thou art altogether corrupt: Thou haſt no good in thee. Thy ſoul is a maſs of darkneſs, rebellion, and vileneſs, before the Lord. Thou thinkeſt, perhaps, that thou haſt a good heart to God, good inclinations, and good deſires: but God knows there is nothing good in thee, but "every imagination of "thine heart is only evil." Thou canſt do no good; thou canſt do nothing but ſin. For,

Firſt, Thou art "the ſervant of ſin," Rom. vi. 17. and therefore "free from righteouſnels," ver. 20.

Whatever

Whatever righteouſneſs be, (poor ſoul!), thou art free of it; thou doſt not, thou canſt not meddle with it. Thou art under the dominion of ſin, a dominion where righteouſneſs can have no place. Thou art a child and ſervant of the devil, though thou be neither wizard nor witch; ſeeing thou art yet in the ſtate of nature, John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the "devil." And, to prevent any miſtake, conſider, that ſin and Satan have two ſorts of ſervants: (1.) There are ſome employed as it were in coarſer work: thoſe bear the devil's mark in their foreheads, having no form of godlineſs; but are profane, groſsly ignorant, mere moraliſts, not ſo much as performing the external duties of religion, but living to the view of the world, as ſons of earth, only, "minding earthly "things," Phil. iii. 19. (2.) There are ſome employed in a more refined ſort of ſervice to ſin, who carry the devil's mark in their right hand, which they can and do hide from the view of the world. Theſe are cloſe hypocrites, who ſacrifice as much to the corrupt mind, as the other to the fleſh, Eph. ii. 3. Theſe are ruined by a more undiſcernible trade of ſin: pride, unbelief, ſelf-ſeeking, and the like, ſwarm in, and prey upon their corrupted, wholly corrupted ſouls. Both are ſervants of the ſame houſe; the latter as far as the former from righteouſneſs.

Secondly, How is it poſſible thou ſhouldſt be able to do any good, thou whoſe nature is wholly corrupt? Can fruit grow where there is no root? or can there be an effect without a cauſe? "Can the fig-tree bear "olive-berries? either a vine, figs?" If thy nature be wholly corrupt, as indeed it is, all thou doſt is certainly ſo too; for no effect can exceed the virtue of its cauſe. "Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?" Matth. vii. 18.

Ah! what a miſerable ſpectacle is he that can do nothing but ſin? Thou art the man, whoſoever thou art, that art yet in thy natural ſtate. Hear, O ſinner, what is thy caſe.

Firſt,

First, Innumerable ſins compaſs thee about: Mountains of guilt are lying upon thee; floods of impurities overwhelm thee; living luſts of all ſorts roll up and down in the dead ſea of thy ſoul, where no good can breathe, becauſe of the corruption there. Thy lips are unclean; the opening of thy mouth is as the opening of an unripe grave full of ſtench and rottenneſs, Rom. iii. 13. "Their throat is an open ſepulchre." Thy natural actions are ſin; for "when ye did eat, "and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourſelves, "and drink for yourſelves?" Zech. vii. 6. Thy civil actions are ſin, Prov. xxi. 4. "The plowing of "the wicked is ſin." Thy religious actions are ſin, Prov. xv. 8. "The ſacrifice of the wicked is an a-"bomination to the Lord." The thoughts and imaginations of thy heart are only evil. A deed may be ſoon done, a word ſoon ſpoken, a thought ſwiftly paſſeth through the heart; but each of theſe is an *item* in thy accounts. O ſad reckoning! as many thoughts, words, actions, as many ſins. The longer thou liveſt, thy accounts ſwell the more. Should a tear be dropt for every ſin, thine head behoved to be waters, and thine "eyes a fountain of tears:" for nothing but ſin comes from thee. Thy heart frames nothing but "evil imaginations:" there is nothing in thy life but what is framed by thine heart: And therefore there is nothing in thy heart or life, but evil.

Secondly, All thy religion, if thou haſt any, is loſt labour, as to acceptance with God, or any ſaving effect to thyſelf. Art thou yet in thy natural ſtate? Truly then thy duties are ſins, as was juſt now hinted. Would not the beſt wine be lothſome, in a "veſſel wherein there is no pleaſure?" So is the religion of an unregenerate man. Under the law, the garment which the fleſh of the ſacrifice was carried in, though it touched other things, did not make them holy: But he that was unclean touching any thing, whether common or ſacred, made it unclean. Even ſo, thy duties cannot make thy corrupt ſoul holy,

though they in themſelves be good; but thy corrupt heart defiles them, and makes them unclean, Hag. ii. 12, 13, 14. Thou waſt wont to divide thy works into two ſorts; ſome good, ſome evil; but thou muſt count again, and put them all under one head; for God writes on them all, Only evil: This is lamentable: It will be no wonder to ſee thoſe beg in harveſt, who fold their hands, and ſleep in ſeedtime: but to be labouring with others in the ſpring, and yet have nothing to reap when the harveſt comes; is a very ſad caſe; and will be the caſe of all profeſſors living and dying in their natural ſtate.

Laſtly, Thou canſt not help thyſelf. What canſt thou do, to take away thy ſin, who art wholly corrupt? Nothing, truly, but ſin. If a natural man begin to relent, drop a tear for his ſin, and reform, preſently the corrupt heart apprehends, at leaſt, a merit of congruity: He has done much himſelf, (he thinks), and God cannot but do more for him on that account. In the mean time he does nothing but ſin: So that the congruous merit is, that the leper be put out of the camp, the dead ſoul buried out of ſight, and the corrupt lump caſt into the pit. How canſt thou think to recover thyſelf by any thing thou canſt do? Will mud and filth waſh out filthineſs? and wilt thou purge out ſin by ſinning? Job took a poſherd to ſcrape himſelf, becauſe his hands were as full of boils as his body. This is the caſe of thy corrupt ſoul: not to be recovered but by Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe "ſtrength was "dried up like a potſherd," Pſal. xxii. 15. Thou art poor indeed, extremely "miſerable and poor," Rev. iii. 17. Thou haſt no ſhelter, but "a refuge of lies;" no garment for thy ſoul, but "filthy rags:" nothing to nouriſh it, but huſks, they cannot ſatisfy. More than that, thou haſt got ſuch a bruiſe in the loins of Adam, which is not as yet cured, that thou art "without ſtrength," Rom. v. 6. unable to do, or work for thyſelf; nay, more than all this, thou canſt not

not ſo much as ſeek aright, but lieſt helpleſs, as an infant expoſed in the open field. Ezek. xvi. 5.

Uſe III. I exhort you to believe this ſad truth. Alas it is evident, it is very little believed in the world. Few are concerned to get their corrupt converſation changed; but fewer, by far, to get their nature changed. Moſt men know not what they are, nor what ſpirits they are of; they are as the eye, which, ſeeing many things, never ſees itſelf. But until ye know, every one "the plague of his own heart," there is no hope of your recovery. Why will ye not believe it? Ye have plain ſcripture-teſtimony for it; but you are loth to entertain ſuch an ill opinion of yourſelves. Alas! that is the nature of your diſeaſe, Rev. iii. "Thou—knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and "miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Lord, open their eyes to ſee it, before they die of it, and in hell lift up their eyes, and ſee what they will not ſee now.

I ſhall ſhut up this weighty point, of the corruption of man's nature, with a few words to another doctrine from the text.

Doctrine, God takes ſpecial notice of our natural corruption, or the ſin of our nature. This he teſtifies two ways: 1. By his word, as in the text, "God ſaw "—that every imagination of the thoughts of man's "heart was only evil continually." See Pſal. xiv. 2, 3. 2. By his works. God writes his particular notice of it, and diſpleaſure with it, as in many of his works, ſo eſpecially in theſe two.

(1.) In the death of the infant-children of men. Many miſeries they have been expoſed to; they were drowned in the deluge, conſumed in Sodom by fire and brimſtone; they have been ſlain with the ſword, daſhed againſt the ſtones, and are ſtill dying ordinary deaths. What is the true cauſe of this? On what ground doth a holy God thus purſue them? Is it the ſin of their parents? That may be the occaſion of the Lord's raiſing the proceſs againſt them; but it muſt

be their own ſin, that is the ground of the ſentence paſſing on them: For "the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall "die," ſaith God, Ezek. xviii. 4. Is it their own actual ſin? They have none. But as men do with toads and ſerpents, which they kill at firſt ſight, before they have done any hurt, becauſe of their venomous nature; ſo it is in this caſe.

(2.) In the birth of the elect children of God. When the Lord is about to change their nature, he makes the ſin of their nature lie heavy on their ſpirits. When he minds to let out the corruption, the lance gets full depth in their ſouls, reaching to the root of ſin, Rom. vii. 7, 8, 9. "The fleſh," or corruption of nature, is pierced, being crucified, as well as "the "affections and luſts," Gal. v. 24.

Uſe. Let us then have a ſpecial eye upon the corruption and ſin of our nature, God ſees it; O that we ſaw it too, and that ſin were "ever before us!" What avails it to notice other ſins, while this mother-ſin is not noticed? Turn your eyes inward to the ſin of your nature. It is to be feared, many have this work to begin yet; that they have ſhut the door, while the grand thief is yet in the houſe undiſcovered. This is a weighty point; and in handling of it,

I. I ſhall, for conviction, point at ſome evidences of mens overlooking the ſin of their nature, which yet the Lord takes particular notice of. (1.) Mens looking on themſelves with ſuch confidence, as if they were in no hazard of groſs ſins. Many would take it very heinouſly to get ſuch a caution, as Chriſt gave his apoſtles, Luke xxi. 34. "Take heed of ſurfeiting and "drunkenneſs." If any ſhould ſuppoſe them to break out in groſs abominations, they would be ready to ſay, Am I a dog? It would raiſe the pride of their hearts, but not their fear and trembling, becauſe they know not the corruption of their nature. (2.) Untenderneſs towards thoſe that fall. Many, in that caſe, caſt off all bowels of Chriſtian compaſſion; for they do not

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"consider themselves, lest they also be tempted," Gal. vi. 1. Mens passions are often highest against the faults of others, when sin sleeps soundly in their own breasts. Even good David, when he was at his worst, was most violent against the faults of others. While his conscience was asleep under his guilt, in the matter of Uriah; the Spirit of the Lord takes notice, that his "anger was greatly kindled against the man," in the parable, 2 Sam. xii. 5. And, on good grounds, it is thought, it was at the same time that he treated the Ammonites so cruelly, as is related, ver. 31. "Putting "them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and "under axes of iron, and making them pass through "the brick-kiln." Grace makes men zealous against sin in others, as well as in themselves: but eyes turned inward to corruption of nature, clothe them with pity and compassion; and fill them with thankfulness to the Lord, that they themselves were not persons left to be such spectacles of human frailty. (3.) There are not a few, who, if they be kept from afflictions in worldly things, and from gross outbreakings in their conversation, know not what it is to have a sad heart. If they meet with a cross, which their proud hearts cannot stoop to bear, they will be ready to say, O to be gone! but the corruption of their nature never makes them long for heaven. Lusts, scandalously breaking out at a time, will mar their peace; but the sin of their nature never makes them a heavy heart. (4.) Delaying of repentance, in hopes to set about it afterwards. Many have their own appointed time for repentance and reformation: as if they were such complete masters over their lusts, that they can allow them to gather more strength, and yet overcome them. They take up resolutions to amend, without an eye to Jesus Christ, union with him, and strength from him: a plain evidence they are strangers to themselves? and so they are left to themselves, and their flourishing resolutions wither; for as they see not the necessity, so they get

get not the benefit of the dew from heaven, to water them. (5.) Mens venturing frankly on temptations, and promiſing liberally on their own heads. They caſt themſelves fearleſsly into temptation, in confidence of their coming off fairly: but, were they ſenſible of the corruption of their nature, they would beware of entering on the devil's ground: as one girt about with bags of gun-powder, would be loath to walk where ſparks of fire are flying, leſt he ſhould be blown up. Self-jealouſing well becomes Chriſtians. "Lord, "is it I?" They that know the deceit of their bow, will not be very confident that they ſhall hit the mark. (6.) Unacquaintedneſs with heart-plagues. The knowledge of the plagues of the heart is a rare qualification. There are indeed ſome of them written in ſuch great characters, that he who runs may read them: but there are others more ſubtile, which few do diſcern. How few are there, to whom the bias of the heart to unbelief is a burden. Nay, they perceive it not. Many have had ſharp convictions of other ſins, that were never to this day convinced of their unbelief; tho' that is the ſin ſpecially aimed at in a thorough conviction, John xvi. 8, 9. "He will reprove the world of ſin,——becauſe they "believe not on me." A diſpoſition to eſtabliſh our own righteouſneſs, is a weed that naturally grows in every man's heart; but few ſweat at the plucking of it up: it lurks undiſcovered. The bias of the heart, to the way of the covenant of works, is a hidden plague of the heart to many. All the difficulty they find is, in getting up their hearts to duties: they find no difficulty in getting their hearts off them, and over them to Jeſus Chriſt. How hard is it to ſtave men off from their own righteouſneſs? Yet it is very hard to convince them of their leaning to it at all. Laſtly, Pride and ſelf-conceit. A view of the corruption of nature would be very humbling, and oblige him that has it to reckon himſelf "the chief of ſinners." Under greateſt attainments and enlargements, it would

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be ballaſt to his heart, and " hide pride from his eyes." The want of thorough humiliation, piercing to the ſin of one's nature, is the ruin of many profeſſors: for digging deep makes great difference betwixt wife and fooliſh builders, Luke vi. 48, 49.

II. I will lay before you a few things, in which ye ſhould have a ſpecial eye to the ſin of your nature. (1.) Have a ſpecial eye to it in your " application to " Jeſus Chriſt." Do you find any need of Chriſt, which ſends you to him as the Phyſician of ſouls? O forget not this diſeaſe, when ye are with the phyſician. They never yet knew well their errand to Chriſt, that went not to him for the ſin of their nature; for his blood to take away the guilt of it, and his Spirit to break the power of it. Though in the bitterneſs of your ſouls, ye ſhould lay before him a catalogue of your ſins of omiſſion and commiſſion, which might reach from earth to heaven; yet if the ſin of your nature were wanting in it, aſſure yourſelves you have forgot the beſt part of the errand a poor ſinner has to the Phyſician of ſouls. What would it have availed the people of Jericho, to have ſet before Eliſha all the veſſels in their city, full of " the water that was " naught," if they had not led him forth to the ſpring, to caſt in the ſalt there? 2 Kings ii. 19, 20, 21. The application is eaſy. (2.) Have a ſpecial eye to it in your repentance, whether initial or progreſſive; in your firſt repentance, and in the renewing of your repentance afterwards. Though a man be ſick, there is no fear of death, if the ſickneſs ſtrike not to his heart: and there is as little fear of the death of ſin, as long as the ſin of our nature is not touched. But if ye would repent indeed, let the ſtreams lead you up to the fountain; and mourn over your corrupt nature, as the cauſe of all ſin in heart, lip, and life, Pſal. li. 4, 5. " Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and " done this evil in thy ſight.—Behold I was ſhapen in " iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me." (3.) Have a ſpecial eye upon it in your mortification,

Gal.

Gal. v. 24. " And they that are Chriſt's have cruci-
" fied the fleſh." It is the root of bitterneſs that muſt be ſtruck at; which the axe of mortification muſt be laid to, elſe we labour in vain. In vain do men go about to purge the ſtreams, while they are at no pains about the muddy fountain: it is vain religion to attempt to make the life truly good, while the corruption of nature retains its ancient vigour and the power of it is not broken. Laſtly, Ye are to eye it in your daily walk. He that would walk aright, muſt have one eye upward to Jeſus Chriſt, and another inward to the corruption of his own nature. It is not enough that we look about us, we muſt alſo look within us. There the wall is weakeſt; there our greateſt enemy lies; and there are grounds for daily watching and mourning.

III. I ſhall offer ſome reaſons, why we ſhould eſpecially notice the ſin of our nature.

1. Becauſe of all ſins, it is the moſt extenſive and diffuſive. It goes through the whole man, and ſpoils all. Other ſins mar particular parts of the image of God; but this doth at once deface the whole. A diſeaſe, affecting any particular member of the body, is ill: but that which affects the whole is worſe. The corruption of nature is the poiſon of the old ſerpent, caſt into the fountain of action: and ſo infects every action, every breathing of the ſoul.

2. It is the cauſe of all particular luſts, and actual ſins, in our hearts and lives. It is the ſpawn which the great leviathan has left in the ſouls of men; from whence comes all the fry of actual ſins and abominations, Mark vii. 21. " Out of the heart of men pro-
" ceed evil thoughts, adulteries," &c. It is the bitter fountain: particular luſts are but rivulets running from it which bring forth into the life a part only, and not the whole of what is within. Now the fountain is ſtill above the ſtreams: ſo where the water is good, it is beſt in the fountain; where it is ill, it is worſt there. The corruption of nature being that

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which defiles all, itſelf muſt needs be the moſt abominable thing.

3. It is virtually all ſin! for it is the ſeed of all ſins, which want but the occaſion to ſet up their heads: being in the corruption of nature, as the effect in the virtue of its cauſe. Hence it is called "a body of "death," (Rom. vii. 24.) as conſiſting of the ſeveral members belonging to ſuch a body of ſins, (Col. ii. 11.) whoſe life lies in ſpiritual death. It is the curſed ground, fit to bring forth all manner of noxious weeds. As the whole neſt of venomous creatures muſt needs be more dreadful, than any few of them that come creeping forth; ſo the ſin of thy nature, that mother of abominations, muſt be worſe than any particular luſts that appear ſtirring in thy heart and life. Never did every ſin appear in the converſation of the vileſt wretch that ever lived; but look thou into thy corrupt nature, and there thou mayſt ſee all and every ſin in the ſeed and root thereof. There is a fulneſs of all unrighteouſneſs there, Rom. i. 29. There is atheiſm, idolatry, blaſphemy, murder, adultery, and whatſoever is vile. Poſſibly none of theſe appear to thee in thy heart: but there is more in that unfathomable depth of wickedneſs, than thou knoweſt. Thy corrupt heart is like an ant's neſt, on which, while the ſtone lieth, none of them appear, but take off the ſtone, and ſtir them up but with the point of a ſtraw, you will ſee what a ſwarm is there, and how lively they be. Juſt ſuch a ſight would thy heart afford thee; did the Lord but withdraw the reſtraint he has upon it, and ſuffer Satan to ſtir it up by temptation.

4. The ſin of our nature is, of all ſins, the moſt fixed and abiding. Sinful actions, though the guilt and ſtain of them may remain, yet, in themſelves, they are paſſing. The drunkard is not always at his cups, nor the unclean perſon always acting lewdneſs. But the corruption of nature is an abiding ſin; it remains with men, in its full power, by night and by

day; at all times fixed, as with bands of iron and braſs, till their nature be changed by converting grace: And the remains of it continue with the godly, until the death of the body. Pride, envy, covetouſneſs, and the like, are not always ſtirring in thee. But the proud, envious, carnal nature is ſtill with thee: Even as the clock that is wrong, is not always ſtriking wrong; but the wrong ſet continues with it, without intermiſſion.

5. It is the great reigning ſin, Rom. vi. 12. "Let "not ſin therefore reign in your mortal body, that "ye ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof." There are three things you may obſerve in the corrupt heart: (1.) There is the corrupt nature; the corrupt ſet of the heart, whereby men are unapt for all good, and fitted for all evil. This the apoſtle, here, calls ſin which reigns. (2.) There are particular luſts, or diſpoſitions of that corrupt nature, which the apoſtle calls "the luſts thereof;" ſuch as pride, covetouſneſs, &c. (3.) There is one among theſe, which is (like Saul among the people) higher by far than the reſt, namely, "the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us," Heb. xii. 1. This we uſually call the predominant ſin, becauſe it doth, as it were, reign over other particular luſts; ſo that other luſts muſt yield to it. Theſe three are like a river, which divides itſelf into many ſtreams, whereof one is greater than the reſt. The corruption of nature is the river-head, which has many particular luſts, in which it runs; but it mainly diſburdens itſelf into what is commonly called one's predominant ſin. Now all of theſe being fed by the ſin of our nature, it is evident, that ſin is the great reigning ſin, which never loſeth its ſuperiority over particular luſts, that live and die with it, and by it. But, as in ſome rivers, the main ſtream runs not always in one and the ſame channel; ſo particular predominants may be changed, as luſt in youth may be ſucceeded by covetouſneſs in old age. Now what doth it avail to reform in other things, while the great reigning ſin

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remains in its full power? What though ſome particular luſt be broken? If that ſin, the ſin of our nature, keep the throne, it will ſet up another in its ſtead; as when a water-courſe is ſtopped in one place, while the fountain is not dammed up, it will ſtream forth another way. And thus ſome caſt off their prodigality, but covetouſneſs comes up in its ſtead: ſome caſt away their profanity, and the corruption of nature ſends not its main ſtream that way as before; but it runs in another channel, namely, in that of a legal diſpoſition, ſelf-righteouſneſs, or the like. So that people are ruined, by their not eying the ſin of their nature.

Laſtly, It is an hereditary evil, Pſal. li. 3. "in ſin "did my mother conceive me." Particular luſts are not ſo, but in the virtue of their cauſe. A prodigal father may have a frugal ſon: but this diſeaſe is neceſſarily propagated in nature, and therefore hardeſt to cure. Surely then the word ſhould be given out againſt this ſin, as againſt the king of Iſrael, 1 Kings xxii. 31. "Fight neither with ſmall nor great, ſave "only with this:" for this ſin being broke, all other ſins are broken with it; and while it ſtands entire, there is no victory.

IV. That ye may get a view of the corruption of your nature, I would recommend to you three things. (1.) Study to know the ſpirituality and extent of the law of God, for that is the glaſs wherein you may ſee yourſelves. (2.) Obſerve your heart at all times, but eſpecially under temptation. Temptation is a fire that brings up the ſcum of the vile heart: do ye carefully mark the firſt riſings of corruption. Laſtly, Go to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, for illumination by his Spirit. Lay out your ſoul before the Lord, as willing to know the vileneſs of your nature. Say unto him, "That which I know not teach thou me." And be willing to take in light from the word. Believe, and you ſhall ſee. It is by the word the Spirit teacheth, but without the Spirit's teaching, all other teaching

will be to little purpoſe. Though the goſpel ſhould ſhine about you, like the ſun at noon-day; and this great truth be never ſo plainly preached, ye will never ſee yourſelves aright, until the Spirit of the Lord light his candle within your breaſt: the fulneſs and glory of Chriſt, the corruption and vileneſs of our nature are never rightly learned, but where the Spirit of Chriſt is the teacher.

And now to ſhut up this weighty point, let the conſideration of what is ſaid, commend Chriſt to you all. Ye that are brought out of your natural ſtate of corruption unto Chriſt, be humble; ſtill coming to Chriſt, and improving your union with him, to the further weakening of the remains of this natural corruption. Is your nature changed? It is but in part ſo. The day was ye could not ſtir: now ye are cured; but remember the cure is not yet perfected, ye ſtill go halting. And though it were better with you than it is, the remembrance of what you were by nature ſhould keep you low. Ye that are yet in your natural ſtate, take with it: believe the corruption of your nature; and let Chriſt, and his grace, be precious in your eyes. O that ye would at length be ſerious about the ſtate of your ſouls; what mind ye to do! Ye muſt die, ye muſt appear before the judgment-ſeat of God. Will ye lie down, and ſleep another night at eaſe in this caſe; do it not, for before another day, ye may be ſiſted before God's dreadful tribunal, in the grave-cloaths of your corrupt ſtate; and your vile ſouls caſt into the pit of deſtruction, as a corrupt lamp, to be for ever buried out of God's ſight. For I teſtify unto you all, there is no peace with God, no pardon, no heaven for you, in this ſtate: There is but a ſtep betwixt you and eternal deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord: If the brittle thread of your life, which may be broke with a touch, ere you are aware, be indeed broken while you are in this ſtate; you are ruined for ever, and without remedy. But come ſpeedily to Jeſus Chriſt;

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he has cleanſed as vile ſouls as yours; and he will yet "cleanſe the blood that he hath not cleanſed," Joel iii. 21. Thus far of the "ſinfulneſs of man's natu-"ral ſtate."

HEAD II.

The MISERY *of Man's Natural State.*

EPHESIANS ii. 3.

We——were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

HAVING ſhewed you the ſinfulneſs of man's natural ſtate, I come now to lay before you the miſery of it. A ſinful ſtate cannot but be a miſerable ſtate. If ſin goes before, wrath follows of courſe. Corruption and deſtruction are ſo knit together, that the Holy Ghoſt calls deſtruction, even eternal deſtruction, corruption, Gal. vi. 8. "He that ſoweth "to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption," that is everlaſting deſtruction; as is clear from its being oppoſed to life everlaſting, in the following clauſe. And ſo the apoſtle having ſhown the Epheſians their real ſtate by nature, viz. that they were "dead in ſins "and treſpaſſes," altogether corrupt; he tells them, in the words of the text, their relative ſtate, namely, that the pit was digged for them, while in that ſtate of corruption: being dead in ſins, they "were by "nature children of wrath, even as others."

In the words we have four things.

1. The miſery of a natural ſtate: It is a ſtate of wrath, as well as a ſtate of ſin. "We were," ſays the apoſtle, "children of wrath," bound over, and liable to the wrath of God; under wrath in ſome meaſure; and in wrath, bound over to more, even

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the full measure of it, in hell, where the floods of it go over the prisoners for ever. Thus Saul in his wrath, adjudging David to die, (1 Sam. xx. 31.) and David, in his wrath, passing sentence of death against the man in the parable, (2 Sam. xii. 5.) say, each of them of his supposed criminal, "He shall surely die;" or as the words in the first language are, "He is a "son of death." So the natural man is a "child of "wrath, a son of death." He is a malefactor, dead in law, lying in chains of guilt; a criminal held fast in his fetters, till the day of execution; which will not fail, unless a pardon be obtained from his God, who is his Judge and Party too. By that means indeed, children of wrath may become children of the kingdom. The phrase in the text, however common it is in the holy language, is very significant. And as it is evident, that the apostle, calling natural men the "children of disobedience," (ver. 2.) means more, than that they were disobedient children: For such may the Lord's own children be: So, to be children of wrath is more, than simply to be liable to, or under wrath,—Jesus Christ was liable to, and under wrath: But I doubt we have any warrant to say, he was a child of wrath. The phrase seems to intimate, that men are, whatsoever they are in their natural state, under the wrath of God; that they are wholly under wrath: Wrath is, as it were, woven into their very nature, and mixeth itself with the whole of the man, who is (if I may so speak) a very lump of wrath, a child of hell, as the iron in the fire is all fire. For men naturally are children of wrath; come forth, so to speak, out of the womb of wrath; as Jonah's gourd was the "son of a night," (which we render, "came up in a night," Jonah iv. 10.) as if it had come out of the womb of the night (as we read of the "womb of the morning," Psal. cx. 3.) and so, the birth following the belly whence it came, was "soon gone." Thus sparks of fire are called "sons of the burning coal," Job v. 7. Marg.

Isa.

Iſa. xxi. 10. "O my threſhing, and the corn, (or "ſon) of my floor," threſhen in the floor of wrath, and, as it were, brought forth by it. Thus the natural man is a child of wrath: It "comes into his "bowels like water, and like oil into his bones," Pſal. cxix. 18. For, though Judas was the only ſon of perdition amongſt the apoſtles, yet all men, by nature, are of the ſame family.

2. There is the riſe of this miſery; men have it by nature. They owe it to their nature, not to their ſubſtance or eſſence: For that neither is nor was ſin, and therefore cannot make them children of wrath; though for ſin, it may be under wrath: Not to their nature, as qualified at man's creation, by his Maker; but to their nature, as vitiated and corrupted by the fall: To the vitious quality or corruption of their nature, (whereof before), which is their principle of action, and ceaſing from action, the only principle in an unregenerate ſtate. Now by this nature, men are children of wrath; as, in time of peſtilential infection, one draws in death with the diſeaſe then raging. Wherefore, ſeeing from our firſt being, as children of Adam, we be corrupt children, "ſhapen in iniqui-"ty, conceived in ſin;" we are alſo from that moment children of wrath.

3. The univerſality of this miſery. All are by nature children of wrath; "we," ſaith the apoſtle, "even as others;" Jews as well as Gentiles. Thoſe that are now by grace the children of God, were by nature, in no better caſe than thoſe that are ſtill in their natural ſtate.

Laſtly, There is a glorious and happy change intimated here; we were children of wrath, but are not ſo now; grace has brought us out of that fearful ſtate. This the apoſtle ſays of himſelf, and other believers. And thus it well becomes the people of God to be often ſtanding on the ſhore, and looking back to the Red ſea of the ſtate of wrath they were ſometimes weltering in, "even as others."

Man's

Man's natural ſtate a ſtate of wrath.

Doctrine, The ſtate of nature is a ſtate of wrath. Every one in a natural, unregenerate ſtate, is in a ſtate of wrath. We are born children of wrath; and continue ſo, until we be born again. Nay, as ſoon as we are children of Adam, we are children of wrath.

I ſhall uſher in what I am to ſay on this point with a few obſerves, touching the univerſality of this ſtate of wrath, which may ſerve to prepare the way of the word into your conſciences.

Wrath has gone as wide as ever ſin went. When angels ſinned; the wrath of God brake in upon them as a flood. "God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, "but caſt them down to hell," 2 Pet. ii. 4. And thereby it was demonſtrated, that no natural excellency in the creature will ſhield it from the wrath of God, if once it become a ſinful creature. The fineſt and niceſt piece of the workmanſhip of Heaven, if once the Creator's image upon it be defaced by ſin, God can and will daſh in pieces in his wrath, unleſs ſatisfaction be made to juſtice, and that image be repaired; neither of which the ſinner himſelf can do. Adam ſinned; and the whole lump of mankind was leavened, and bound over to the fiery oven of God's wrath. And from the text ye may learn, (1.) That ignorance of that ſtate cannot free men from it: the Gentiles, that knew not God, "were by nature chil-"dren of wrath, even as others." A man's houſe may be on fire, his wife and children periſhing in the flames, while he knows nothing of it, and therefore is not concerned about it. Such is your caſe, O ye that are ignorant of theſe things! Wrath is ſilently ſinking into your ſouls, while you are bleſſing yourſelves, ſaying, "Ye ſhall have peace." Ye need not a more certain token that ye are children of wrath, than that ye never yet ſaw yourſelves ſuch. Ye cannot

not be the children of God, that never yet saw yourselves children of the devil. Ye cannot be in the way to heaven, that never saw yourselves by nature in the high road to hell. Ye are grosly ignorant of your state by nature: and so ignorant of God, and of Christ, and your need of him; and though ye look on your ignorance as a covert from wrath; yet, take it out of the mouth of God himself, that it will ruin you, if it be not removed, Isa. xxvii. 11. "It is a "people of no understanding: therefore he that made "them, will not have mercy on them." See 2 Thess. i. 8. Hos. iv. 6. (2.) No outward privileges can exempt men from this state of wrath: For the Jews, the children of the kingdom, God's peculiar people, were "children of wrath, even as others." Though ye be church members, partakers of all church-privileges; though ye be descended of godly parents, of great and honourable families, be what ye will, ye are, "by nature" heirs of hell, "children of wrath." (3.) No profession, nor attainments in a profession of religion, do or can exempt a man from this state of wrath. Paul was one of the straitest sect of the Jewish religion, Acts xxvi. 5. yet "a child of wrath, "even as others," till he was converted. The close hypocrite and the profane, are alike, as to their state; however different their conversations be: And they will be alike in their fatal end, Psal. cxxv. 5. "As "for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, "the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of "iniquity." (4.) Young ones, that are yet but setting out into the world, have not that to do, to make themselves children of wrath, by following the graceless multitude. They are "children of wrath by na-"ture;" so it is done already: They were born heirs of hell; they will indeed make themselves more so, if they do not, while they are young, flee from that wrath they were born to, by fleeing to Jesus Christ. Lastly, Whatever men are now by grace, they were "even as others" by nature. And this

may be a ſad meditation to them, that have been at "eaſe from their youth," and have had "no "changes."

Now, theſe things being premiſed, I ſhall, in the firſt place, ſhew what this ſtate of wrath is: Next, confirm the doctrine; and then apply it.

I. I am to ſhew what this ſtate of wrath is. But who can fully deſcribe the wrath of an angry God? None can do it. Yet ſo much of it may be diſcovered, as may ſerve to convince men of the abſolute neceſſity of fleeing to Jeſus Chriſt, out of that ſtate of wrath. Anger in men is a paſſion and commotion of the ſpirit, for an injury received; with a deſire to reſent the ſame. When it comes to a height and is fixed in one's ſpirit, it is called wrath. Now there are no paſſions in God, properly ſpeaking; they are inconſiſtent with his abſolute unchangeableneſs and independency: And therefore, Paul and Barnabas (to remove the miſtake of the Lycaonians, who thought they were gods) tell them, "they were men of like paſſions "with themſelves," Acts xiv. 15. Wrath then is attributed to God, not in reſpect of the affection of wrath, but the effects thereof. Wrath is a fire in the bowels of a man, tormenting the man himſelf; but there is no perturbation in God. His wrath does not in the leaſt mar that infinite repoſe and happineſs which he hath in himſelf. It is a more undiſturbed act of his will, producing dreadful effects againſt the ſinner. It is little we know of an infinite God; but condeſcending to our weakneſs, he is pleaſed to ſpeak of himſelf to us after the manner of men. Let us therefore notice man's wrath, but remove every thing, in our conſideration of the wrath of God, that argues imperfection; and ſo we may attain to ſome view of it, however ſcanty. By this means we are led to take up the wrath of God againſt the natural man in theſe three.

Firſt, There is wrath in the heart of God againſt him. The Lord approves him not, is diſpleaſed with him.

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Every natural man lies under the diſpleaſure of God; and that is heavier than mountains of braſs. Although he be pleaſed with himſelf, and others be pleaſed with him too, yet God looks down on him as diſpleaſed. Firſt, His perſon is under God's diſpleaſure; "thou "hateſt all workers of iniquity," Pſal. v. 5. A godly man's ſin is diſpleaſing to God, yet his perſon is ſtill "accepted in the beloved," Eph. i. 6. But "God "is angry with the wicked every day," Pſal. vii. 11. The fire of wrath burns continually againſt him, in the heart of God. They are as dogs and ſwine, moſt abominable creatures in the ſight of God. Though their natural ſtate be gilded over with a ſhining profeſſion, yet they are abhorred of God; they are to him as "ſmoke in his noſe," Iſ. lxv. 5. and "luke-"warm water," to be "ſpewed out of his mouth," Rev. iii. 16. "whited ſepulchres," Matth. xxiii. 27. "a generation of vipers," Matth. xii. 23. and "a "people of his wrath," Iſ. x. 6. Secondly, He is diſpleaſed with all they do; it is impoſſible for them to pleaſe him being unbelievers, Heb. xi. 6. He hates their perſons; and ſo hath no pleaſure in, but is diſpleaſed with, their beſt works, Iſ. lxvi. 6. "He that "ſacrificeth a lamb, is as if he cut off a dog's neck," &c. Their duty, as done by them, "is an abomin-"ation to the Lord," Prov. xv. 8. And as men turn their back on them whom they are angry with, ſo the Lord's refuſing communion with the natural man in his duties, is a plain indication of this wrath.

Secondly, There is wrath in the word of God againſt him. When wrath is in the heart, it ſeeks a vent by the lips; ſo God fights againſt the natural man with "the ſword of his mouth," Rev. ii. 16. The Lord's word never ſpeaks good of him, but always curſeth and condemneth him. Hence it is, that when he is awakened, the word read or preached, often encreaſeth his horror. Firſt, It condemns all his actions, together with his corrupt nature. There is

nothing he does, but the law declares it to be ſin. It is a rule of perfect obedience, from which he always, in all things, declines; and ſo it rejects every thing he doth, as ſin. Secondly, It pronounceth his doom, and denounceth God's curſe againſt him, Gal. iii. 10. "For as many as are of the works of the law, "are under the curſe: for it is written, Curſed is e-"very one that continueth not in all things which are "written in the book of the law to do them." Be he never ſo well in the world, it pronounceth a woe from heaven againſt him, Iſ. iii. 11. The Bible is a quiver filled with arrows of wrath againſt him; ready to be poured in on his ſoul. God's threatenings, in his word, hang over his head as a black cloud, ready to ſhower down on him every moment. The word is indeed the ſaints ſecurity againſt wrath: but it binds the natural man's ſin and wrath together, as a certain pledge of his ruin, if he continue in that ſtate. So the conſcience being awakened, and perceiving this tie made by the law, the man is filled with terrors in his ſoul.

Thirdly, There is wrath in the hand of God againſt the natural man. He is under heavy ſtones of wrath already, and is liable to more.

Firſt, There is wrath on his body. It is a piece of curſed clay, which wrath is ſinking into, by virtue of the threatening of the firſt covenant, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſure-"ly die." There is never a diſeaſe, gripe nor ſtitch, that affects him, but it comes on him with the ſting of God's indignation in it. They are all cords of death, ſent before to bind the priſoner.

Secondly, There is wrath upon his ſoul. (1.) He can have no communion with God; he is "fooliſh, "and ſhall not ſtand in God's ſight," Pſal. v. 5. When Adam ſinned, God turned him out of Paradiſe: and natural men are, as Adam left them, baniſhed from the gracious preſence of the Lord; and can have no acceſs to him, in that ſtate. There is war betwixt

twixt heaven and them: and ſo all commerce is cut off. "They are without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. The ſun is gone down on them, and there is not the leaſt glimpſe of favour towards them from heaven. (2.) Hence the ſoul is left to pine away in its iniquity. The natural darkneſs of their minds, the averſeneſs to good in their wills, the diſorder of their affections, and diſtemper of their conſciences, and all their natural plagues, are left upon them in a penal way, and being ſo left, increaſe daily. God caſts a portion of worldly goods to them, more or leſs, as a bone is thrown to a dog: but, alas! his wrath againſt them appears, in that they get no grace. The Phyſician of ſouls comes by them, and goes by them, and cures others beſide them, while they are conſuming away in their iniquity, and ripening daily for utter deſtruction. (3.) They lie open to fearful additional plagues on their ſouls, even in this life. Firſt, Sometimes they meet with deadening ſtrokes, ſilent blows, from the hand of an angry God: arrows of wrath, that enter into their ſouls without noiſe: Iſa. vi. 10. "Make "the heart of this people fat, and make their ears "heavy, and ſhut their eyes; leſt they ſee with their "eyes," &c. God ſtrives with them for a while, and convictions enter their conſciences; but they rebel againſt the light: and, by a ſecret judgment, they are knockt in the head; ſo that, from that time, they do, as it were, live and rot above the ground. Their hearts are deadened, their affections withered; their conſciences ſtupified; and their whole ſouls blaſted; "caſt forth as a branch, and withered," John xv. 16. They are plagued with judicial blindneſs. They ſhut their eyes againſt the light; and they are given over to the devil, the god of this world, to be blinded more, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Yea, "God ſends them ſtrong "deluſions, that they ſhould believe a lie," 2 Theſſ. ii. 11. Even conſcience, like a falſe light on the ſhore, leads them upon rocks; by which they are broken in pieces. They harden themſelves againſt God; and

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he gives up with them, and leaves them to Satan and their own hearts, whereby they are hardened more and more. They are often "given up unto vile af-"fections." Rom. i. 26. The reins are laid on their necks; and they are left to run into all excefs, as their furious luſts draw them. Secondly, Sometimes they meet with quickning ſtrokes, whereby their ſouls become like mount Sinai, where nothing is ſeen but fire and ſmoke; nothing heard but the thunder of God's wrath, and the voice of the trumpet of a broken law waxing louder and louder: which makes them like Paſhur, (Jer. xx. 4.) "a terror to themſelves." God takes the filthy garments of their ſins, which they were wont to ſleep in ſecurely; overlays them with brimſtone, and ſets them on fire about their ears: ſo they have a hell within them.

Thirdly, There is wrath on the natural man's enjoyments. Whatever be wanting in his houſe, there is one thing that is never wanting there, Prov. iii. 33. "The curſe of the Lord is in the houſe of the wick-"ed." Wrath is on all that he has; on the bread that he eats, the liquor he drinks, the cloaths which he wears, "His baſket and ſtore are curſed," Deut. xxviii. 17. Some things fall wrong with him; and that comes to paſs by virtue of this wrath: other things go according to his wiſh, and there is wrath in that too; for it is a ſnare to his ſoul, Prov. i. 32. "The "proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them." This wrath turns his bleſſings into curſes, Mal. ii. 2. "I will "curſe your bleſſings; yea, I have curſed them al-"ready." The holy law is "a killing letter to him," 2 Cor. iii. 6. The miniſtry of the goſpel, "a ſavour "of death unto death," chap. ii. 16. In the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, "he eateth and drinketh "damnation to himſelf," 1 Cor xi. 29. Nay more than all that, Chriſt himſelf is to him, "a ſtone of "ſtumbling, and a rock of offence," 1 Pet. ii. 8. Thus wrath follows the natural man, as his ſhadow doth his body.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, He is under the "power of Satan," Acts xxvi. 18. The devil has overcome him, ſo he is his by conqueſt, his "lawful captive." Iſa. xlix. 24: The natural man is "condemned already," John iii: 18. and therefore under the heavy hand of "him "that hath the power of death, that is the devil." And he keeps his priſoners in the priſon of a natural ſtate, bound hand and foot, Iſa. lxi. 1. laden with divers luſts, as chains wherewithal he holds them faſt: Thou needeſt not, as many do, call on the devil to take thee; for he has a faſt hold of thee already, as a child of wrath.

Laſtly, The natural man hath no ſecurity for a moment's ſafety, from the wrath of God its coming on him to the uttermoſt. The curſe of the law, denounced againſt him, has already tied him to the ſtake, ſo that the arrows of juſtice may pierce his ſoul; and in him may meet all the miſeries and plagues that flow from the avenging wrath of God. See how he is ſet as a mark to the arrows of wrath, Pſal. vii. 11, 12. 13. "God is angry with the wicked every day. If "he turn not, he will whet his ſword; he hath bent "his bow, and made it ready; he hath alſo prepared "for him the inſtruments of death." Doth he lie down to ſleep? There is not a promiſe he knows of, or can know, to ſecure him that he ſhall not be in hell ere he awake. Juſtice is purſuing, and cries for vengeance on the ſinner: the law caſts the fire-balls of its curſes continually upon him: waſted and long-tried patience is that which keeps in his life. He walks amidſt enemies armed againſt him; his name may be "Magor-miſſabib, i. e. terror round about." Jer. xx. 3. Angels, devils, men, beaſts, ſtones, heaven, and earth, are in readineſs, on a word of command from the Lord, to ruin him.

Thus the natural man lives, but he muſt die too; and death is a dreadful meſſenger to him. It comes upon him armed with wrath, and puts three ſad charges in his hand. (1.) Death chargeth him to bid an

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eternal farewel to all things in this world; to leave it, and make away to another world. Ah! what a dreadful charge muſt this be to a "child of wrath!" He can have no comfort from heaven for God is his enemy: and, as for the things of the world, and the enjoyment of his luſts, which were the only ſprings of his comfort; theſe are in a moment dried up to him for ever. He is not ready for another world: he was not thinking of removing ſo ſoon; or, if he was, yet he has no portion ſecured to him in the other world, but that which he was born to, and was increaſing all his days, namely, "treaſure of wrath." But go he muſt; his clay-god, the world, muſt be parted with, and what has he more? There was never a glimmering of light, or favour from heaven, to his ſoul: and now the wrath that did hang on the threatening, as "a cloud like a man's hand," is darkening the face of the whole heaven above him: and if he "look into "the earth," (from whence all his light was wont to come), "behold trouble and darkneſs, dimneſs of "anguiſh; and he ſhall be driven to darkneſs," Iſa. viii. 22. (2.) Death chargeth ſoul and body to part till the great day. His ſoul is required of him, Luke xii. 20. O what a miſerable parting muſt this be to a child of wrath! Care was indeed taken to provide for the body things neceſſary for this life: but alas! there is nothing laid up for another life, to it; nothing to be a ſeed of a glorious reſurrection: as it lived, ſo it muſt die and riſe again, ſinful fleſh, fuel for the fire of God's wrath. As for the ſoul, he was never ſolicitous to provide for it. It lay in the body, dead to God, and all things truly good; and ſo muſt be carried out into the pit, in the grave-clothes of its natural ſtate; for now that death comes, the companions in ſin muſt part. (3.) Death chargeth the ſoul to compear before the tribunal of God, while the body lies to be carried to the grave, Eccl. xii. 7. "The ſpirit ſhall return un-"to God who gave it." Heb. ix. 27. "It is ap-"pointed unto all men once to die, but after this the "judgment."

"judgment." Well were it for the ſinful ſoul, if it might be buried together with the body. But that cannot be: it muſt go and receive its ſentence; and ſhall be ſhut up in the priſon of hell, while the curſed body lies impriſoned in the grave, till the day or the general judgment.

When the end of the world, appointed of God, is come; the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ariſe. Then ſhall the weary earth, at the command of the Judge, caſt forth the bodies, the curſed bodies of theſe that lived and died in their natural ſtate: "The ſea, "death, and hell ſhall deliver up their dead," Rev. xx. 13. Their miſerable bodies and ſouls, ſhall be reunited, and they ſiſted before the tribunal of Chriſt. Then ſhall they receive that fearful ſentence, "De-"part from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, pre-"pared for the devil and his angels," Matth. xxv. 41. Whereupon "they ſhall go away into everlaſt-"ing puniſhment," ver. 46. They ſhall be eternally ſhut up in hell, never to get the leaſt drop of comfort, nor the leaſt eaſe of their torment. There they will be puniſhed with the puniſhment of loſs, being ex-communicated for ever from the preſence of God, his angels and ſaints. All means of grace, all hopes of a delivery, ſhall be for ever cut off from their eyes. They ſhall not have "a drop of water to cool their "tongues," Luke xvi. 24, 25. They ſhall be puniſh-ed with the puniſhment of ſenſe. They muſt not on-ly depart from God, but depart into fire, into ever-laſting fire. There "the worm," that ſhall gnaw them, ſhall "never die; the fire" that ſhall ſcorch them, ſhall "never be quenched." God ſhall, through all eternity, hold them up with the one hand, and pour the full vials of wrath into them with the other.

This is that ſtate of wrath natural men live in; be-ing under much of the wrath of God, and liable to more. But, for a further view of it, let us conſider the qualities of that wrath. (1.) It is irreſiſtible; there is no ſtanding before it: "Who may ſtand in

" thy ſight, when once thou art angry ?" Pſal. lxxvi. 7. Can the worm or the moth defend itſelf againſt him that deſigns to cruſh it? As little can worm man ſtand before an angry God. Fooliſh man indeed practically bids a defiance to Heaven: but the Lord often, even in this world, opens ſuch ſluices of wrath upon them, as all their might cannot ſtop; but they are carried away thereby, as with a flood. How much more will it be ſo in hell? (2.) It is unſupportable. What one cannot reſiſt, he will ſet himſelf to bear: but, " who ſhall dwell with devouring fire? " who ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?" God's wrath is a weight that ſhall ſink men into the loweſt hell. It is a burden no man is able to ſtand under. " A wounded ſpirit who can bear it?" Prov. xviii. 14. (3.) It is unavoidable to ſuch as will go on impenitently in their ſinful courſe. " He that being of- " ten reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be " deſtroyed, and that without remedy," Prov. xxix. 1. We may now fly from it indeed, by flying to Jeſus Chriſt, but ſuch as fly from Chriſt, ſhall never be able to avoid it. Whither can men fly from an avenging God? Where will they find a ſhelter? The hills will not hear them. The mountains will be deaf to their loudeſt cries, when they cry to them, to " hide them from the wrath of the Lamb." (4.) It is powerful and fierce wrath, Pſal. xc. 11. " Who " knoweth the power of thine anger? Even accord- " ing to thy fear, ſo is thy wrath." We are apt to fear the wrath of man more than we ought: but no man can apprehend the wrath of God to be more dreadful than it really is: the power of it can never be known to the utmoſt; ſeeing it is infinite, and (properly ſpeaking) has no utmoſt. How fierce ſoever it be, either on earth, or in hell, God can ſtill carry it further. Every thing in God is moſt perfect in its kind; and therefore no wrath is ſo fierce as his. O ſinner! how wilt thou be able to endure that wrath, which will " tear thee in pieces," Pſal. l. 22. " and

" grind

" grind thee to powder!" Luke xx. 18. The hiſtory of the two ſhe-bears, that tare the children of Bethel, is an awful one, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. But the united force of the rage of lions, leopard, and ſhe-bears, bereaved of their whelps, is not ſufficient to give us even a ſcanty view of the power of the wrath of God, Hoſ. xiii. 7, 8. " Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: " as a leopard by the way will I obſerve them. I will " meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, " and will rent the caul of their heart," &c. (5.) It is penetrating and piercing wrath. It is " burning " wrath, and fiery indignation." There is no pain more exquiſite than that which is cauſed by fire: and no fire ſo piercing as the fire of God's indignation, that " burns unto the loweſt hell," Deut. xxxii. 22. The arrows of mens wrath can pierce fleſh, blood and bones; but cannot reach the ſoul: but the wrath of God will ſink into the ſoul, and ſo pierce a man in the moſt tender part: likeas, when a perſon is thunder-ſtruck, oft-times there is not a wound to be ſeen in the ſkin; yet life is gone, and the bones are, as it were, melted: ſo God's wrath can penetrate into, and melt one's ſoul within him, when his earthly comforts ſtand about him entire, and untouched; as in Belſhazzar's caſe, Dan. v. 6. (6.) It is conſtant wrath, running parallel with the man's continuance in an unregenerate ſtate; conſtantly attending him from the womb to the grave. There are few ſo dark days, but the ſun ſometimes looketh out from under the clouds: but the wrath of God is an abiding cloud on the objects of it, John iii. 36. " The wrath of God abideth " on him" that believes not. (7.) It is eternal O miſerable ſoul! if thou fly not from this wrath, unto Jeſus Chriſt, thy miſery had a beginning, but it ſhall never have an end. Should devouring death wholly ſwallow thee up, and for ever hold thee faſt in a grave, it would be kind; but thou muſt live again, and never die; that thou mayſt be ever dying, " in the " hands of the living God." Cold death will quench

the flame of man's wrath againſt us, if nothing elſe do it; but "God's wrath," when it has come on the ſinner, millions of ages will ſtill be "the wrath to "come," Matth. iii. 7. 1 Theſſ. i. 10. as the water of a river is ſtill coming, how much ſoever of it has paſſed. While God is, he will purſue the quarrel. Laſtly, Howſoever dreadful it is, and though it be eternal, yet it is moſt juſt wrath: it is a clear fire, without the leaſt ſmoke of injuſtice. The ſea of wrath, raging with greateſt fury againſt the ſinner, is clear as cryſtal. The Judge of all the earth can do no wrong: he knows no tranſports of paſſion, for they are inconſiſtent with the perfection of his nature. "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I ſpeak "as a man) God forbid; for then how ſhall God judge "the world?" Rom. iii. 5, 6.

The doctrine of the ſtate of wrath confirmed and vindicated.

II. I ſhall confirm the doctrine. Conſider, (1.) How peremptory the threatening of the firſt covenant is, "In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely "die," Gen. ii. 17. Hereby ſin and puniſhment being connected, the veracity of God aſcertains the execution of the threatening. Now, all men being by nature under this covenant, the breach of it lays them under the curſe. (2.) The juſtice of God requires, that a child of ſin be a child of wrath; that the law being broken, the ſanction thereof ſhould take place. God, as man's ruler and judge, cannot but do right, Gen. xviii. 25. Now it is "a righteous thing with God to "recompence ſin" with wrath, 2 Theſſ. i. 6. He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil," Hab i. 13. And "he hates all the workers of iniquity," Pſal. v. 6. (3.) The horrors of a natural conſcience prove this. There is a conſcience in the breaſts of men, which can tell them they are ſinners, and therefore liable to the wrath of God. Let men, at any time, ſoberly

ſoberly commune with themſelves, and they will find they have the witneſs in themſelves, "knowing the "judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch "things are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. (4.) The pangs of the new birth, the work of the Spirit of bondage on elect ſouls, in order to their converſion, demonſtrate this. Hereby their natural ſinfulneſs and miſery, as liable to the wrath of God, are plainly taught them; filling their hearts with fear of that wrath. Now that this Spirit of bondage is no other than the Spirit of God, whoſe work is to "convince "of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment," (John xvi. 8.) this teſtimony muſt needs be true; for the Spirit of truth cannot witneſs an untruth. Mean while, true believers, being freed from the ſtate of wrath, "re-"ceive not the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but "receive the Spirit of adoption," Rom. viii. 15. And therefore, if fears of that nature do ariſe, after the ſoul's union with Chriſt, they came from the ſaint's own ſpirit, or from a worſe. Laſtly, The ſufferings of Chriſt plainly prove this doctrine. Wherefore was the Son of God a ſon under wrath, but becauſe the children of men were children of wrath? He ſuffered the wrath of God; not for himſelf, but for thoſe that were liable to it in their own perſons. Nay, this not only ſpeaks us to have been liable to wrath; but alſo that wrath muſt have a vent, in the puniſhing of ſin. If this was done in the green tree, what will become of the dry? What a miſerable caſe muſt a ſinner be in that is out of Chriſt; that is only vitally united to Chriſt, and partakers not of his Spirit? God, who ſpared not his own Son, ſurely will not ſpare ſuch a one.

But the unregenerate man, who has no great value for the honour of God, will be apt to riſe up againſt his Judge, and in his own heart condemn his proceedings. Nevertheleſs, the Judge being infinitely juſt, ſentence muſt be righteous. And therefore, to ſtop thy mouth, O proud ſinner, and to ſtill thy clamour againſt

againſt thy righteous Judge: conſider, Firſt, thou art a ſinner by nature; and it is highly reaſonable that guilt and wrath be as old as ſin. Why ſhould not God begin to vindicate his honour, as ſoon as vile worms begin to impair it? Why ſhould not a ſerpent bite the thief as ſoon as he leaps over the hedge? Why ſhould not the threatening take hold of the ſinner, as ſoon as he caſts away the command? the poiſonous nature of the ſerpent affords a man ſufficient ground to kill it, as ſoon as ever he can reach it: and by this time, thou mayſt be convinced, that thy nature is a very compound of enmity againſt God. Secondly, Thou haſt not only an enmity againſt God, in thy nature; but haſt diſcovered it, by actual ſins, which are in his eye acts of hoſtility. Thou haſt brought forth thy luſts into the field of battle, againſt thy Sovereign Lord. And now that thou art ſuch a criminal, thy condemnation is juſt: for, beſides the ſin of thy nature, thou haſt done that againſt heaven which if thou hadſt done againſt men, thy life behoved to have gone for it; and ſhall not wrath from heaven overtake thee? (1.) Thou art guilty of high treaſon and rebellion againſt the King of Heaven. The thought and wiſh of thy heart, which he knows as well as the language of thy mouth, has been "No "God," Pſal. xiv. 1. Thou haſt rejected his government, blown the trumpet, and ſet up the ſtandard of rebellion againſt him; being one of theſe that ſay, "We will not have this man to reign over us," Luke xix. 14. Thou haſt ſtriven againſt, and quenched his Spirit; practically diſowned his laws, proclaimed by his meſſengers; ſtopped thine ears at their voice, and ſent them away mourning for thy pride. Thou haſt conſpired with his grand enemy the devil. Although thou art a ſworn ſervant of the King of glory, daily receiving of his favours, and living on his bounty; thou art holding a correſpondence, and haſt contracted a friendſhip with his greateſt enemy, and art acting for him againſt the Lord; for "the luſts of

"the

" the devil you will do," John viii. 44. (1.) Thou art a murderer before the Lord. Thou haſt laid the ſtumbling-block of thine iniquity before the blind world; and haſt ruined the ſouls of others by thy ſinful courſe. And though thou doſt not ſee now; the time may come, when thou ſhalt ſee the blood of thy relations, neighbours, acquaintances, and others, upon thy head, Matth. xviii. 7. " Wo unto the world " becauſe of offences; wo to that man by whom the " offence cometh." Yea, thou art a ſelf-murderer before God, Prov. viii. 36. " He that ſinneth againſt " me wrongeth his own ſoul; all they that hate me, " love death," Ezek. xviii. 31. " Why will ye die." The laws of men go as far as they can againſt the ſelf-murderer, denying his body a burial-place amongſt others, and confiſcating his goods: what wonder is it the law of God is ſo ſevere againſt ſoul-murderers? Is it ſtrange, that they who will depart from God now, coſt what it will, be forced to depart from him at laſt into everlaſting fire? But what is yet more criminal, thou art guilty of the murder of the Son of God; for the Lord will reckon thee amongſt thoſe that " pierced him," Rev. i. 7. Thou haſt rejected him, as well as the Jews did; and, by thy rejecting him, thou haſt juſtified their deed. They indeed did not acknowledge him to be the Son of God, but thou doſt. What they did againſt him, was in his ſtate of humiliation: but thou haſt acted againſt him, in his ſtate of exaltation. Theſe things will aggravate thy condemnation. What wonder then, if the voice of the Lamb change to the roaring of the Lion, againſt the traitor and murderer?

Object. But ſome will ſay, Is there not a vaſt diſproportion betwixt our ſin, and that wrath you talk of? I anſwer, No; God puniſheth no more than the ſinner deſerves. To rectify your miſtake in this matter, conſider. (1.) The vaſt rewards God has annexed to obedience. His word is no more full of fiery wrath againſt ſin, than it is of gracious rewards

to

to the obedience it requires. If heaven be in the promiſes, it is altogether equal that hell be in the threatenings. If death were not in the balance with life, eternal miſery with eternal happineſs, where were the proportion? Moreover, ſin deſerves the miſery, but our beſt works do not deſerve the happineſs: yet both are ſet before us; ſin and miſery, holineſs and happineſs. What reaſon is there then to complain? (2.) How ſevere ſoever the threatenings be, yet all has enough ado to reach the end of the law, "Fear "him," ſays the Lord, "which after he hath killed, "hath power to caſt into hell; yea, I ſay unto you, "Fear him," Luke xii. 5. This beſpeaks our dread of divine power and majeſty; but yet how few fear him indeed! The Lord knows ſinners hearts to be exceedingly intent upon fulfilling their luſts; they cleave ſo fondly to theſe fulſome breaſts, that a ſmall force does not ſuffice to draw them away from them. They that travel through deſarts, where they are in hazard from wild beaſts, have need to carry fire along with them; and they have need of a hard wedge that have knotty timber to cleave: ſo a holy law muſt be fenced with dreadful wrath, in a world lying in wickedneſs. But who are they that complain of that wrath as too great, but thoſe to whom it is too little to draw them off from their ſinful courſes? This was the man who pretended to fear his Lord, becauſe he was an "auſtere man" that "kept his pound laid up "in a napkin:" and ſo he was "condemned out of "his own mouth," Luke xix. 20, 21, 22. Thou art that man, even thou whoſe objection I am anſwering. How can the wrath thou art under, and liable to, be too great, while yet it is not ſufficient to awaken thee to flee from it? Is it time to relax the penalties of the law, when men are trampling the commands of it under foot? (3.) Conſider how God dealt with his own Son, whom he ſpared not, Rom. viii. 42. The wrath of God ſeized on his ſoul and body both, and brought him into the duſt of death. That

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his ſufferings were not eternal flowed from the quality of the ſufferer, who was infinite; and therefore able to bear, at once, the whole load of wrath: and, upon that account his ſufferings were infinite in value. But now that the ſufferings of a mere creature cannot be infinite in value, they muſt be protracted to an eternity. And what confidence can a rebel ſubject have to quarrel (for his part) a puniſhment execute on the king's ſon? (4.) The ſinner doth againſt God what he can. "Behold, thou haſt done evil things "as thou couldſt," Jer. iii. 5. That thou haſt not done more, and worſe, thanks to him who reſtrained thee; to the chain which the wolf was kept in by, not to thyſelf. No wonder God ſhew his power on the ſinner, who puts forth his power againſt God as far as it will reach. The unregenerate man puts no period to his ſinful courſe; and will put no bounds to it neither, if he were not reſtrained by divine power for wiſe ends: and therefore it is juſt he be for ever under wrath. (5.) It is infinite majeſty ſin ſtrikes againſt; and ſo it is in ſome ſort, an infinite evil. Sin riſeth in its demerit, according to the quality of the party offended. If a man wound his neighbour, his goods muſt go for it; but if he wound his prince, his life muſt go to make amends for that. The infinity of God makes infinite wrath the juſt demerit of ſin. God is infinitely diſpleaſed with ſin: and when he acts, he muſt act like himſelf, and ſhew his diſpleaſure by proportionable means. Laſtly, Thoſe that ſhall lie for ever under his wrath, will be eternally ſinning; and therefore muſt eternally ſuffer: not only in reſpect of divine judicial procedure; but becauſe ſin is its own puniſhment, in the ſame manner as holy obedience is its own reward.

The doctrine of the miſery of man's natural ſtate applied.

Uſe (1.) Of information. Is our ſtate by nature a ſtate of wrath? Then,

1. Surely we are not born innocent. Theſe chains of wrath, which by nature are upon us, ſpeak us to be born criminals. The ſwaddling-bands, wherewith infants are bound hand and foot, as ſoon as they are born, may put us in mind of the cords of wrath, with which they are held priſoners, as children of wrath.

2. What deſperate madneſs is it, for ſinners to go on in their ſinful courſe? What is it but to heap coals of fire on thine own head, to lay more and more fuel to the fire of wrath; to "treaſure up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath?" Rom. ii. 5. Thou mayſt "periſh, when his wrath is kindled but a little," Pſal. ii. 12. why wilt thou increaſe it yet more? Thou art already bound with ſuch cords of death, as will not eaſily be looſed: what need is there of more? Stand, careleſs ſinner, and conſider this.

3. Thou haſt no reaſon to complain, as long as thou art out of hell, "Wherefore doth a living man complain?" Lam. iii. 39. If one who has forfeited his life, be baniſhed his native country, and expoſed to many hardſhips, he may well bear all patiently, ſeeing his life is ſpared. Do ye murmur, for that ye are under pain or ſickneſs? Nay, bleſs God ye are not there where the worm never dieth. Doſt thou grudge, that thou art not in ſo good a condition in the world as ſome of thy neighbours are? Be thankful rather, that ye are not in the caſe of the damned. Is thy ſubſtance gone from thee? Wonder that the fire of God's wrath hath not conſumed thyſelf. Kiſs the rod, O ſinner, and acknowledge mercy; for God "puniſheth us leſs than our iniquities deſerve," Ezra ix. 13.

4. Here is a memorandum, both for poor and rich. (1.) The pooreſt that go from door to door, and had not one penny left them by their parents, were born to an inheritance. Their firſt father Adam left them children of wrath; and continuing in their natural

ſtate, they cannot miſs of it; for "this is the portion "of a wicked man from God, and the heritage ap- "pointed to him by God," Job xx. 29. An heritage that will furniſh them with a habitation, who have not where to lay their head; they ſhall be "caſt into utter darkneſs," Matth. xxv. 30. for to them "is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever," Jude 13. where their bed ſhall be ſorrow; "they "ſhall lie down in ſorrow," Iſa. l. 11. their food ſhall be judgment, for God will "feed them with "judgment," Ezek. xxxiv. 16. and their drink ſhall be the red wine of God's wrath, "the dregs where- "of all the wicked of the earth ſhall wring out, and "drink them," Pſal. lxxv. 8. I know that theſe who are deſtitute of worldly goods, and withal void of the knowledge and grace of God, who therefore may be called the devil's poor, will be apt to ſay here, We hope God will make us ſuffer all our miſery in this world, and we ſhall be happy in the next: as if their miſerable outward condition in time, would ſecure their happineſs in eternity. A groſs and fatal miſtake! and this is another inheritance they have, viz. "Lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no "profit," Jer. xvi. 19. But "the hail ſhall ſweep "away the refuge of lies," Iſa. xxviii. 17. Doſt thou think, O ſinner, that God, who commands judges on earth "not to reſpect the perſon of the poor in "judgment," Lev. xix. 15. will pervert judgment for thee? Nay, know for certain, that however miſerable thou art here, thou ſhalt be eternally miſerable hereafter, if thou liveſt and dieſt in thy natural ſtate.

(2.) Many that have enough in the world, have far more than they know of. Thou haſt (it may be), O unregenerate man, an eſtate, a good portion, or large ſtock left thee by thy father; thou haſt improven it, and the ſun of proſperity ſhines upon thee; ſo that thou canſt ſay, with Eſau, Gen. xxxiii. 9. "I have "enough." But know, thou haſt more than all that, an inheritance thou doſt not conſider of: thou

art a child of wrath, an heir of hell. That is an heritage which will abide with thee, amidſt all the changes in the world, as long as thou continueſt in an unregenerate ſtate. When thou ſhalt leave thy ſubſtance to others, this ſhall go along with thyſelf, into another world. It is no wonder a ſlaughter-ox is fed to the full, and is not toiled as others are, Job xxi. 30. "The wicked is reſerved to the day of deſtruc-
"tion; they ſhall be brought forth to the day of
"wrath." Well then, "rejoice, let thine heart
"cheer thee, walk in the ways of thine heart, and in
"the ſight of thine eyes." Live above reproofs and warnings from the word of God: ſhew thyſelf a man of a fine ſpirit, by caſting off all fear of God; mock at ſerioufneſs: live like thyſelf, a child of wrath, an heir of hell: "But know thou, that for all theſe
"things God will bring thee into judgment," Eccl. xi. 9. Aſſure thyſelf, thy "breaking ſhall come ſud-
"denly, at an inſtant," Iſa. xxx. 13. "For as the
"crackling of thorns under a pot, ſo is the laughter
"of a fool," Eccl. vii. 6. The fair blaze, and great noiſe they make is quickly gone: ſo ſhall thy mirth be. And then that wrath, that is now ſilently finking into thy ſoul, ſhall make a fearful hiſſing.

5. Wo to him, that like Moab, "hath been at eaſe
"from his youth," Jer. xlviii. 11. and never ſaw the black cloud of wrath hanging over his head. There are many who "have no changes, therefore they fear
"not God," Pſal. lv. 19. They have lived in a good belief (as they call it) all their days; that is, they had never power to believe an ill report of their ſoul's ſtate. Many have come by their religion too eaſily: and as it came lightly to them, ſo it will go from them, when the trial comes. Do ye think men flee from wrath in a morning-dream? Or will they flee from the wrath they never ſaw purſuing them?

6. Think it not ſtrange, if ye ſee one in great diſtreſs about his ſoul's condition, who was wont to be

as jovial and as little concerned for falvation as any of his neighbours. Can one get a right view of himſelf, as in a ſtate of wrath, and not be pierced with ſorrows, terrors, and anxiety? When a weight, quite above one's ſtrength, lies upon him, and he is alone, he can neither ſtir hand nor foot; but when one comes to lift it off him, he will ſtruggle to get from under it. Thunder-claps of wrath from the word of God, conveyed to the ſoul by the Spirit of the Lord, will ſurely keep a man awake.

Laſtly, It is no wonder wrath come upon churches and nations, and upon us in this land, and that infants and children yet unborn ſmart under it. Moſt of the ſociety are yet children of wrath; few are flying from it, or taking the way to prevent it; but people of all ranks are helping it on. The Jews rejected Chriſt: and their children have been ſmarting under wrath theſe ſixteen hundred years. God grant, that the bad entertainment given to Chriſt and his goſpel by this generation, be not purſued with wrath on the ſucceeding one.

Uſe (2.) Of Exhortation. And here, (1.) I ſhall drop a word to theſe who are yet in an unregenerate ſtate. (2.) To thoſe that are brought out of it. (3.) To all indifferently.

I. To you that are yet in an unregenerate ſtate, I would ſound the alarm, and warn you to ſee to yourſelves, while yet there is hope. O ye children of wrath, take no reſt in this diſmal ſtate; but flee to Jeſus Chriſt, the only refuge; haſte, and make your eſcape thither. The ſtate of wrath is too hot a climate for you to live in, Mic. ii. 10. "Ariſe ye, and "depart, for this is not your reſt." O ſinner, knoweſt thou where thou art? doſt thou not ſee thy danger? the curſe has entered into thy ſoul: wrath is thy covering: the heavens are growing blacker and blacker above thy head: the earth is weary of thee: the pit is opening her mouth for thee; and ſhould the thread of thy life be cut this moment, thou

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art henceforth paſt all hope for ever. Sirs, if we ſaw you putting a cup of poiſon to your mouth, we would fly to you and ſnatch it out of your hands; if we ſaw the houſe on fire about you, while ye were faſt aſleep in it, we would run to you, and drag you out of it. But, alas! ye are in ten thouſand times greater hazard: yet we can do no more, but tell you your danger; invite, exhort, beſeech, and obteſt you, to look to yourſelves; and lament your ſtupidity and obſtinacy, when we cannot prevail with you to take warning. If there were no hope of your recovery, we ſhould be ſilent, and would not torment you before the time: but though ye be loſt and undone, there is hope in Iſrael concerning this thing. Wherefore, I cry unto you in the name of the Lord, and in the words of the prophet, Zech. ix. 12. "Turn ye to the ſtrong hold, "ye priſoners of hope." Flee to Jeſus Chriſt out of this your natural ſtate.

Motive 1. While ye are in this ſtate, ye muſt ſtand or fall, according to the law, or covenant of works. If ye underſtood this aright, it would ſtrike through your hearts as a thouſand darts. One had better be a ſlave to the Turks, condemned to the gallies, or under Egyptian bondage, than be under the covenant of works now. All mankind were brought under it in Adam, as we heard before: and thou in thy unregenerate ſtate, art ſtill where Adam left thee. It is true, there is another covenant brought in: but what is that to thee, who art not brought into it? Thou muſt needs be under one of the two covenants; either under "the law, or under grace." That thou art not "under grace, the dominion of ſin" over thee manifeſtly evinceth; therefore thou art under the law, Rom. vi. 14. Do not think God has laid aſide the firſt covenant, Matth. v. 17, 18. Gal. iii. 10. No, he will "magnify the law, and make it honourable." It is broken indeed on thy part; but it is abſurd to think, that therefore your obligation is diſſolved. Nay, thou muſt ſtand and fall by it, till thou canſt

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produce thy discharge from God himself, who is thy party in that covenant; and this thou canst not pretend to, seeing thou art not in Christ.

Now, to give you a view of your misery, in this respect, consider these following things. (1.) Hereby ye are bound over to death, in virtue of the threatening of death in that covenant, Gen. ii. 17. The condition being broken, ye fall under the penalty. So it concludes you under wrath. (2.) There is no salvation for you under this covenant, but on a condition impossible to be performed by you. The justice of God must be satisfied for the wrong you have done already. God has written this truth in characters of the blood of his own Son. Yea, and you must perfectly obey the law for the time to come. So saith the law, Gal. iii. 12. "The man that doth them shall "live in them." Come then, O sinner, see if thou canst make a ladder, whereby thou mayst reach the throne of God: stretch forth thine arms, and try if thou canst fly on the wings of the wind, catch hold of the clouds, and pierce through, these visible heavens; and then either climb over, or break through, the jasper walls of the city above. These things shalt thou do, as soon as thou shalt reach heaven in thy natural state, or under this covenant. (3.) There is no pardon under this covenant. Pardon is the benefit of another covenant, with which thou hast nothing to do, Acts xiii. 39. "And by him all that believe "are justified from all things, from which ye could "not be justified by the law of Moses." As for thee, thou art in the hand of a mercilefs creditor, which will take thee by the throat, saying, "Pay what thou "owest;" and cast thee into prison, there to remain till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing: unless thou be so wise as to get a cautioner in time, who is able to answer for all thy debt, and get up thy discharge. This Jesus Christ alone can do. Thou abidest under this covenant, and pleadest mercy; but what is thy plea founded on? There is not one promise of mercy

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or pardon in that covenant. Doſt thou plead mercy for mercy's ſake? Juſtice will ſtep in betwixt it and thee; and plead God's covenant-threatening, which he cannot deny. (4.) There is no place for repentance in this covenant, ſo as the ſinner can be helped by it. For as ſoon as ever thou ſinneſt, the law lays its curſe on thee, which is a dead weight thou canſt by no means throw off; no, not though thine "head were waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears, "to weep day and night" for thy ſin. That is "what "the law cannot do, in that it is weak through the "fleſh," Rom. viii. 3. Now thou art another profane Eſau, that hath ſold the bleſſing; and there is no place for repentance, though thou ſeekeſt it carefully with tears, while under that covenant. (5.) There is no accepting of the will for the deed under this covenant, which was not made for good will, but good works. The miſtake in this point ruins many. They are not in Chriſt, but ſtand under the firſt covenant; and yet they will plead this privilege. This is juſt as if one having made a feaſt for thoſe of his own family, when they ſit down at table, another man's ſervant that has run away from his maſter, ſhould preſumptuouſly come forward, and ſit down among them: would not the maſter of the feaſt give ſuch a ſtranger that check, "Friend, how cameſt thou thi-"ther?" and, ſince he is none of his family, command him to be gone quickly. Though a maſter accept the good will of his own child for the deed, can a hired ſervant expect that privilege? (6.) Ye have nothing to do with Chriſt, while under that covenant. By the law of God a woman cannot be married to two huſbands at once: either death or divoree muſt diſſolve the firſt marriage, ere ſhe can marry another. So we muſt firſt "be dead to the law," ere we can be "married to Chriſt," Rom. vii. 4. The law is the firſt huſband; Jeſus Chriſt, who raiſeth the dead, marries the widow, that was heart broken, and ſlain by the firſt huſband. But while the ſoul is in the

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houſe with the firſt huſband, it cannot plead a marriage-relation to Chriſt; nor the benefits of a marriage-covenant, which is not yet entered into, Gal. v. 4. "Chriſt is become of no effect to you, whoſoever "of you are juſtified by the law, ye are fallen from "grace." Peace, pardon, and ſuch like benefits, are all benefits of the covenant of grace. And ye muſt not think to ſtand off from Chriſt, and the marriage-covenant with him, and yet plead theſe benefits; more than one man's wife can plead the benefit of the contract of marriage paſt betwixt another man and his own wife. Laſtly, See the bill of excluſion, paſſed in the court of heaven, againſt all under the covenant of works, Gal. iv. 30. "The ſon "of the bond woman ſhall not be heir." Compare ver. 24. Heirs of wrath muſt not be heirs of glory. Whom the firſt covenant has power to exclude out of heaven, the ſecond covenant cannot bring into it.

Object. Then it is impoſſible for us to be ſaved.

Anſ. It is ſo, while you are in that ſtate. But if ye would be out of that dreadful condition, haſten out of that ſtate. If a murderer be under ſentence of death; ſo long as he lives within the kingdom, the laws will reach his life: but if he can make his eſcape, and get over the ſea, into the dominions of another prince, our laws cannot reach him there. This is what we would have you to do: flee out of the kingdom of darkneſs into "the kingdom of God's "dear Son;" out of the dominion of the law, into the dominion of grace: then all the curſes of the law, or covenant of works, ſhall never be able to reach you.

Motive 2. O ye children of wrath, your ſtate is wretched, for ye have loſt God, and that is an unſpeakable loſs. Ye are "without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. Whatever you may call yours, ye cannot call God yours. If we look to the earth, perhaps ye can tell us, that land, that houſe, or that herd of cattle

tle, is yours. Bnt let us look upward to heaven; is that God, that grace, that glory yours? Truly, you have "neither part nor lot in that matter." When Nebuchadnezzar talks of cities and kingdoms, O how big does he ſpeak! "Great Babylon that I have "built; my power; my majeſty:" but he tells a poor tale, when he comes to ſpeak of God, ſaying, "your "God," Dan. ii. 47. and iv. 30. Alas! ſinner, whatever thou haſt, God is gone from thee. O the miſery of a godleſs ſoul! Haſt thou loſt God? Then, (1.) The ſap and ſubſtance of all thou haſt in the world, is gone. The godleſs man, have what he will, is one "that hath not," Matth. xxv 29. I defy the unregenerate man to attain to ſoul-ſatisfaction, whatever he poſſeſſeth, ſince God is not his God. All his days he eateth in darkneſs; in every condition there is a ſecret diſſatisfaction haunts his heart, like a ghoſt: the ſoul wants ſomething, though perhaps it knoweth not what it is; and ſo it will be always, till the ſoul return to God, the fountain of ſatisfaction. (2.) Thou canſt do nothing to purpoſe for thyſelf; for God is gone, "his ſoul is departed from "thee," Jer. vi. 8. like a leg out of joint hanging by, whereof a man has no uſe, as the word there uſed doth bear. Loſing God, thou has loſt the fountain of good; and ſo all grace, all goodneſs, all the ſaving influences of his Spirit. What canſt thou do then? What fruit canſt thou bring forth, more than a branch cut off from the ſtock? John xv. 4. Thou art "become unprofitable," Rom iii. 12. as a filthy rotten thing, fit only for the dunghill. (3.) Death has come up into thy windows, yea, and has ſettled on thy face; for God, "in whoſe favour is life," Pſal. xxx. 5. is gone from thee, and ſo the ſoul of thy ſoul is departed. What a loathſome lump is the body, when the ſoul is gone? Far more loathſome is thy ſoul in this caſe. Thou art dead while thou liveſt. Do not deny it, ſeeing thy ſpeech is laid, thine eyes cloſed, and all ſpiritual motion in thee ceaſeth.

eth. Thy true friends, who ſee thy caſe, do lament; becauſe thou art gone into the land of ſilence. (4.) Thou haſt not a ſteady friend among all the creatures of God; for now that thou haſt loſt the Maſter's favour, all the family is ſet againſt thee. Conſcience is thine enemy: the world never ſpeaks good of thee: God's people loath thee, ſo far as they ſee what thou art, Pſal. xv. 4. The beaſts and ſtones of the field are banded together againſt thee, Job v. 23. Hoſ. ii. 18. Thy meat, drink, cloaths, grudge to be ſerviceable to the wretch that has loſt God, and abuſeth them to his diſhonour. The earth groaneth under thee; yea, "the whole creation groaneth, "and travelleth in pain together," becauſe of thee and ſuch as thou art, Rom. viii. 22. Heaven will have nothing to do with thee; for "there ſhall in no "wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth," Rev. xxi. 27. Only "hell from beneath is moved for "thee, to meet thee at thy coming," Iſa. xiv. 9. Laſtly, Thy hell is begun already. What makes hell but excluſion from the preſence of God? "Depart "from me, ye curſed." Now ye are gone from God already, with the curſe upon you. That ſhall be your puniſhment at length (if ye return it) which is now your choice. As a gracious ſtate is a ſtate of glory, in the bud, ſo a graceleſs ſtate is a hell in the bud, which, if it continue, will come to perfection at length.

Motive 3. Conſider the dreadful inſtances of the wrath of God; and let them ſerve to awaken thee, to flee out of this ſtate. Conſider, (1.) How it has fallen on men. Even, in this world, many have been ſet up as monuments of divine vengeance, that others might fear. Wrath has ſwept away multitudes, who have fallen together by the hand of an angry God. Conſider how the Lord "ſpared not the old world, "bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungod-"ly: and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomor-"rah into aſhes, condemned them with an overthrow,

" making them an example unto thoſe that after " ſhould live ungodly," 2 Pet. ii. 5, 6. But it is yet more dreadful to think of that weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth, amongſt thoſe, who " in hell " lift up their eyes," but cannot get a " drop of wa- " ter to cool their tongues." Believe theſe things, and be warned by them; leſt deſtruction come upon thee for a warning to others. (2.) Conſider how wrath fell upon the fallen angels, whoſe caſe is abſolutely hopeleſs. They were the firſt that ventured to break the hedge of the divine law; and God ſet them up for monuments of his wrath againſt ſin. They once " left their own habitation," and were never allowed to look in again at the hole of the door; but they are " reſerved in everlaſting chains of darkneſs " unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 6. Laſtly, Behold how an angry God dealt with his own ſon, ſtanding in the room of elect ſinners, Rom. viii. 32. " God ſpared not his own Son." Sparing mercy might have been expected, if any at all. If any perſon could have obtained it, ſurely his own Son would have got it: but he ſpared him not. The Father's delight is made a man of ſorrows: he who is the wiſdom of God becomes ſore amazed, ready to faint away in a fit of horror. The weight of this wrath makes him ſweat great drops of blood. By the fierceneſs of this fire, his heart " was like wax melt- " ed in the midſt of his bowels." Behold here how ſevere God is againſt ſin! The ſun was ſtruck blind with this terrible ſight, rocks were rent, graves opened, death, as it were, in the exceſs of aſtoniſhment, letting its priſoners ſlip away. What is a deluge, a ſhower of fire and brimſtone on Sodomites, the terrible noiſe of a diſſolving world, the whole fabric of heaven and earth falling down at once, angels caſt down from heaven into the bottomleſs pit! What are all theſe, I ſay, in compariſon with this, GOD ſuffering! groaning! dying upon a croſs! Infinite holineſs did it, to make ſin look like itſelf, viz. infinite-

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ly odious. And will men live at eaſe, while expoſed to this wrath?

Laſtly, Conſider what a God he is with whom thou haſt to do, whoſe wrath thou art liable unto. He is a God of infinite knowledge and wiſdom: ſo that none of thy ſins, however ſecret, can be hid from him. He infallibly finds out all means, whereby wrath may be executed, toward the ſatisfying of juſtice. He is of infinite power, and ſo can do what he will againſt the ſinner. How heavy muſt the ſtrokes of wrath be, which are laid on by an omnipotent hand! Infinite power can make the ſinner priſoner, even when he is in his greateſt rage againſt Heaven. It can bring again the ſeveral parcels of duſt out of the grave, put them together again, reunite the ſoul and body, ſiſt them before the tribunal, hurry them away to the pit, and hold them up with the one hand, through eternity, while they are laſhed with the other. He is infinitely juſt, and therefore muſt puniſh; it were acting contrary to his nature to ſuffer the ſinner to eſcape wrath. Hence the executing of this wrath is pleaſing to him: for though the Lord hath no delight in the death of a ſinner, as it is the deſtruction of his own creature; yet he delights in it as it is the execution of juſtice. "Upon the wicked he ſhall reign "ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and an horrible tem-"peſt." Mark the reaſon: "For the righteous Lord "loveth righteouſneſs," Pſal. xi. 6, 7. "I will cauſe "my fury to reſt upon them, and I will be comfort-"ed," Ezek. v. 13. "I will alſo laugh at your ca-"lamity," Prov. i. 26. Finally, He lives for ever, to purſue the quarrel. Let us therefore conclude, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the liv-"ing God."

Be awakened then, O young ſinner; be awakened O old ſinner, who art yet in the ſtate thou waſt born in. Your ſecurity is none of God's allowance; it is the ſleep of death: riſe out of it, ere the pit cloſe its mouth on you. It is true, you may put on a breaſt-

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plate of iron, make your brow braſs, and your heart as an adamant: who can help it? But God will break that brazen brow and make that adamantine heart, at laſt, to fly into a thouſand pieces. Ye may, if you will, labour to put theſe things out of your heads, that ye may yet ſleep in a ſound ſkin, though in a ſtate of wrath. Ye may run away with the arrows ſticking in your conſciences, to your work, to work them away! or to your beds to ſleep them out; or to company, to ſport and laugh them away: but convictions, ſo ſtifled, will have a fearful reſurrection; and the day is coming, when the arrows of wrath ſhall ſo ſtick in thy ſoul, as thou ſhalt never be able to pluck them out through the ages of eternity, unleſs thou take warning in time.

But, if any deſire to flee from the wrath to come, and for that end to know what courſe to take, I offer them theſe few advices; and obteſt and beſeech them, as they love their own ſouls, to fall in with them. (1.) Retire by yourſelves into ſome ſecret place, and there meditate on this your miſery. Believe it, and fix your thoughts on it. Let each put the queſtion to himſelf, How can I live in this ſtate? how can I die in it? how will I riſe again and ſtand before the tribunal of God in it? (2.) Conſider ſeriouſly the ſin of your nature, heart and life. A kindly ſight of wrath flows from a deep ſenſe of ſin. They who ſee themſelves exceeding ſinful, will find no great difficulty to perceive themſelves to be heirs of wrath. (3.) Labour to juſtify God in this matter. To quarrel with God about it, and to rage like a wild bull in a net, will but fix you the more in it. Humiliation of ſoul, before the Lord, is neceſſary for an eſcape. God will not ſell deliverance, but freely gives it to thoſe who ſee themſelves altogether unworthy of his favour. Laſtly, Turn your eyes, O priſoners of hope, towards the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and embrace him, as he offereth himſelf in the goſpel. "There "is no ſalvation in any other," Acts iv. 12. God is

a conſuming fire; ye are children of wrath: if the Mediator interpoſe not betwixt him and you, ye are undone for ever. If ye would be ſafe, come under his ſhadow: one drop of that wrath cannot fall there, for he "delivereth us from the wrath to come," 1 Theſſ. i. 10. Accept of him in his covenant, where-in he offereth himſelf to thee: and ſo thou ſhalt, as the captive woman, redeem thy life, by marrying the conqueror. His blood will quench that fire of wrath, which burns againſt thee: in the white raiment of his righteouſneſs thou ſhalt be ſafe; for no ſtorm of wrath can pierce it.

II. I ſhall drop a few words to the ſaints.

Firſt, "Remember——that at that time" (namely, when ye were in your natural ſtate) "ye were "without Chriſt,—having no hope, and without God "in the world." Call to mind that ſtate ye were in formerly: and review the miſery of it. There are five memorials I may thence give in to the whole aſſembly of the ſaints, who are no more children of wrath; but "heirs of God, and joint heirs with "Chriſt," though as yet in their minority. (1.) Remember, that in the day our Lord took you by the hand, ye were in no better condition than others. O what moved him to take you, when he paſſed by your neighbours! he found you children of wrath, even as others: but he did not leave you ſo. He came into the common priſon where ye lay in your fetters, even as others: and, from amongſt the multitude of condemned malefactors, he picked out you, commanded your fetters to be taken off, put a pardon in your hand, and brought you into "the glorious liberty of "the children of God," while he left others in the devil's fetters. (2.) Remember, there was nothing in you to engage him to love you, in the day he firſt appeared for your deliverance. Ye were "children "of wrath even as others;" fit for hell, and altogether unfit for heaven: yet the King brought you into the palace; the King's ſon made love to you, a con-

condemned criminal, and eſpouſed you to himſelf, on the day in which ye might have been led forth to execution. "Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemeth good "in thy ſight," Mat. xi. 26. (3.) Remember, ye were fitter to be loathed than loved in that day. Wonder that, when he ſaw you in your blood, he looked not at you with abhorrence, and paſſed by you. Wonder, that ever ſuch a time could be a time of love, Ezek. xvi. 8. (4.) Remember ye are decked with borrowed feathers. It is his comelineſs which is upon you, verſe 14. It was he that took off your priſon-garments, and cloathed you with robes of righteouſneſs, garments of ſalvation; garments wherewith ye are arrayed as "the lillies which toil not, neither "do they ſpin." He took the chains from off your arms, the rope from about your neck: put you in ſuch a dreſs, as ye might be fit for the court of heaven, even to eat at the King's table. (5.) Remember your "faults this day," as Pharaoh's butler, who had forgotten Joſeph. Mind how you have forgotten, and how unkindly you have treated him, who remembered you in your low eſtate. "Is this your kindneſs to "your friend?" In the day of your deliverance, did ye think ye could have requited him your Lord.

Secondly, Pity the children of wrath, the world that lies in wickedneſs. Can ye be unconcerned for them, ye who were once in the ſame condition? Ye have got aſhore indeed, but your fellows are yet in hazard of periſhing; and will not ye make them all poſſible help for their deliverance. What they are, ye ſometimes were. This may draw pity from you, and engage you to uſe all means for their recovery. See Tit. iii. 1, 2, 3.

Thirdly, Admire that matchleſs love, which brought you out of the ſtate of wrath. Chriſt's love was active love; he "loved thy ſoul from the pit of "corruption." It was no eaſy work to purchaſe the life of the condemned ſinner; but he gave his life for thy life. He gave his precious blood to quench

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that flame of wrath, which otherwife would have burnt thee up. Men get the beft view of the ftars from the bottom of a deep pit: and from this pit of mifery, into which thou waft caft by the firft Adam, thou mayft get the beft view of the Sun of righteoufnefs, in all its dimenfions. He is the fecond Adam who took thee out of the "horrible pit," and out of the "mi-"ry clay." How broad were the fkirts of that love, which covered fuch a multitude of fins! Behold the length of it, reaching "from everlafting to everlaft-"ing," Pfal. ciii. 17. the depth of it, going fo low as to deliver thee "from the loweft hell," Pfal. lxxxvi. 13. the height of it, in raifing thee up to "fit in hea-"venly places," Eph. ii. 6.

Fourthly, Be humble, carry low fails, "walk foft-"ly all your years." Be not proud of your gifts, graces, privileges, or attainments; but remember ye "were children of wrath, even as others." The pea-cock walks flowly, hangs down his ftarry feathers, while he looks to his black feet. "Look ye to the "hole of the pit, whence ye are digged," and walk humbly, as it becomes free grace's debtors.

Laftly, Be wholly for your Lord. Every wife is obliged to be dutiful to her hufband; but double ties lie upon her who was taken from a prifon or a dung-hill. If your Lord has delivered you from wrath, you ought, upon that very account, to be wholly his; to act for him, to fuffer for him, and do whatever he calls you to. The faints have no reafon to complain of their lot in the world, whatever it be. Well may they bear the crofs for him, by whom the curfe was born away from them. Well may they bear the wrath of men in his caufe, who has freed them from the wrath of God; and cheerfully go to a fire for him, by whom hell-fire is quenched to them. Soul and body, and all thou hadft in the world were fometime under wrath: he has removed that wrath; fhall not all thefe be at his fervice? That thy foul is not overwhelmed with the wrath of God,

is owing purely to Jeſus Chriſt: and ſhall it not then be a temple for his ſpirit? That thy heart is not filled with horror and deſpair is owing to him only; to whom then ſhould it be devoted, but to him alone? That thine eyes are not blinded with the ſmoke of the pit, thy hands are not fettered with chains of darkneſs, thy tongue is not broiling in the fire of hell, and thy feet are not ſtanding in that lake that burns with fire and brimſtone, is owing purely to Jeſus Chriſt: and ſhall not theſe eyes be employed for him, theſe hands act for him, that tongue ſpeak for him, and theſe feet ſpeedily run his errands? To him who believes he is a child of wrath, even as others, but is now delivered by the bleſſed Jeſus, nothing will appear too much, to do or ſuffer for his deliverer, when he has a fair call to it.

III. To conclude with a word to all; let no man think lightly of ſin, which lays the ſinner open to the wrath of God. Let not the ſin of our nature, which wreathes the yoke of God's wrath, ſo early, about our necks, ſeem a ſmall thing in our eyes. Fear the Lord, becauſe of his dreadful wrath. Tremble at the thoughts of ſin, againſt which God has ſuch fiery indignation. Look on his wrath, and ſtand in awe, and ſin not. Do you think this is to preſs you to ſlaviſh fear? If it were ſo, one had better be a ſlave to God with a trembling heart, than a free man to the devil, with a ſeared conſcience, and a heart of adamant. But it is not ſo, you may love him, and thus fear him too; yea, he ought to do it, though ye were ſaints of the firſt magnitude. See Pſal. cxix. 120. Mat. x. 28. Luke xii. 5. Heb. xii. 28, 29. Although ye have paſſed the gulph of wrath, being in Jeſus Chriſt, yet it is but reaſonable your hearts ſhiver, when you look back to it. Your ſin ſtill deſerves wrath, even as the ſin of others: and it would be terrible to be in a fiery furnace; although, by a miracle, we were ſo fenced againſt it, as that it could not not harm us.

HEAD

HEAD III.

Man's utter inability to recover himself.

ROMANS v. 6.

For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly.

JOHN vi. 44.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him.

WE have now had a view of the total corruption of man's nature, and that load of wrath which lies on him, that gulf of miſery he is plunged into in his natural ſtate. But there is one part of his miſery that deſerves particular conſideration namely, his "utter inability to recover himſelf," the knowledge of which is neceſſary for the due humiliation of a ſinner. What I deſign here is only to propoſe a few things, whereby to convince the unregenerate man of this his inability; that he may ſee an abſolute need of Chriſt, and of the power of his grace.

As a man that is fallen into a pit, cannot be ſuppoſed to help himſelf out of it, but by one of two ways; either by doing all himſelf alone, or taking hold of, and improving the help offered him by others; ſo an unconverted man cannot be ſuppoſed to help himſelf out of that ſtate but either in the way of the law, or covenant of works; by doing all himſelf without Chriſt, or elſe in the way of the goſpel, or covenant of grace, by exerting his own ſtrength to lay hold upon

pon, and to make uſe of the help offered him by a Saviour. But, alas! the unconverted man is dead in the pit, and cannot help himſelf either of theſe ways: not the firſt way; for the firſt text tells us, that when our Lord came to help us, we were without ſtrength, unable to recover ourſelves. We were ungodly, therefore under a burden of guilt and wrath; yet without ſtrength, unable to ſtand under it; and unable to throw it off, or get from under it: ſo that all mankind had undoubtedly periſhed, had not Chriſt died for the ungodly, and brought help to them, who could never have recovered. But when Chriſt comes, and offereth help to ſinners, cannot they take it? cannot they improve help, when it comes to their hands? No; the ſecond text tells us, they cannot; "No man "can come unto me," (i. e. believe in me, John vi. 35.) "except the father draw him." This is a drawing which enables them to come, who, till then, could not come; and therefore could not help themſelves, by improving the help offered. It is a drawing, which is always effectual; for it can be no leſs than hearing and learning of the Father, which whoſo partakes of, cometh to Chriſt, ver. 25. Therefore it is not drawing in the way of mere moral ſuaſion, which may be, yea, and always is, ineffectual. But it is drawing by mighty power, Eph. i. 19. abſolutely neceſſary for them that have no power in themſelves, to come and take hold of the offered help.

Hearken then, O unregenerate man, and be convinced, that as thou art in a moſt miſerable ſtate by nature; ſo thou art utterly unable to recover thyſelf any manner of way. Thou art ruined, and what way wilt thou go to work, to recover thyſelf? Which of the two ways wilt thou chuſe? Wilt thou try it alone, or wilt thou make uſe of help? Wilt thou fall on the way of works, or on the way of the goſpel? I know very well, thou wilt not ſo much as try the way of the goſpel, till once thou haſt found the recovery impracticable, in the way of the law. Therefore we

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ſhall begin where corrupt nature teaches men to begin, viz. at the way of the law of works.

I. Sinner, I would have thee believe that thy working will never effect it. Work, and do thy beſt; thou ſhalt never be able to work thyſelf out of this ſtate of corruption and wrath. Thou muſt have Chriſt, elſe thou ſhalt periſh eternally. It is only Chriſt in you, can be the hope of glory. But if thou wilt needs try it, then I muſt lay before thee, from the unalterable word of the living God, two things which thou muſt do for thyſelf. And if thou canſt do them, it muſt be yielded that thou art able to recover thyſelf: but if not, then thou canſt do nothing in this way for thy recovery.

FIRST, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the "commandments," Matth. xix. 17. That is, if thou wilt by doing, enter into life, then perfectly keep the ten commands; for the ſcope of theſe words is to beat down the pride of the man's heart, and to let him ſee an abſolute need of a Saviour, from the impoſſibility of keeping the law. The anſwer is given ſuitable to the addreſs. Our Lord checks him for his compliment, Good Maſter, ver. 16. telling him, "There is none good but one, that is God." ver. 17. As if he had ſaid, You think yourſelf a good man and me another; but where goodneſs is ſpoken of, men, and angels may vail their faces before the good God. And as to his queſtion, wherein he diſcovered his legal diſpoſition, Chriſt does not anſwer him, ſaying, "Believe, and thou ſhalt be ſaved;" that would not have been ſo ſeaſonable in the caſe of one, who thought he could do well enough for himſelf, if he but knew what thing he ſhould do: but, ſuitable to the humour the man was in, he bids him "keep the "commandments:" keep them nicely and accurately, as thoſe that watch malefactors in priſon, leſt any of them eſcape, and their life go for theirs. See then, O unregenerate man, what thou canſt do in this matter;

ter; for if thou wilt recover thyſelf in this way, thou muſt perfectly keep the commandments of God.

And, (1.) Thy obedience muſt be perfect, in reſpect of the principle of it; that is, thy ſoul, the principle of action, muſt be perfectly pure, and altogether without ſin. For the law requires all moral perfection, not only actual, but habitual: and ſo condemns original ſin; impurity of nature, as well as of actions. Now, if thou canſt bring this to paſs, thou ſhalt be able to anſwer that queſtion of Solomon's, ſo as never one of Adam's poſterity could yet anſwer it, Prov. xx. 9. "Who can ſay, I have made my heart clean?" But if thou canſt not, the very want of this perfection is a ſin, and ſo lays thee open to the curſe, and cuts thee off from life. Yea, it makes all thine actions, ſinful; "For who can being a clean thing out of an "unclean?" Job xiv. 4. And doſt thou think by ſin, to help thyſelf out of ſin and miſery; (2.) Thy obedience muſt alſo be perfect in parts. It muſt be as broad as the whole law of God: if thou lackeſt one thing, thou art undone; for the law denounceth the curſe on him that continueth not in every thing written therein, Gal. iii. 10. Thou muſt give internal and external obedience to the whole law; keep all the commandments in heart and life. If thou breakeſt any one of them, that will inſure thy ruin. A vain thought or idle word, will ſtill ſhut thee up under the curſe. (3.) It muſt be perfect in reſpect of degrees; as was the obedience of Adam, while he ſtood in his innocence. This the law requires, and will accept of no leſs, Matth. xxii. 37. "Thou ſhalt love the Lord "thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, "and with all thy mind." If one degree of that love required by the law be wanting; if each part of thy obedience be not ſcrewed up to the greateſt height commanded; that want is a breach of the law, and ſo leaves thee ſtill under the curſe. One may bring as many buckets of water to a houſe that is on fire, as he is able to carry, and yet it may be conſumed;

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and will be ſo, if he bring not as many as will quench the fire. Even ſo, although thou ſhouldſt do what thou art able, in keeping the commands; if thou fail in the leaſt degree of obedience, which the law enjoins; thou art certainly ruined for ever: unleſs thou take hold of Chriſt, renouncing all thy righteouſneſs as filthy rags. See Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 19. Laſtly, It muſt be perpetual, as the man Chriſt's obedience was, who always did the things that pleaſed the Father; for the tenor of the law is, "Curſed is he that "continueth not in all things written in the law to "do them." Hence, though Adam's obedience was for a while abſolutely perfect; yet, becauſe at length he tripped in one point, viz. in eating the forbidden fruit, he fell under the curſe of the law. If one ſhould live a dutiful ſubject to his prince, till the cloſe of his days, and then conſpire againſt him, he muſt die for his treaſon. Even ſo, though thou ſhouldſt, all the time of thy life, live in perfect obedience to the law of God; and only at the hour of death entertain a vain thought, or pronounce an idle word, that idle word, or vain thought, would blot out all thy former righteouſneſs, and ruin thee; namely, in this way, in which thou art ſeeking to recover thyſelf.

Now, ſuch is the obedience thou muſt perform, if thou wouldſt recover thyſelf in the way of the law. But, though thou ſhouldſt thus obey, the law ſtakes thee down in the ſtate of wrath, till another demand of it be ſatisfied, viz.

SECONDLY, Thou muſt "pay what thou ow-"eſt." It is undeniable thou art a ſinner: and whatever thou mayſt be in time to come, juſtice muſt be ſatisfied for thy ſin already committed. The honour of the law muſt be maintained, by thy ſuffering the denounced wrath. It may be thou haſt changed thy courſe of life, or art now reſolved to do it, and ſet about the keeping of the commands of God: but what haſt thou done, or what wilt thou do with the old debt?

debt? Your obedience to God though it were perfect, is a debt due to him, for the time wherein it is performed; and can no more satisfy for former sins, than a tenant's paying the current year's rent, can satisfy the master for all bygones. Can the paying of new debts acquit a man from old accounts? Nay, deceive not yourselves, you will find these "laid up in store with "God, and sealed up among his treasures," Deut. xxxii. 34. It remains then, that either thou must bear that wrath, to which for thy sin thou art liable, according to the law; or else thou must acknowledge thou canst not bear it, and thereupon have recourse to the surety, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me now ask thee, Art thou able to satisfy the justice of God? Canst thou pay thy own debt? Surely not: for, seeing he is an infinite God, whom thou hast offended; the punishment, being suited to the quality of the offence, must be infinite. But so it is, thy punishment or sufferings for sin cannot be infinite in value, seeing thou art a finite creature: therefore, they must be infinite in duration or continuance; that is, they must be eternal. And so all thy sufferings in this world are but an earnest of what thou must suffer in the world to come.

Now, sinner, if thou canst answer these demands, thou mayst recover thyself in the way of the law. But art thou not conscious of thy inability to do any of these things, much more to do them all? yet if thou do not all, thou dost nothing. Turn then to what course of life thou wilt, thou art still in a state of wrath. Screw up thy obedience to the greatest height thou canst; suffer what God lays upon thee, yea, add, if thou wilt, to the burden, and walk under all, without the least impatience; yet all this will not satisfy the demands of the law; and therefore thou art still a ruined creature. Alas! sinner, what art thou doing, while thou striveſt to help thyself; but dost not receive, and unite with Jesus Christ? Thou art labouring in the fire, wearying thyself for very vanity; labouring

labouring to enter into heaven by the door which Adam's ſon ſo bolted, as neither he, nor any of his loſt poſterity can ever enter by it. Doſt thou not ſee the flaming ſword of juſtice, keeping thee off from the tree of life? Doſt not thou hear the law denouncing a curſe on thee, for all thou art doing; even for thy obedience, thy prayers, thy tears, thy reformation of life, &c. becauſe, being under the law's dominion, thy beſt works are not ſo good, as it requires them to be, under the pain of the curſe? Believe it, Sirs, if you live and die out of Chriſt, without being actually united to him as the ſecond Adam, a life-giving ſpirit, and without coming under the covert of his atoning blood; though ye ſhould do the utmoſt that any man on earth can do, in keeping the commands of God, ye ſhall never ſee the face of God in peace. If you ſhould, from this moment, bid an eternal farewel to this world's joy, and all the affairs thereof; and henceforth buſy yourſelves with nothing, but the ſalvation of your ſouls: if you ſhould go into ſome wilderneſs, live upon the graſs of the field, and be companions to dragons and owls; if you ſhould retire to ſome dark cavern of the earth, and weep there for your ſins, until you have wept yourſelves blind, yea, wept out all the moiſture of your body; if ye ſhould confeſs with your tongue, unti lit cleave to the roof of your mouth; pray, till your knees grow hard as horns; faſt, till your body become like a ſkeleton; and after all this, give it to be burnt; the word is gone out of the Lord's mouth in righteouſneſs, and cannot return; you ſhould periſh for ever, notwithſtanding of all this; as not being in Chriſt, John xvi. 6. "No man cometh unto the Father. but "by me," Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there ſalvation in "any other." Mark xvi. 6. "He that believeth not "ſhall be damned."

Object. But God is a merciful God, and he knows we are not able to anſwer theſe demands; we hope therefore to be ſaved, if we do as well as we can, and keep the commands as well as we are able, *Anſ.* (1.)

Though thou art able to do many things, thou art not able to do one thing aright: thou canſt do nothing acceptable to God, being out of Chriſt, John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do nothing." An unrenewed man, as thou art, can do nothing but ſin; as we have already evinced. Thy beſt actions are ſin, and ſo they increaſe thy debt to juſtice: how then can it be expected they ſhould leſſen it? (2.) If God ſhould offer to ſave men, upon condition that they did all they could do, in obedience to his commands, we have ground to think, that theſe who would betake themſelves to that way, ſhould never be ſaved: for where is the man that does as well as he can? Who ſees not many falſe ſteps he has made, which he might have evited? There are ſo many things to be done, ſo many temptations to carry us out of the road of duty, and our nature is ſo very apt to be ſet on fire of hell, that we would ſurely fail, even in ſome point, that is within the compaſs of our natural abilities. But, (3.) Though thou ſhouldſt do all thou art able to do. in vain doſt thou hope to be ſaved in that way. What word of God is this hope of thine founded on? It is neither founded on law nor goſpel; and therefore it is but a deluſion. It is not founded on the goſpel, for the goſpel leads the ſoul out of itſelf, to Jeſus Chriſt for all; and it eſtabliſheth the law, Rom. iii. 13. Whereas this hope of yours cannot be eſtabliſhed, but on the ruins of the law, which God will magnify and make honourable. And hence it appears, that it is not founded on the law neither. When God ſet Adam a working for happineſs to himſelf and his poſterity, perfect obedience was the conditiion required of him; and a curſe was denounced in caſe of diſobedience. The law being broken by him, he and his poſterity were ſubjected to the penalty, for ſin committed, and withal ſtill bound to perfect obedience: for it is abſurd to think, that man's ſinning, and ſuffering for his ſin, ſhould free him from his duty of obedience to his Creator. When Chriſt came in the

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room of the elect to purchase their salvation, the same were the terms. Justice had the elect under arrest: if he minds to deliver them, the terms are known. He must satisfy for their sin, by suffering the punishment due to it; he must do what they cannot do, to wit, obey the law perfectly; and to fulfil all righteousness. Accordingly, all this he did, and so became "the end of the law for righteousness, to every one "that believeth," Rom. x. 4. And now dost thou think, God will abate of these terms to thee, when his own Son got no abatement of them! Expect it not, though thou shouldst beg it with tears of blood; for if they prevailed, they behoved to prevail against the truth, justice and honour of God, Gal. iii. 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all "things which are written in the book of the law to "do them." ver. 12. "And the law is not of faith: "but, the man that doth them, shall live in them." It is true, that God is merciful: but cannot he be merciful unless he save you in a way that is neither consistent with his law nor gospel? Hath not his goodness and mercy sufficiently appeared, in sending the Son of his love, to do "what "the law could not do, in that it was weak through "the flesh;" He has provided help for them that cannot help themselves: but thou, insensible of thine own weakness, wilt needs think to recover thyself by thine own works, while thou art no more able to do it, than to remove mountains of brass out of their place. Wherefore I conclude, thou art utterly unable to recover thyself by the way of works or of the law. O that thou wouldst conclude the same concerning thyself!

II. Let us try next what the sinner can do to recover himself in the way of the gospel. It is likely, thou thinkest, that howbeit thou canst not do all by thyself alone; yet Jesus Christ offering thee help, thou canst of thyself, embrace it, and use it to thy recovery. But, O sinner, be convinced of thine absolute need of the grace of Christ: for truly, there is help offered,

but thou canſt not accept of it: there is a rope caſt out to hale ſhipwrecked ſinners to land: but, alas! they have no hands to catch hold of it. They are like infants expoſed in the open field, that muſt ſtarve, though their food be lying by them, unleſs one put it into their mouths. To convince natural men of this, let it be conſidered.

Firſt, That although Chriſt is offered in the goſpel, yet they cannot believe in him. Saving faith is the faith of God's elect; the ſpecial gift of God to them, wrought in them by his Spirit. Salvation is offered to them that will believe in Chriſt, but "how can ye "believe?" John v. 44. It is offered to theſe that will come to Chriſt; but "no man can come unto "him, except the Father draw him." It is offered to them that will look to him, as lifted upon the pole of the goſpel, Iſa. xlv. 22. but the natural man is ſpiritually blind, Rev. iii. 17. and as to the things of the Spirit of God, he "cannot know them," for they are "ſpiritually diſcerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Nay, "whoſoever will," he is welcome; "let him come," Rev. xxii. 17. but there muſt be "a day of pow-"er" on the ſinner, before he will be "willing," Pſal. cx. 3.

Secondly, Man naturally has nothing, wherewithal to improve, to his recovery, the help brought in by the goſpel. He is caſt away in a ſtate of wrath; but is bound hand and foot, ſo that he cannot lay hold of the cords of love, thrown out to him in the goſpel. The moſt ſkilful artificer cannot work without inſtruments; nor can the moſt cunning muſician play well on an inſtrument that is out of tune. How can one believe, how can he repent, whoſe underſtanding is darkneſs, Eph. v. 8. whoſe heart is a ſtony heart, inflexible, inſenſible, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. whoſe affections are wholly diſordered and diſtempered; who is averſe to good, and bent to evil? The arms of natural abilities are too ſhort, to reach ſupernatural help: hence thoſe who moſt excel in them are oft-times

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moſt eſtranged from ſpiritual things, Matth xi. 25. "Thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and pru-"dent."

Thirdly, Man cannot work a ſaving change on himſelf; but ſo changed he muſt be, elſe he can neither believe nor repent, nor ever ſee heaven. No action can be without a ſuitable principle. Believing, repenting, and the like, are the product of the new nature; and can never be produced by the old corrupt nature. Now, what can the natural man do in this matter? He muſt be regenerate, "begotten again unto a live-"ly hope:" but as the child cannot be active in his own generation, ſo a man cannot be active, but paſſive only, in his own regeneration. The heart is ſhut againſt Chriſt: man cannot open it, only God can do it by his grace, Acts xvi. 14. He is "dead in "ſin:" he muſt be quickened, raiſed out of his grave; who can do this but God himſelf? Eph. ii. 1. 5. Nay, he muſt be "created in Chriſt Jeſus unto "good works," Eph. ii. 10. Theſe are works of omnipotency, and can be done by no leſs power.

Fourthly, Man, in his depraved ſtate, is under an utter inability to do any thing truly good, as was cleared before at large: how then can he obey the goſpel? His nature is the very reverſe of the goſpel: how can he, of himſelf, fall in with that device of ſalvation, and accept the offered remedy? The corruption of man's nature infallibly concludes his utter inability to recover himſelf any manner of way: and whoſo is convinced of the one, muſt needs admit the other; for they ſtand and fall together. Were all the purchaſe of Chriſt offered to the unregenerate man, for one good thought, he cannot command it, 2 Cor. iii. 5. "Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves, "to think any thing as of ourſelves." Were it offered on condition of a good word, yet "how can ye "being evil, ſpeak good things?" Mat. xii. 35. Nay, were it left to yourſelves, to chuſe what is eaſieſt,

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Chriſt himſelf tells you, John xv. 5. "Without me "ye can do nothing."

Laſtly, The natural man cannot but reſiſt the Lord, offering to help him; howbeit, that reſiſtance is infallibly overcome in the elect, by converting grace. Can the ſtony heart chuſe but reſiſt the ſtroke? There is not only an inability, but an enmity and obſtinacy in man's will by nature. God knows, O natural man, (whether thou knoweſt it or not), "that thou "art obſtinate, and thy neck is an iron ſinew, and "thy brow braſs," Iſa. xlviii. 4. and cannot be overcome, but by him, who hath "broken the gates of "braſs, and cut the bars of iron in ſunder." Hence is there ſuch hard work in converting of a ſinner. Sometimes he ſeems to be caught in the net of the goſpel; yet quickly he ſlips away again. The hook catcheth hold of him; but he ſtruggles, till getting free of it, he makes away with a bleeding wound. When good hopes are conceived of him, by theſe that travel in birth, for the forming of Chriſt in him; there is oft-times nothing brought forth but wind. The deceitful heart makes many a ſhift to avoid a Saviour, and to cheat the man of his eternal happineſs. Thus the natural man lies in a ſtate of ſin and wrath, utterly unable to recover himſelf.

Object. (1.) If we be under an utter inability to do any good, how can God require us to do it? *Anſ.* God making man upright, Eccl. vii. 29. gave him a power to do every thing he ſhould require of him: this power man loſt by his own fault. We were bound to ſerve God and to do whatſoever he commanded us, as being his creatures; and alſo we were under the ſuperadded tie of a covenant, for that effect. Now, we having, by our own fault, diſabled ourſelves; ſhall God loſe his right of requiring our taſk, becauſe we have thrown away the ſtrength he gave us, wherewithal to perform it? Has the creditor no right to require payment of his money, becauſe the debtor has ſquandered it away, and is not able to pay him? Truly,

Truly, if God can require no more of us than we are able to do, we need no more to ſave us from wrath, but to make ourſelves unable for every duty, and to incapacitate ourſelves for ſerving of God any manner of way, as profane men frequently do: and ſo the deeper one is immerſed in ſin, he will be the more ſecure from wrath; for where God can require no duty of us we do not ſin in omitting it; and where there is no ſin there can be no wrath. (As to what may be urged by the unhumbled ſoul, againſt the putting of our ſtock in Adam's hand; the righteouſneſs of that diſpenſation was cleared before.) But moreover, the unrenewed man is daily throwing away the very remains of natural abilities; that light and ſtrength which are to be found amongſt the ruins of mankind. Nay, farther, he will not believe his own utter inability to help himſelf, ſo that out of his own mouth he will be condemned. Even thoſe who make their natural impotency to good, a covert to their ſloth, do, with others, delay the work of turning to God from time to time; under convictions, make large promiſes of reformation, which afterward they never regard; and delay their repentance to a death-bed, as if they could help themſelves in a moment, which ſpeaks them to be far from a due ſenſe of their natural inability, whatever they pretend.

Now, if God can require of men the duty they are not able to do; he can in juſtice puniſh them for their not doing it, notwithſtanding of their inability. If he have power to exact the debt of conſcience, he has alſo power to caſt the inſolvent debtor into priſon, for his not paying of it. Further, though unregenerate men have no gracious abilities; yet they want not natural abilities, which nevertheleſs they will not improve. There are many things they can do, which they do not, they will not do them; and therefore their condemnation will be juſt. Nay, all their inability to good is voluntary; they will not come to Chriſt, John v. 40. They will not repent,

they

they will die, Ezek. xviii. 15. So they will be juſtly condemned, becauſe they will not turn to God, nor come to Chriſt; but love their chains better than their liberty, and darkneſs rather than light, John iii. 19.

Object. (2.) Why do you then preach Chriſt to us, call us to come to him, to believe, repent, and uſe the means of ſalvation? *Anſ.* Becauſe it is your duty ſo to do. Is it your duty to accept of Chriſt, as he is offered in the goſpel; to repent of your ſins, and to be holy in all manner of converſation; theſe things are commanded you of God; and his command, not your ability, is the meaſure of your duty. Moreover, theſe calls and exhortations are the means, that God is pleaſed to make uſe of, for converting his elect, and working grace in their hearts: to them, "faith "cometh by hearing," Rom. x. 17. while they are as unable to help themſelves as the reſt of mankind are. Upon very good grounds may we, at the command of God, who raiſeth the dead, go to their graves and cry on his name, "Awake thou that ſleepeſt, "and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee "light," Eph. v. 14. And ſeeing the elect are not to be known and diſtinguiſhed from others before converſion: as the ſun ſhines on the blind man's face, and the rain falls on the rocks as well as on the fruitful plains; ſo we preach Chriſt to all, and ſhoot the arrow at venture, which God himſelf directs, as he ſees meet. Moreover, theſe calls and exhortations are not altogether in vain, even to thoſe that are not converted by them. Such perſons may be convinced, though they be not converted: although they be not ſanctified by theſe means, yet they may be reſtrained by them, from running into that exceſs of wickedneſs, which otherwiſe they would arrive at. The means of grace ſerve, as it were, to embalm many dead ſouls which are never quickened by them: tho' they do not reſtore them to life; yet they keep them from ſmelling ſo rank as otherwiſe they would do.

Finally,

Finally, Though ye cannot recover yourſelves, nor take hold of the ſaving help offered to you in the goſpel: yet even by the power of nature, ye may uſe the outward and ordinary means, whereby Chriſt communicates the benefits of redemption to ruined ſinners, who are utterly unable to recover themſelves out of the ſtate of ſin and wrath. Ye may and can, if ye pleaſe, do many things that would ſet you in a fair way for help from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Ye may go ſo far on, as to be "not far from the king-"dom of God," as the diſcreet ſcribe had done, Mark xii. 34. though (it would ſeem) he was deſtitute of ſupernatural abilities. Though ye cannot cure yourſelves, yet ye may come to the pool, where many ſuch diſeaſed perſons as ye are have been cured: though ye have none to put you into it, yet ye may lie at the ſide of it: and "who knows but the Lord "may return and leave a bleſſing behind him? as in the caſe of the impotent man, recorded John v. 5, 6, 7, 8. I hope Satan does not chain you to your houſes, nor ſtake you down on your fields on the Lord's day; but ye are at liberty, and can wait at "the poſts "of wiſdom's doors" if ye will. And when ye come thither, he doth not beat drums at your ears, that ye cannot hear what is ſaid: there is no force upon you, obliging you to apply all you hear to others: ye may apply to yourſelves what belongs to your ſtate and condition: and when ye go home, ye are not fettered in your houſes, where perhaps no religious diſcourſe is to be heard; but ye may retire to ſome ſeparate place, where ye can meditate, and poſe your conſcience with pertinent queſtions, upon what ye have heard. Ye are not poſſeſſed with a dumb devil that ye cannot get your mouth opened in prayer to God. Ye are not ſo driven out of your beds to your worldly buſineſs, and from your worldly buſineſs to your beds again; but ye might, if ye would, beſtow ſome prayers to God upon the caſe of your periſhing ſouls. Ye may examine yourſelves as to the ſtate of

your ſouls, in a ſolemn manner, as in the preſence of God; ye may diſcern that ye have no grace, and that ye are loſt and undone without it; and ye may cry unto God for it.

Theſe things are within the compaſs of natural abilities, and may be practiſed where there is no grace. It muſt aggravate your guilt, that you will not be at ſo much pains about the ſtate and caſe of your precious ſouls.

And if ye do not what ye can do, ye will be condemned not only for your want of grace, but for your deſpiſing of it.

Object. (3.) But all this is needleſs, ſeeing we are utterly unable to help ourſelves out of the ſtate of ſin and wrath. *Anſ.* Give not place to that deluſion, which puts aſunder what God hath joined, namely, the uſe of means, and a ſenſe of our own impotency. If ever the Spirit of God graciouſly influence your ſouls, ye will become thoroughly ſenſible of your abſolute inability, and yet enter upon a vigorous uſe of means. Ye will do for yourſelves, as if ye were to do all: and yet overlook all ye do, as if ye had done nothing. Will ye do nothing for yourſelves, becauſe ye cannot do all? Lay down no ſuch impious concluſion againſt your own ſouls. Do what ye can; and, it may be, while ye are doing what ye can for yourſelves, God will do for you what ye cannot, "Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt?" ſaid Philip to the eunuch: "How can I," ſaith he, "except ſome man "ſhould guide me?" Acts viii. 30, 31. He could not underſtand the ſcripture he read; yet he could read it: he did what he could, he read; and while he was reading, God ſent him an interpreter. The Iſraelites were in a great ſtrait at the Red Sea; and how could they help themſelves, when upon the one hand were mountains, and on the other the enemies garriſon; when Pharaoh and his hoſt were behind them, and the Red ſea before them, what could they do? "Speak unto the children of Iſrael," ſaith the Lord

Lord to Moſes, "that they go forward," Exod. xiv. 15. For what end ſhould they go forward? Can they make a paſſage to themſelves through the ſea? No; but let them go forward, ſaith the Lord; tho' they cannot turn ſea to dry land, yet they can go forward to the ſhore: and ſo they did; and when they did what they could, God did for them what they could not do.

Queſt. Has God promiſed to convert and ſave them, who, in the uſe of means, do what they can towards their own relief? *Anſ.* We may not ſpeak wickedly for God; natural men being "ſtrangers to the cove-"nant of promiſe," Eph. ii. 12. have no ſuch promiſe made to them. Nevertheleſs they do not act rationally, unleſs they exert the powers they have, and do what they can. For (1.) It is poſſible this courſe may ſucceed with them. If ye do what ye can, it may be, God will do for you what you cannot do for yourſelves. This is ſufficient to determine a man, in a matter of the utmoſt importance, ſuch as this, Acts viii. 22. "Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy "heart may be forgiven thee," Joel ii. 14. "Who "knoweth if he will return?" If ſucceſs may be, the trial ſhould be. If, in a wreck at ſea, all the ſailors and paſſengers had betaken themſelves each to a broken board for ſafety; and one of them ſhall ſee all the reſt periſh, notwithſtanding of their utmoſt endeavours to ſave themſelves: yet the very poſſibility of eſcaping by that means, would determine that one ſtill to do his beſt with his board. Why then do not ye reaſon with yourſelves, as the four lepers did, who ſat at the gate of Samaria? 2 Kings vii. 3, 4. Why do ye not ſay, If we ſit ſtill, not doing what we can, we die: let us put it to a trial; if we be ſaved, we ſhall live; if not, we ſhall but die? (2.) It is probable this courſe may ſucceed. God is good and merciful: he loves to ſurpriſe men with his grace, and is often "found of them that ſought him not," Iſa. lxv. 1. If ye do this, ye are ſo far in the road

of your duty: and ye are using the means, which the Lord is wont to bless, for mens spiritual recovery: ye lay yourselves in the way of the great Physician; and so it is probable ye may be healed. Lydia went, with others to the place "where prayer was "wont to be made; and the Lord opened her heart," Acts xvi. 13, 14. Ye plow and sow, though no body can tell you for certain, that you will get so much as your seed again: ye use means for the recovery of your health, though you are not sure if they will succeed. In these cases probability determines you; and why not in this also? Importunity, we see, does very much with men: therefore pray, meditate, desire help of God; be much at the throne of grace, supplicating for grace; and do not faint. Though God regard not you, who, in your present state, are but one mass of sin, universally depraved, and vitiated in all the powers of the soul: yet he may regard his own ordinance. Though he regards not your prayers, your meditations, &c. yet he may regard prayer, meditation, and the like means of his own appointment, and so bless them to you. Wherefore, if ye will not do what ye can: ye are not only dead, but ye declare yourselves unworthy of eternal life.

To conclude, Let the saints admire the freedom and power of grace, which came to them in their helpless condition, made their chains fall off, the iron gate to open to them, raised the fallen creatures; and brought them out of the state of sin and wrath, wherein they would have lain and perished, had they not been mercifully visited. Let the natural man be sensible of his utter inability to recover himself. Know thou art without strength: and canst not come to Christ till thou be drawn. Thou art lost, and canst not help thyself. This may shake the foundation of thy hopes, who never saweſt thy absolute need of Christ, and his grace; but thinkest to shift for thyself by thy civility, morality, drowsy wishes and duties; and by a faith and repentance, which have sprung up out of thy

thy natural powers, without the power and efficacy of the grace of Chriſt. O be convinced of thy abſolute need of Chriſt, and his overcoming grace: believe thy utter inability to recover thyſelf; and ſo thou mayſt be humbled, ſhaken out of thy ſelf-confidence, and lie down in duſt and aſhes, groaning out thy miſerable caſe before the Lord. A kindly ſenſe of thy natural impotency, the impotency of depraved human nature, would be a ſtep towards a delivery.

Thus far of man's natural ſtate, the ſtate of entire depravation.

STATE

STATE III.

NAMELY,

The *State* of *Grace*, or *Begun Recovery*.

HEAD I.

REGENERATION.

1 PET. i. 23.

Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

WE proceed now to the ſtate of grace, the ſtate of begun recovery of human nature, into which all that ſhall partake of eternal happineſs, are tranſlated, ſooner or later, while in this world. It is the reſult of a gracious change, made upon thoſe who ſhall inherit eternal life; which change may be taken up in theſe two. (1.) In oppoſition to their natural real ſtate, the ſtate of corruption, there is a change made upon them in regeneration; whereby their nature is changed. (2.) In oppoſition to their natural relative ſtate, the ſtate of wrath, there is a change made upon them, in their union with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; by which they are ſet beyond the reach of condemnation. Theſe, therefore, namely, regeneration, and union with Chriſt, I deſign to handle, as the great and comprehenſive changes on a ſinner, conſtituting him in the ſtate of grace.

The firſt of theſe we have in the text; together with the outward and ordinary means, by which it is brought

brought about. The apoſtle here, to excite the ſaints to the ſtudy of holineſs, and particularly of brotherly love, put them in mind of their ſpiritual original. He tells them, they were born again; and that of one "incorruptible ſeed, the word of God." This ſpeaks them to be brethren, partakers of the ſame new nature; which is the root from which holineſs, and particularly brotherly love, doth ſpring. We are once born ſinners: we muſt be born again, that we may be ſaints. The ſimple word ſignifies "to be be-"gotten;" and ſo it may be read, Matth. xi. 11. "to "be convinced," Matth. i. 20. and "to be born," Matth. ii. 1. Accordingly the compound word uſed in the text, may be taken in all its full latitude, the laſt notion preſuppoſing the two former: and ſo rege-neration is a ſupernatural real change on the whole man, fitly compared to natural or corporal generation, as will afterwards appear. The ordinary means of re-generation called the ſeed, whereof the new creature is formed, is not corruptible ſeed. Of ſuch indeed our bodies are generated: but the ſpiritual ſeed, of which the new creature is generated, is incorruptible, namely, "the word of God, which liveth and abid-"eth for ever." The ſound of the word of God paſſeth, even as other ſounds do: but the word laſt-eth, liveth, and abideth, in reſpect of its everlaſting effects, on all upon whom it operates. This "word "which by the goſpel is preached unto you," (verſe 25.) impregnated by the Spirit of God, is the means of regeneration; and by it are dead ſinners raiſed to life.

DOCT. "All men in the ſtate of grace are born "again." All gracious perſons, namely, ſuch as are in a ſtate of favour with God, and endowed with gracious qualities and diſpoſitions, are regenerate per-ſons. In diſcourſing this ſubject, I ſhall ſhew what regeneration is; next, why it is ſo called; and then apply the doctrine.

I. For the better underſtanding of the nature of re-

generation, take this along with you in the firſt place; that as there are falſe conceptions in nature, ſo there are alſo in grace: and by theſe many are deluded, miſtaking ſome partial changes made upon them for this great and thorough change. To remove ſuch miſtakes, let theſe few things be conſidered. (1.) Many call the church their mother, whom God will not own to be his children, Cant. i. 6. "My mother's children," (i. e. falſe brethren) "were angry with me." All that are baptized are not born again. Simon was baptized, yet ſtill "in the gall of bitterneſs, and in "the bond of iniquity," Acts viii. 13, 23. Where Chriſtianity is the religion of the country, many will be called by the name of Chriſt, who have no more of him but the name: and no wonder, ſeeing the devil had his goats among Chriſt's ſheep, in theſe places where but few profeſſed the Chriſtian religion; 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were "not of us." (2.) Good education is not regeneration. Education may chain up mens luſts, but cannot change their hearts. A wolf is ſtill a ravenous beaſt, though it be in chains. Joaſh was very devout during the life of his good tutor Jehoiada; but afterwards he quickly ſhewed what ſpirit he was of, by his ſudden apoſtaſy, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. 17, 18. Good example is of mighty influence to change the outward man: but that change often goes off, when one changes his company; of which the world affords many ſad inſtances. (3.) A turning from open profanity, to civility and ſobriety, falls ſhort of this ſaving change. Some are, for a while, very looſe, eſpecially in their younger years: but at length they reform, and leave their profane courſes. Here is a change, yet but ſuch a one as may be found in men utterly void of the grace of God, and whoſe righteouſneſs is ſo far from exceeding, that it doth not come up to the "righte- "ouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees." (4.) One may engage in all the outward duties of religion, and yet not be born again. Though lead be caſt into va-

rious

rious ſhapes, it remains ſtill but a baſe metal. Men may "eſcape the pollutions of the world," and yet be but dogs and ſwine, 2 Pet. ii. 20, 22. All the external acts of religion are within the compaſs of natural abilities. Yea, hypocrites may have the counterfeit of all the graces of the Spirit: for we read of all the graces of true holineſs, Eph. iv. 23. and faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5.; which ſhews us, that their is a counterfeit holineſs, and a feigned faith. (5.) Men may advance to a great deal of ſtrictneſs in their own way of religion; and yet be ſtrangers to the new-birth, Acts xxvi. 5. "After the moſt ſtraiteſt "ſect of our religion, I lived a Phariſee." Nature has its own unſanctified ſtrictneſs in religion. The Phariſees had ſo much of it, that they looked on Chriſt as little better than a mere libertine. A man whoſe conſcience hath been awakened, and who lives under the ſelf-influence of the covenant of works, what will he not do that is within the compaſs of natural abilities? It was a truth, though it came out of a helliſh mouth, that "ſkin for ſkin, all that a man "hath will he give for his life," Job ii. 4. (6.) One may have ſharp ſoul-exerciſe and pangs, and yet die in the birth. Many "have been in pain" that have but "as it were brought forth wind." There may be ſore pangs and throws of conſcience, which turn to nothing at laſt. Pharaoh and Simon Magus had ſuch convictions, as made them deſire the prayers of others for them. Judas repented himſelf, and, under terrors of conſcience, gave back his ill-gotten pieces of ſilver. All is not gold that gliſters. Trees may bloſſom fairly in the ſpring, on which no fruit is to be found in the harveſt: and ſome have ſharp ſoul-exerciſes, which are nothing but foretaſtes of hell.

The new birth, howſoever in appearance hopefully begun, may be marred two ways. Firſt, Some like Sarah, Gen. xxxviii. 28, 29. are brought to the birth, but go back again. They have ſharp convictions for

a while: but theſe go off, and they turn as careleſs about their ſalvation, as profane as ever; and uſually worſe than ever, "their laſt ſtate is worſe than their "firſt," Matth. xii. 45. They get awakening grace, but not converting grace; and that goes off by degrees, as the light of the declining day, till it iſſue in midnight darkneſs. Secondly, like Iſhmael, come forth too ſoon; they are born before the time of the promiſe, Gen. xvi. 2. compare Gal. iv. 22. and downward. They take up with a mere law-work, and ſtay not till the time of the promiſe of the goſpel. They ſnatch at conſolation, not waiting till it be given them: and fooliſhly draw their comfort from the law that wounded them. They apply the healing plaiſter to themſelves, before their wound be ſufficiently ſearched. The law, that rigorous huſband, ſeverely beats them, and throws in curſes and vengeance upon their ſouls: then they fall a reforming, praying, mourning, promiſing, and vowing, till this ghoſt be laid; which done, they fall aſleep again in the arms of the law: but they are never ſhaken out of themſelves and their own righteouſneſs, nor brought forward to Jeſus Chriſt.

Laſtly, There may be a wonderful moving of the affections, in ſouls that are not at all touched with regenerating grace. Where there is no grace, there may notwithſtanding be a flood of tears, as in Eſau, who "found no place of repentance, though he ſought it "carefully with tears," Heb. xii. 17. There may be great flaſhes of joy, as in the hearers of the word, repreſented in the parable by the ſtony ground, who "anon with joy receive it," Matth. xiii. 20. There may alſo be great deſires after good things, and great delight in them too; as in theſe hypocrites deſcribed, Iſa. lviii. 2. "Yet they ſeek me daily, and delight to "know my ways:—they take delight in approaching "to God." See how high they may ſometimes ſtand, who yet fall away, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. They may be "enlightened, taſte of the heavenly gift, be partakers

"of

" of the Holy Ghoſt, taſte the good word of God, " and the powers of the world to come." Common operations of the divine ſpirit, like a land-flood, make a ſtrange turning of things upſide down: and when they are over, all runs again in the ordinary channel. All theſe things may be, where the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt never reſts upon the ſoul; but the ſtony heart ſtill remains; and in that caſe, theſe affections cannot but wither, becauſe they have no root.

But regeneration is a real thorough change, whereby the man is made a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. The Lord God makes the creature a new creature, as the goldſmith melts down the veſſel of diſhonour, and makes it a veſſel of honour. Man is, in reſpect of his ſpiritual ſtate, altogether disjointed by the fall; every faculty of the ſoul is, as it were, diſlocate: in regeneration the Lord looſeth every joint, and ſets it right again. Now this change made in regeneration is,

1. A change of qualities or diſpoſitions: it is not a change of the ſubſtance, but of the qualities of the ſoul. Vitious qualities are removed, and the contrary diſpoſitions are brought in, in their room. " The " old man is put off," Eph. iv. 22. " the new man " put on," ver. 24. Man loſt none of the rational faculties of his ſoul by ſin: he had an underſtanding ſtill, but it was darkened; he had ſtill a will, but it was contrary to the will of God. So in regeneration, there is not a new ſubſtance created, but new qualities are infuſed; light inſtead of darkneſs, righteouſneſs inſtead of unrighteouſneſs.

2. It is a ſupernatural change; he that is " born " again, is born of the Spirit," John iii. 5. Great changes may be made, by the power of nature, eſpecially when aſſiſted by external revelation. And nature may be ſo elevated by the common influences of the Spirit, that one may thereby be " turned into a- " nother man," (as Saul was, 1 Sam. x. 6.) who yet never becomes " a new man." But in regeneration,

nature itſelf is changed, and we become "partakers "of the divine nature;" and this muſt needs be a ſupernatural change. How can we that are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, renew ourſelves, more than a dead man can raiſe himſelf out of his grave? Who but the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt, can form Chriſt in a ſoul, changing it into the ſame image? Who, but the ſpirit of ſanctification can give the new heart? Well may we ſay, when we ſee a man thus changed, "This is the "finger of God."

3. It is a change into the likeneſs of God, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "We—beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the "Lord, are changed into the ſame image." Every thing that generates, generates its like: the child bears the image of the parent; and they that are born of God, bear God's image. Man aſpiring to be as God, made himſelf like the devil. In his natural ſtate he reſembles the devil, as a child doth the father, John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil." But when this happy change comes, that image of Satan is defaced, and the image of God reſtored. Chriſt himſelf, who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, is the pattern, after which the new creature is made, Rom. viii. 29. "For whom he did foreknow, "he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the i-"mage of his Son." Hence he is ſaid to be formed in the regenerate, Gal. ii. 9.

4. It is an univerſal change; "all things become "new," 2 Cor. v. 17. It is a bleſſed leaven that leavens the whole lump, the whole ſpirit, and ſoul and body. Original ſin infects the whole man; and regenerating grace, which is the ſalve, goes as far as the ſore. This fruit of the Spirit is in all goodneſs; goodneſs of the mind, goodneſs of the will, goodneſs of the affections, goodneſs of the whole man; one gets not only a new head, to know religion, or a new tongue to talk of it; but a new heart to love and embrace it, in the whole of his converſation. When the Lord opens the ſluice of grace on the ſoul's new-

birth

birth day, the waters run through the whole man, to purify and make him fruitful. In theſe natural changes ſpoken of before, there are, as it were, pieces of new cloth put into an old garment: a new life ſewed to an old heart; but the gracious change is a thorough change, a change both of heart and life.

5. Yet it is but an imperfect change. Though every part of the man is renewed, there is no part of him perfectly renewed. As an infant has all the parts of a man, but none of them are come to their perfect growth; ſo regeneration brings a perfection of parts, to be brought forward in the gradual advances of ſanctification, 1 Pet. ii. 2. "As new-born babes deſire "the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow "thereby." Although in regeneration, there is a heavenly light let into the mind; yet there is ſtill ſome darkneſs there; though the will is renewed, it is not perfectly renewed; there is ſtill ſome of the old inclination to ſin remaining: and thus it will be, till that which is in part be done away, and the light of glory come. Adam was created at his full ſtature; but they that are born, muſt have their time to grow up: ſo theſe that are born again, do come forth into the new world of grace, but imperfectly holy; though Adam being created upright, was at the ſame time perfectly righteous, without the leaſt mixture of ſinful imperfection.

Laſtly, Nevertheleſs, it is a laſting change, which never goes off. The ſeed is incorruptible, ſaith the text; and ſo is the creature that is formed of it. The life given in regeneration, whatever decays it may fall under, can never be utterly loſt. "His ſeed remain-"eth in him who is born of God," 1 John iii. 19. Though the branches ſhould be cut down, the root ſhall abide in the earth; and being watered with the dew of heaven, ſhall ſprout again: for "the "root of the righteous ſhall not be moved," Prov. xii. 3.

But

But to come to particulars,

First, In regeneration the mind is savingly enlightened. There is a new light let into the understanding; so that they who were "sometime darkness, are "now light in the Lord," Eph. v. 8. The beams of the light of life, make their way into the dark dungeon of the heart: then the night is over, and the morning light is come, which will shine more and more unto the prefect day. Now the man is illuminated.

1. In the knowledge of God. He has far other thoughts of God, than ever he had before, Hos. ii. 20. "I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithful-"ness, and thou shalt know the Lord." The Spirit of the Lord brings him back to that question, "What is God?" and catechiseth him anew upon that grand point, so as he is made to say, "I have "heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now "mine eye seeth thee," Job xliii. 5. The spotless purity of God, his exact justice, his all-sufficiency, and other glorious perfections revealed in his word, are by this new light discovered to the soul, with a plainness and certainty, that doth as far exceed the knowledge it had of these things before, as ocular demonstration exceeds common fame. For now he sees what he only heard of before.

2. He is enlightened in the knowledge of sin. He hath other thoughts of it, than he was wont to have. Formerly his sight could not pierce through the cover Satan laid over it: but now the Spirit of God strips it before him, wipes off the paint and fairding; and he sees it in its native colours, as the worst of evils, exceeding sinful, Rom. vii. 13. O what deformed monsters do formerly beloved lusts appear! were they right eyes, he would pluck them out: were they right hands, he would consent to their cutting off. He sees how offensive sin is to God, how destructive it is to the soul: and calls himself fool, for fighting

ing ſo long againſt the Lord, and harbouring that deſtroyer as a boſom-friend.

3. He is inſtructed in the knowledge of himſelf. Regenerating grace cauſeth the prodigal to come to himſelf, Luke xv. 17. and makes men full of eyes within, knowing every one the plague of his own heart. The mind being ſavingly enlightened, the man ſees how deſperately corrupt his nature is; what enmity againſt God and his holy law, has long lodged there: ſo that his ſoul loathes itſelf. No open ſepulchre, no puddle ſo vile and loathſome in his eyes as himſelf, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. "Then ſhall ye re-
"member your own evil ways, and your doings that
"were not good, and ſhall loath yourſelves in your
"own ſight." He is no worſe than he was before: but the ſun is ſhining; and ſo theſe pollutions are ſeen which he could not diſcern, when there was no dawning in him: as the word is, Iſa. viii. 20. while as yet the day of grace was not broken with him.

4. He is enlightened in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. "But we preach Chriſt cru-
"cified, 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." The truth is, unregenerate men, though capable of preaching Chriſt, have not (properly ſpeaking) the knowledge of him, but only an opinion, a good opinion of him; as one has of many controverted points of doctrine wherein he is far from certainty. As when ye meet with a ſtranger by the road, he behaving himſelf diſcreetly, ye conceive a good opinion of him; and therefore willingly converſe with him; but yet ye will not commit your money to him: becauſe, though ye have a good opinion of the man, he is a ſtranger to you, ye do not know him; ſo may they think well of Chriſt; but they will never commit themſelves to him, ſeeing they know him not. But ſaving illumination carries the ſoul beyond opinion, to the certain knowledge of Chriſt,

Chriſt, and his excellency, 1 Theſſ. i. 5. "For our "gospel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in "power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſu-"rance." The light of grace thus diſcovers the ſuitableneſs of the myſtery of Chriſt, to the divine perfections, and to the ſinner's caſe. Hence the regenerate admire the glorious plan of ſalvation through Chriſt crucified, lay their whole weight upon it, and heartily acquieſce therein; for whatever he be to others, he is to them, Chriſt the power of God, and the wiſdom of God. But unrenewed men not ſeeing this, are offended in him: they will not venture their ſouls in that bottom, but betake themſelves to the broken boards of their own righteouſneſs. The ſame light convincingly diſcovers a ſuperlative worth, a tranſcendent glory and excellency in Chriſt, which darken all created excellencies, as the riſing ſun makes the ſtars to hide their heads: and ſo it engages "the merchant-man "to ſell all that he hath, to buy the one pearl "of great price," Matth. xiii. 45, 46. makes the ſoul well content to take Chriſt for all, and inſtead of all. Even as an unſkilful merchant, to whom one offereth a pearl of great price, for all his petty wares, dares not venture on the bargain, for though he thinks that one pearl may be more worth than all he has, yet he is not ſure of it; but when a jeweller comes to him, and aſſures him, it is worth double all his wares, he then greedily embraceth the bargain, and chearfully parts with all he has, for that pearl. Finally, This illumination in the knowledge of Chriſt convincingly diſcovereth to men a fulneſs in him, ſufficient for the ſupply of all their wants, enough to ſatisfy the boundleſs deſire of an immortal ſoul. They are perſuaded ſuch fulneſs is in him, and that in order, to be communicate, they depend upon it, as a certain truth; and therefore their ſouls take up their eternal reſt in him.

5. The man is inſtructed in the knowledge of the vanity

vanity of the world, Pſal cxix. 96. "I have ſeen an "end of all perfection." Regenerating grace elevates the ſoul, ſets it, as it were, amongſt the ſtars, from whence this earth cannot but appear a little, yea, a very little thing; even as heaven appeared before, while the ſoul was immerſed in the earth. Grace brings a man into a new world; where this world is reputed but a ſtage of vanity, an howling wilderneſs, a valley of tears. God hath hung the ſign of vanity at the door of all created enjoyments: yet how do men throng into the houſe, calling and looking for ſomewhat that is ſatisfying; even after it has been a thouſand times told them, there is no ſuch thing in it, it is not to be got there, Iſ. lvii. 10. "Thou "art wearied in the greatneſs of thy way: yet ſaidſt "thou not, There is no hope." Why are men ſo fooliſh? the truth of the matter lies here, they do not ſee by the light of grace, they do not ſpiritually diſcern that ſign of vanity. They have often indeed made a rational diſcovery of it: but can that truly wean the heart from the Lord? Nay, no more than painted fire can burn off the priſoner's bands. But the light of grace is the light of life, powerful and efficacious.

Laſtly, (To ſum up all in one word), in regeneration the mind is enlightened in the knowledge of ſpiritual things, 1 John ii. 20. "Ye have an unction "from the holy One," that is from Jeſus Chriſt, Rev. iii. 18. It is an alluſion to the ſanctuary, whence the holy oil was brought to anoint the prieſt, "and "ye know all things," viz. neceſſary to ſalvation. Though men be not book-learned, if they be born again, they are Spirit-learned; for all ſuch are taught of God, John vi. 45. the Spirit of regeneration teacheth them what they knew not before; and what they did know, as by the ear only, he teacheth them over again as by the eye. The light of grace is an overcoming light, determining men to aſſent to divine truths on the mere teſtimony of God. It is no eaſy

thing for the mind of man to acquiesce in divine revelation. Many pretend great respect to the scriptures: whom, nevertheless, the clear scripture-testimony will not divorce from their pre-conceived opinions. But this illumination will make mens minds run, as captives, after Christ's chariot wheels; which, for their part, shall be allowed to drive over, and "cast down their own imaginations? and every high "thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of "God," 2 Cor. x. 5. It will make them "receive "the kingdom of God as a little child," Mark x. 15. who thinks he has sufficient ground to believe any thing, if his father do but say it is so.

Secondly, The will is renewed. The Lord takes away the stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and so of stones raiseth up children to Abraham. Regenerating grace is powerful and efficacious, and gives the will a new set. It does not indeed force it; but sweetly, yet powerfully draws it, so that "his people are willing in the "day of his power," Psal. cx. 3. There is heavenly oratory in the Mediator's lips, to persuade sinners, Psal. xlv. 2. "Grace is poured into thy lips." There are cords of a man, and bands of love in his hands to draw them after, Hos. xi. 4. Love makes a net for elect souls, which will infallibly catch them, and hale them to land. The cords of Christ's love are strong cords: and they need to be so, for every sinner is heavier than a mountain of brass: and Satan, together with the heart itself, draw the contrary way. "But love is strong as death:" and the Lord's love to the soul he died for, is strongest love; which acts so powerfully, that it must come off victorious.

1. The will is cured of its utter inability to will what is good. While the opening of the prison to them that are bound, is proclaimed in the gospel; the Spirit of God comes to the prison-door, opens it, goes to the prisoner, and by the power of his grace, makes his chains fall off, breaks the bond of iniqui-

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ty, wherewith he was held in ſin ſo as he could neither will nor do any thing truly good; brings him forth into a large place, "working in him both to "will and to do of his good pleaſure," Phil. ii. 13. Then it is that the ſoul, that was fixed to the earth can move heaven-ward; the withered hand is reſtored, and can be ſtretched out.

2. There is wrought in the will a fixed averſion to evil. In regeneration, a man gets a "new ſpirit put "within him," Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and that "ſpirit "luſteth againſt the fleſh," Gal. v. 17. The ſweet morſel of ſin, ſo greedily ſwallowed down, he now loaths and would fain be rid of it; even as willingly as one, that had drunk a cup of poiſon would throw it up again. When the ſpring is ſtopt, the mud lies in the well unmoved: but when once the ſpring is cleared, the waters ſpringing up, will work away the mud by degrees. Even ſo, while a man continues in an unregenerate ſtate, ſin lies at eaſe in the heart: but as ſoon as the Lord ſtrikes the rocky heart, with the rod of his ſtrength, in the day of converſion, grace is "in him a well of water ſpringing up in-"to everlaſting life," John iv. 14. working away natural corruption, and gradually purifying the heart, Acts xv. 9. The renewed will riſeth up againſt ſin, ſtrikes at the root thereof, and the branches too. Luſts are now grievous, and the ſoul endeavours to ſtarve them: the corrupt nature is the ſource of all evil; and therefore the ſoul will be often laying it before the great Phyſician. O what ſorrow, ſhame, and ſelf-loathing fill the heart, in the day that grace makes its triumphant entrance into it! For now the madman is come to himſelf, and the remembrance of his follies cannot but cut him to the heart.

Laſtly, The will is endowed with an inclination bent, and propenſity to good. In its depraved ſtate, it lay quite another way, being prone and bent to evil only: but now, by a pull of the omnipotent, all-conquering arm, it is drawn from evil to good; and

gets another ſet. And as the former ſet was natural; ſo this is natural too, in reſpect of the new nature given in regeneration, which has its own holy luſtings, as well as the corrupt old nature hath its ſinful luſtings, Gal. v. 17. The will, as renewed, inclines and points towards God and godlineſs. When God made man, his will, in reſpect of its intention, was directed towards God as his chief end; in reſpect of its choice, it pointed towards that which God willed. When man unmade itſelf, his will was framed into the very reverſe hereof: he made himſelf his chief end, and his own will his law. But when man is new made, in regeneration, grace rectifies this diſorder in ſome meaſure, though not perfectly indeed; becauſe we are but renewed in part, while in this world. It brings back the ſinner, out of himſelf, to God in his chief end, truly, though not perfectly, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none "upon earth that I deſire beſides thee." Phil. i. 21. "For me to live is Chriſt." It makes him to deny himſelf, and whatever way he turns, to point habitually towards God; who is the centre of the gracious ſoul, its home, its dwelling-place in all generations, Pſal xc. 1. By regenerating gracè, the will is framed into a conformity to the will of God. It is conformed to his preceptive will, being endowed with holy inclinations, agreeable to every one of his commands. The whole law is impreſſed on the gracious ſoul: every part of it is written over on the renewed heart. And although remaining corruption makes ſuch blots in the writing, that oft-times the man himſelf cannot read it: yet he that wrote it can read it at all times; it is never quite blotted out, nor can be. What he has written, he has written, it ſhall ſtand; "For this is the covenant——I will put my laws into "their mind, and write them in their hearts," Heb. viii. 10. And it is a covenant of ſalt, a perpetual covenant. It is alſo conformed to his providential will; ſo that the man will be no more maſter of his own proceſs;

proceſs; nor carve out his lot for himſelf. He learns to ſay, from his heart, "The will of the Lord be "done: he ſhall chuſe our inheritance for us," Pſal. xlvii. 4. Thus the will is diſpoſed to fall in with thoſe things, which in its depraved ſtate, it could never be reconciled to.

Particularly, (1.) The ſoul is reconciled to the covenant of peace. The Lord God propoſeth a covenant of peace to ſinners; a covenant which he himſelf hath framed, and regiſtered in the Bible: but they are not pleaſed with it. Nay, an unrenewed heart cannot be pleaſed with it. Were it put into their hands, to frame it according to their mind; they would blot many things out of it, which God has put in, and put in many things God has kept out. But the renewed heart is entirely ſatisfied with the covenant, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "He hath made with me "an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things, and "ſure: this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire." Though the covenant could not be brought down to their depraved will; their will is, by grace, brought up to the covenant: they are well pleaſed with it: there is nothing in it, they would have out; nor is any thing left out of it, which they would have in. (2.) The will is diſpoſed to receive Chriſt Jeſus the Lord. The ſoul is content to ſubmit to him. Regenerating grace undermines, and brings down the towering imaginations of the heart, raiſed up againſt its rightful Lord: it breaks the iron ſinew, which kept the ſinner from bowing to him; and diſpoſeth him to be no more ſtiff-necked, but to yield himſelf. He is willing to take on the yoke of Chriſt's commands, to take up the croſs, and to follow him. He is content to take Chriſt on any terms. Pſal. cx. 3. "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy pow-"er."

Now the mind being ſavingly enlightened, and the will renewed; the ſinner is thereby determined and enabled, to anſwer the goſpel-call. So the main work

work in regeneration is done; the fort of the heart is taken: there is room made for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the innermoſt parts of the ſoul; the inner door of the will being now opened to him, as well as the outer door of the underſtanding. In one word, Chriſt is paſſively received into the heart; he is come into the ſoul by his quickening Spirit, whereby ſpiritual life is given to the man, who, in himſelf, was dead in ſin. And his firſt vital act we may conceive to be an active receiving of Jeſus Chriſt diſcerned in his glorious excellency; that is, a believing on him, a cloſing with him, as diſcerned, offered and exhibited in the word of his grace, the glorious goſpel: the immediate effect of which is union with him, John i. 12, 13. "To as many as received him, to them "gave he power (or privilege) to become the ſons of "God, even to them that believe on his name: "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of "the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," Eph. iii. 17. "That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts "by faith." Chriſt having taken the heart by ſtorm, and triumphantly entered into it, in regeneration, the ſoul, by faith, yields itſelf to him, as it is expreſſed, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Thus, this glorious King, who came into the heart, by his Spirit, dwells in it by faith. The ſoul, being drawn, runs; and being effectually called, comes.

Thirdly, In regeneration, there is a happy change made on the affections; they are both rectified and regulated.

1. This change rectifies the affections, placing them on ſuitable objects. 2 Theſſ. iii. 5. "The Lord di-"rect your hearts into the love of God." The regenerate man's deſires are rectified; they are ſet on God himſelf, and the things above. He who before cried with the world, "Who will ſhew us any good?" has changed his note, and ſays, "Lord, lift up the "light of thy countenance upon us," Pſal. iv. 6. Sometimes he ſaw no beauty in Chriſt, for which he was to be deſired; but now he is all deſires, he is altogether

together lovely, Cant. v. 16. The main ſtream of his deſires is turned to run towards God; for there is the one thing he deſireth, Pſal. xxvii. 4. He deſires to be holy, as well as to be happy; and rather to be gracious than great. His hopes, which before were low, and ſtaked down to things on earth, are now raiſed, and ſet on the glory which is to be revealed. He entertains the hope of eternal life, founded on the word of promiſe, Tit. i. 2. Which hope he has, as an anchor of the ſoul, fixing the heart under trials, Heb. vi. 19. And it puts him upon purifying himſelf, even as God is pure, John iii. 3. For he is begotten again unto a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. His love is raiſed, and ſet on God himſelf, Pſal. xviii. 1. On his holy law, Pſal. cxix. 97. Though it ſtrike againſt his moſt beloved luſt, he ſays, "The law is holy, and "commandment holy, and juſt, and good," Rom. vii. 12. He loves the ordinances of God, Pſal. lxxxiv. 1. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O "Lord of hoſts!" Being paſſed from death unto life, he loves the brethren, (1 John iii. 14.) the people of God, as they are called, 1 Pet. ii. 10. He loves God for himſelf; and what is God's for his ſake. Yea, as being a child of God, he loves his own enemies. His heavenly Father is compaſſionate and benevolent: "He maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil, and on the "good; and ſendeth rain on the juſt, and on the un-"juſt:" and therefore he is in the like manner diſpoſed, Matth. v. 44, 45. His hatred is turned againſt ſin, in himſelf and others, Pſal. ci. 34. "I hate "the work of them that turn aſide, it ſhall not cleave "to me." He groans under the remains of it, and longs for deliverance, Rom. vii. 2. "O wretched "man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body "of this death!" His joys and delights are in God the Lord, in the light of his countenance, in his law; and in his people, becauſe they are like him. Sin is what he chiefly fears: it is a fountain

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of ſorrow to him now, though formerly a ſpring of pleaſure.

2. It regulates the affections placed on ſuitable objects. Our affections, when placed on the creature, are naturally exorbitant; when we joy in it, we are apt to overjoy; and when we ſorrow, we are ready to ſorrow overmuch: but grace bridles theſe affections, clips their wings, and keeps them within bounds, that they overflow not all their banks. It makes a man "hate his father, and mother, and wife, "and children,—yea, and his own life alſo," comparatively; that is, to love them leſs than he loves God, Luke xiv. 26. It alſo ſanctifies lawful affections; bringing them forth fromright principles, and directing them to right ends. There may be unholy deſires after Chriſt and his grace; as when men deſire Chriſt, not from any love to him, but merely out of love to themſelves. "Give us of your oil," ſaid the fooliſh virgins, "for our lamps are gone out," Matth. xxv. 8. There may be an unſanctified ſorrow for ſin; as when one ſorroweth for it, not becauſe it is diſpleaſing to God, but only becauſe of the wrath annexed to it, as did Pharaoh, Judas, and others. So a man may love his father and mother, from mere natural principles, without any reſpect to the command of God binding him thereto. But grace ſanctifies the affections, in ſuch caſes, making them to run in a new channel of love to God, reſpect to his commands, and regard to his glory. Again, grace ſcrews up the affections where they are too low. It gives the chief ſeat in them to God, and pulls down all other rivals, whether perſons or things, making them lie at his feet. Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom "have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon "earth that I deſire beſides thee." He is loved for himſelf, and other perſons or things for his ſake. What is lovely in them, to the renewed heart, is ſome ray of the divine goodneſs appearing in them: for unto gracious ſouls they ſhine only by borrowed light.

light. This accounts for the ſaints loving all men, and yet hating thoſe that hate God, and contemning the wicked as vile perſons. They hate and contemn them for their wickedneſs; there is nothing of God in that, and therefore nothing lovely nor honourable in it: but they love them for their commendable qualities or perfections, whether natural or moral; becauſe, in whomſoever theſe are, they are from God, and can be traced to him as their fountain. Finally, Regenerating grace ſets the affections ſo firmly on God, that the man is diſpoſed, at God's command, to quit his hold of every thing elſe, in order to keep his hold of Chriſt; to hate father and mother, in compariſon with Chriſt, Luke xiv. 26. It makes even lawful enjoyments, like Joſeph's mantle, to hang looſe about a man, that he may quit them, when he is in hazard to be enſnared by holding them.

If the ſtream of our affections was never thus turned, we are, doubtleſs, going down the ſtream into the pit. If "the luſt of the eye, the luſt of the fleſh, "and the pride of life," have the throne in our hearts, which ſhould be poſſeſſed by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; if we never had ſo much love to God, as to ourſelves; if ſin has been ſomewhat bitter to us, but never ſo bitter as ſuffering, never ſo bitter as the pain of being weaned from it: truly we are ſtrangers to this ſaving change. For grace turns the affections upſide down, whenever it comes into the heart.

Fourthly, The conſcience is renewed. Now that a new light is ſet up in the ſoul, in regeneration; conſcience is enlightened, inſtructed, and informed. That candle of the Lord, (Prov. xx. 27.) is now ſnuffed and brightened; ſo as it ſhines, and ſends forth its light into the moſt retired corners of the heart; diſcovering ſins which the ſoul was not aware of before: and, in a ſpecial manner, diſcovering the corruption or depravity of nature, that ſeed and ſpawn whence all actual ſins proceed. This produ-

ces the new complaint, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched "man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the bo- "dy of this death!" That conſcience, which lay ſleeping in the man's boſom before, is now awakened, and makes its voice to be heard through the whole ſoul: and therefore there is no more reſt for him in the ſluggard's bed; he muſt get up and be doing, ariſe, "haſte and eſcape for his life." It powerfully incites to obedience, even in the moſt ſpiritual acts, which lay not within the view of the natural conſcience; and powerfully reſtrains from ſin, even from theſe ſins, which do not lie open to the obſervation of the world. It urgeth the ſovereign authority of God, to which the heart is now reconciled, and which it willingly acknowledges: and ſo it engageth the man to his duty, whatever be the hazard from the world; for it fills the heart ſo with the fear of God, that the force of the fear of man is broken. This hath engaged many to put their life in their hand, and follow the cauſe of religion they once contemned, and reſolutely walk in the path they formerly abhorred, Gal. i. 23. "He which perſecuted us in "times paſt, now preacheth the faith which once he "deſtroyed." Guilt now makes the conſcience to ſmart. It hath bitter remorſe for ſins paſt, which fills the ſoul with anxiety, ſorrow, and ſelf-loathing. And every new reflection on theſe ſins is apt to affect, and make its wounds bleed afreſh with regret. It is made tender in point of ſin and duty, for the time to come: being once burnt, it dreads the fire, and fears to break the hedge where it was formerly bit by the ſerpent. Finally, The renewed conſcience drives the ſinner to Jeſus Chriſt, as the only Phyſician that can draw out the ſting of guilt; and whoſe blood alone can "purge the conſcience from "dead works," Heb. ix. 14. refuſing all eaſe offered to it from any other hand. And this is an evidence, that the conſcience is not only fired, as it may

be

be in an unregenerate ſtate; but oiled alſo, with regenerating grace.

Fifthly, As the memory wanted not its ſhare of depravity, it is alſo bettered by regenerating grace. The memory is weakened, with reſpect to thoſe things that are not worth their room therein; and men are taught to forget injuries and drop their reſentments, Matth. v. 44, 45. "Do good to them that hate you, "and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you,— "That ye may be," (i. e. appear to be) "the children "of your Father which is in heaven." It is ſtrengthened for ſpiritual things. We have Solomon's receipt for an ill memory, Prov. iii. 1. "My ſon," ſaith he, "forget not my law." But how ſhall it be kept in mind? "Let thine heart keep my commandments." Grace makes a heart-memory, even where there is no good head-memory, Pſal. cxix. 11. "Thy word have "I hid in mine heart." The heart truly touched with the powerful ſweetneſs of truth, will help the memory to retain what is ſo reliſhed. Did divine truths make deeper impreſſions on our hearts, they would thereby impreſs themſelves with more force on our memories, Pſal. cxix. 93. "I will never forget "thy precepts, for with them thou haſt quickened "me." Grace ſanctifies the memory. Many have large, but unſanctified memories, which ſerve only to gather knowledge, whereby to aggravate their condemnation: but the renewed memory ſerves to "remember his commandments to do them," Pſal. ciii. 18. It is a ſacred ſtore-houſe, from whence a Chriſtian is furniſhed in his way to Zion; for faith and hope are often ſupplied out of it, in a dark hour. It is the ſtore-houſe of former experiences; and theſe are the believer's way-marks, by noticing of which he comes to know where he is, even in a dark time, Pſal. xlii. 6. "O my God, my ſoul is caſt down "within me: therefore will I remember thee from "the land of Jordan." It alſo helps the ſoul to godly ſorrow and ſelf-loathing, preſenting old guilt anew

before the conſcience, and making it bleed afreſh, though the ſin be already pardoned, Pſal. xxv. 7. "Remember not the ſins of my youth." And where unpardoned guilt is lying on the ſleeping conſcience, it is often employed to bring in a word, which, in a moment, ſets the whole ſoul aſtir: as, when "Peter "remembered the words of Jeſus,—he went out and "wept bitterly," Matth. xxvi. 75. The word of God, laid up in a ſanctified memory, ſerves a man to reſiſt temptations, puts the ſword in his hand againſt his ſpiritual enemies, and is a light to direct his ſteps in the way of religion and righteouſneſs.

Sixthly, There is a change made on the body, and the members thereof, in reſpect of their uſe; they are conſecrated to the Lord. Even the body is—for the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. 13. It is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, ver. 19. The members thereof, that were formerly inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, become inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God, Rom. vi. 13. Servants to righteouſneſs unto holineſs, ver. 19. The eye that conveyed ſinful imaginations into the heart, is under a covenant, Job xxxi. 1. to do ſo no more: but to ſerve the ſoul, in viewing the works, and reading the word of God. The ear, that had often been death's porter, to let in ſin, is turned to be the gate of life, by which the word of life enters the ſoul. The tongue, that ſet on fire the whole courſe of nature, is reſtored to the office it was deſigned for by the Creator; namely, to be an inſtrument of glorifying him, and ſetting forth his praiſe. In a word, the whole man is for God, in ſoul and body, which by this bleſſed change are made his.

Laſtly, This gracious change ſhines forth in the converſation. Even the outward man is renewed. A new heart makes newneſs of life. When the king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold, Pſal. xlv. 13. The ſingle eye makes the whole body full of light, Matth. vi. 22. This

change

change will appear in every part of one's converſation; particularly in theſe following things.

1. In the change of his company. Though ſometimes he deſpiſed the company of the ſaints, now they are the excellent, in whom is all his delight, Pſal. xvi. 3. I am a companion of all that fear thee, ſaith the royal pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 63. A renewed man joins himſelf with the ſaints: for he and they are like minded, in that which is their main work and buſineſs: they have all one new nature; they are travelling to Immanuel's land, and converſe together in the language of Canaan. In vain do men pretend to religion, while ungodly company is their choice; for "a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed," Prov. xiii. 20. Religion will make a man ſhy of throwing himſelf into an ungodly family, or any unneceſſary familiarity with wicked men; as one that is clean will beware of going into an infected houſe.

2. In his relative capacity, he will be a new man. Grace makes men gracious in their ſeveral relations, and natively leads them to the conſcientious performance of relative duties. It does not only make good men, and good women, but makes good ſubjects, good huſbands, good wives, children, ſervants, and in a word, good relatives in the church, commonwealth and family. It is a juſt exception made againſt the religion of many; namely, that they are bad relatives, they are ill huſbands, wives, maſters, ſervants, &c. How will we prove ourſelves to be new creatures, if we be ſtill but juſt ſuch as we were before, in our ſeveral relations? 2 Cor. v. 17. "Therefore, if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new crea-
"ture; old things are paſt away: behold, all things
"are become new." Real Godlineſs will gain a teſtimony to a man, from the conſciences of his neareſt relations; though they know more of his ſinful infirmities than others do, as we ſee in that caſe, 2 Kings iv. 2. "Thy ſervant my huſband is dead, and thou
"knoweſt that thy ſervant did fear the Lord."

3. In

3. In the way of his following his worldly buſineſs, there is a great change. It appears to be no more his all, as ſometime it was. Though ſaints apply themſelves to worldly buſineſs, as well as others; yet their hearts are not ſwallowed up in it. It is evident they are carrying on a trade with Heaven, as well as a trade with earth, Phil. iii. 20. "For our converſa-"tion is in heaven." And they go about their employment in the world, as a duty laid upon them by the Lord of all, doing their lawful buſineſs as the will of God, Eph. vi. 7. working, becauſe he hath ſaid, "Thou ſhalt not ſteal."

4. They have a ſpecial concern for the advancement of the kingdom of Chriſt in the world: they eſpouſe the intereſts of religion, and prefer Jeruſalem above their chief joy, Pſal. cxxxvii. 6. How privately ſoever they live, grace makes them a public ſpirit, which will concern itſelf in the ark and work of God; in the goſpel of God; and in the people of God; even theſe of them whom they never ſaw in the face. As children of God, they naturally care for theſe things. They have a new and unwonted concern for the ſpiritual good of others and no ſooner they taſte of the power of grace themſelves, but they are inclined to ſet up to be agents for Chriſt and holineſs in the world; as appears in the caſe of the woman of Samaria, who, when Chriſt had manifeſted himſelf to her, "Went her way into the city, and ſaith unto "the men, Come, ſee a man which told me all things "that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt?" John iv. 28, 29. They have ſeen and felt the evil of ſin, and therefore pity the world lying in wickedneſs. They would fain pluck the brands out of the fire, remembering that they themſelves were plucked out of it. They will labour to commend religion to others, both by word and example; and rather deny themſelves their liberty in indifferent things, than by the uncharitable uſe of it, deſtroy others, 1 Cor. viii. 13. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I

"will

" will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I " make my brother to offend."

5. In their use of lawful comforts, there is a great change. They rest not in them as their end; but use them as means to help them in their way. They draw their satisfaction from the higher springs, even while the lower springs are running. Thus Hannah, having obtained a son, rejoiced not so much in the gift, as in the giver, 1 Sam. ii. 1. And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord. Yea, when the comforts of life are gone, they can subsist without them, and rejoice in the Lord, although the fig-tree do not blossom, Hab. iii. 17, 18. Grace teacheth to use the conveniencies of a present life sparingly; and to shew a holy moderation in all things. The heart, which formerly immersed itself in these things, without fear, is now shy of being over much pleased with them; and, being apprehensive of danger, uses them warily; as the dogs of Egypt run, while they lap their water out of the river Nile, for fear of the crocodiles that are in it.

Lastly, This change shines forth, in the man's performance of religious duties. He who lived in the neglect of them will do so no more, if once the grace of God enter into his heart. If a man be new-born, he will desire the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. Whenever the prayerless person gets the spirit of grace, he will be in him a spirit of supplication, Zech. xii. 10. It is as natural for one that again to fall a praying, as for the new-born babe to fall a crying, Acts ix. 11. " Behold he prayeth." His heart will be a temple for God, and his house a church. His devotion, which before was superficial and formal, is now spiritual and lively; for as much as heart and tongue are touched with a live-coal from heaven; and he rests not in the mere performing of duties, as careful only to get his task done; but in every duty seeketh communion with God in Christ, justly considering them as means appointed of God for that end, and

reckoning

reckoning himself disappointed if he miss of it. Thus far of the nature of regeneration.

The resemblance betwixt natural and spiritual generation.

II. I come to shew why this change is called regeneration, being born again. It is so called, because of the resemblance betwixt natural and spiritual generation, which lies in the following particulars.

First, Natural generation is a mysterious thing: and so is spiritual generation, John iii. 8. "The wind "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound "thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and "whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of "the Spirit." The work of the Spirit is felt; but his way of working is a mystery we cannot comprehend. A new light is let into the mind, and the will is renewed; but how that light is conveyed thither, how the will is fettered with cords of love, and how the rebel is made a willing captive, we can no more tell, than we can tell how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, Eccles. xi. 5. As a man hears the sound of the wind, and finds it stirring; but knows not where it begins, and where it ends; so is every one that is born of the Spirit: he finds the change that is made upon him; but how it is produced he knoweth not. One thing he may know, that whereas he was blind, now he seeth: but the seed of grace doth spring and grow up, he knoweth not how, Mark iv. 26, 27.

Secondly, In both, the creature comes to a being it had not before. The child is not till it be generate; and a man has no gracious being, no being in grace, till he be regenerate. Regeneration is not so much the curing of a sick man, as the quickening of a dead man, Eph. ii. 1. 5. Man in his depraved state is a mere non-entity in grace, and is brought into a new

new being, by the power of him "who calleth things, "that be not, as though they were; being created in "Jesus Christ unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. Therefore our Lord Jesus, to give ground of hope to the Laodiceans, in their wretched and miserable state, proposeth himself as the beginning of the creation of God, Rev. iii. 14. namely, the active beginning of it; for all things were made by him, at first, John i. 3. From whence they might gather, that seeing he made them when they were nothing, he could make them over again, when worse than nothing; the same hand that made them his creatures, could make them new creatures.

Thirdly, As the child is merely passive in generation, so is the child of God in regeneration. The one contributes nothing to its own generation; neither does the other contribute any thing, by way of efficiency, to its own regeneration: for though a man may lay himself down at the pool; yet he hath no hand in moving of the water, no efficacy in performing of the cure. One is born the child of a king, another the child of a beggar; the child has no hand at all in this difference. God leaves some in their depraved state; others he brings into a state of grace or regeneracy. If thou be thus honoured, no thanks to thee: for who maketh thee to differ from another? 1 Cor iv. 7.

Fourthly, There is a wonderful contexture of parts in both births. Admirable is the structure of man's body, in which there is such a variety of organs; nothing wanting, nothing superfluous. The Psalmist, considering his own body, looks on it as a piece of marvellous work; "I am fearfully and wonderfully "made," saith he, Psal. cxxxix. 14. "and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth," ver. 15. that is, in the womb, where I know not how the bones do grow, more than I know what is a doing in the lowest parts of the earth. In natural generation we are curiously wrought, as a piece of needle-work,

as the word imports; even ſo it is in regeneration, Pſal. xlv. 14. "She ſhall be brought unto the King, "in raiment of needle-work," raiment curiouſly wrought. It is the ſame word in both texts. And what that raiment is, the apoſtle tells us, Eph. iv. 24. It is "the new man, which after God is created in "righteouſneſs and true holineſs." That is the raiment, he ſaith in the ſame place, we muſt put on; not excluding the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Both are curiouſly wrought, as maſter-pieces of the manifold wiſdom of God. O the wonderful contexture of graces in the new creature! O glorious creature, new-made, after the image of God! It is grace for grace in Chriſt, which makes up this new man, John i. 16.: even as in bodily generation, the child has member for member in the parent; has every member the parent has in a certain proportion.

Fifthly, All this, in both caſes, hath its riſe from that which is in itſelf very ſmall and inconſiderable. O the power of God, in making ſuch a creature of corruptible ſeed, and much more in bringing forth the new creature from ſo ſmall beginnings; it is as "the "little cloud, like a man's hand," which ſpread, till "heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there "was a great rain." 1 Kings xviii. 44, 45. A man gets a word at a ſermon which hundreds beſides him hear, and let ſlip: but it remains with him, works in him, and never leaves him, till the little world be turned upſide down by it; that is, till he become a new man. It is like the vapour that got up into Ahaſuerus's head, and cut off ſleep from his eyes, Eſt. vi. 1. which proved a ſpring of ſuch motions as never ceaſed, until Mordecai, in royal pomp, was brought on horſeback through the ſtreet, proud Haman trudging at his foot; the ſame Haman afterwards hanged, Mordecai advanced, and the church delivered from Haman's helliſh plot. The grain of muſtard ſeed—becometh a tree, Mat. xiii. 31, 32. God

loves

loves to bring great things out of ſmall beginnings.

Sixthly, Natural generation is carried on by degrees, Job x. 10. "Haſt thou not poured me out as "milk, and crudled me like cheeſe?" So in regeneration. It is with the ſoul, ordinarily, in regeneration, as with the blind man cured by our Lord, who firſt "ſaw men as trees walking," afterwards "ſaw every "man clearly," Mat. viii. 23, 24, 25. It is true, regeneration being ſtrictly ſpeaking, a paſſing from death to life, the ſoul is quickened in a moment; likeas, when the embryo is brought to perfection in the womb, the ſoul is infuſed into the lifeleſs lump. Nevertheleſs, we may imagine ſomewhat like conception in ſpiritual generation, whereby the ſoul is prepared for quickening: and the new creature is capable of growth, 1 Pet. ii. 2. and of life more abundantly, John x. 10.

Seventhly, In both there are new relations. The regenerate may call God, Father; for they are his children, John i. 12, 13. begotten of him, 1 Pet. i. 3. The bride, the Lamb's wife. (that is the church,) is their mother, Gal. iv. 26. They are related, as brethren and ſiſters, to angels and glorified ſaints; and the family of heaven. They are of the heavenly ſtock: the meaneſt of them, the baſe things of the world, 1 Cor. i. 28. the kinleſs things, (as the word imports,) who cannot boaſt of the blood that runs in their veins, are yet, by their new birth, near of kin with the excellent in the earth.

Eightly, There is a likeneſs betwixt the parent and the child. Every thing that generates, generates its like; and the regenerate are partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 14. The moral perfections of the divine nature, are, in meaſure and degree, communicated to the renewed ſoul: and thus the divine image is retrieved; ſo that, as the child reſembles the father,

the new creature reſembles God himſelf, being holy as he is holy.

Laſtly, As there is no birth without pain, both to the mother and to the child; ſo there is great pain in bringing forth the new creature. The children have more or leſs of theſe birth pains, whereby they are pricked in their heart, Acts ii. 27. The ſoul hath ſore pains, when under conviction and humiliation. "A "wounded ſpirit who can bear?" The mother is pained, Zion travels, Iſa. lxvi. 8. She ſighs, groans, crieth, and hath hard labour in her miniſters and members, to bring forth children to her Lord, Gal. iv. 19. "My little children of whom I travail in birth "again, until Chriſt be formed in you." And never was a mother more feelingly touched with joy, that a man-child is born into the world, than ſhe is upon the new birth of her children. But, what is more remarkable than all this; we read, not only of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt's travail (or toil) of ſoul, Iſa. liii. 11. but (what lies more directly to our purpoſe) of his pains, or pangs, as of one travailing in child-birth; ſo the word uſed, Acts ii. 24. properly ſignifies. Well may he call the new creature, as Rachel called her dear bought ſon, Benoni, i. e. the ſon of my ſorrow; and as ſhe called another, Naphtali, i. e. my wreſtling: for the pangs of that travail put him to ſtrong crying and tears, Heb. v. 7. yea, into an agony and bloody ſweat, Luke xxii. 44. And in the end he died of theſe pangs, they became to him the pains of death, Acts ii. 24.

The doctrine of regeneration applied.

USE I. By what is ſaid, you may try whether you are in the ſtate of grace, or not. If ye be brought out of the ſtate of wrath, or ruin, into the ſtate of grace, or ſalvation; ye new creatures, ye are born again. But ye will ſay, "How ſhall we know whe-"ther we be born again or not?" *Anſ.* Did you

aſk

aſk me if the ſun were riſen and how you ſhould know whether it were riſen, or not? I would bid you look up to the heavens, and ſee it with your eyes. And would ye know if the light be riſen in your heart? Look in, and ſee. Grace is light, and diſcovers itſelf. Look into thy mind, ſee if it has been illuminate in the knowledge of God. Haſt thou been inwardly taught what God is? Were thine eyes ever turned inward to ſee thyſelf, the ſinfulneſs of thy depraved ſtate; the corruption of thy nature, the ſins of thy heart and life? Waſt thou ever let into a view of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin? Have thine eyes ſeen King Jeſus in his beauty; the manifold wiſdom of God in him, his tranſcendent excellency, and abſolute fulneſs and ſufficiency, with the vanity and emptineſs of all things elſe? Next, What change is there on thy will? Are the fetters taken off, wherewith it was ſometimes bound up from moving heavenwards? And has thy will got a new ſet? Doſt thou find an averſion to ſin, and a proneneſs to good wrought in thy heart? Is thy ſoul turned towards God, as thy chief end? Is thy will new moulded into ſome meaſure of conformity to the preceptive and providential will of God? Art thou heartily reconciled to the covenant of peace, and fixedly diſpoſed to the receiving of Chriſt, as he is offered in the goſpel? And as to a change in your affections, are they rectified and placed on right objects? Are your deſires going out after God? are they to his name, and remembrance of him? Iſa. xxvi. 8. are your hopes in him? Is your love ſet upon him, and your hatred ſet againſt ſin? Does your offending a good God affect your heart with ſorrow, and do you fear ſin more than ſuffering? Are your affections regulated? Are they, with reſpect to created comforts, brought down, as being too high; and, with reſpect to God in Chriſt, ſcrewed up, as being too low? Has he the chief ſeat in your heart? And are all your lawful worldly comforts and enjoyments laid at his feet? Has thy conſcience

ſcience been enlightened and awakened, refuſing all eaſe, but from the application of the blood of a Redeemer? Is thy memory ſanctified, thy body conſecrated to the ſervice of God? and art thou now walking in newneſs of life? Thus ye may diſcover, whether ye are born again, or not.

But, for your further help in this matter, I will diſcourſe a little of another ſign of regeneration, namely, the love of the brethren; an evidence whereby the weakeſt and moſt timorous ſaints have often had comfort, when they could have little or no conſolation from other marks propoſed to them. This the apoſtle lays down, 1 John iii. 14. "We know that "we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we "love the brethren." It is not to be thought, that the apoſtle, by the brethren in this place, means brethren by a common relation to the firſt Adam, but to the ſecond Adam Chriſt Jeſus: becauſe, howſoever true it is, that univerſal benevolence, a good-will to the whole race of mankind, takes place in the renewed ſoul, as being a lively lineament of the divine image: yet the whole context ſpeaks of thoſe that are the ſons of God, ver. 1, 2. children of God, ver. 10. born of God, ver. 9. diſtinguiſhing betwixt the children of God, and the children of the devil, ver. 10. betwixt theſe that are of the devil, ver. 8, 12. and theſe that are of God, ver. 10. And the text itſelf comes in as a reaſon why we ſhould not marvel that the world hates the brethren, the children of God, ver. 13. How can we marvel at it, ſeeing the love of the brethren is an evidence of one's having paſſed from death to life? And therefore it were abſurd to look for that love amongſt the men of the world, who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſin. They cannot love the brethren; no marvel then that they hate them. Wherefore it is plain, that by brethren here is meant brethren by regeneration.

Now, in order to ſet this mark of regeneration in a true light, conſider theſe three things. (1.) This love

love to the brethren is a love to them as ſuch. Then do we love them in the ſenſe of the text, when the grace, or image of God in them, is the chief motive of our love to them. When we love the godly for their godlineſs, the ſaints for their ſanctity or holineſs: then we love God in them, and ſo may conclude, we are born of God; for "every one that loveth him "that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of "him," 1 John v. 1. Hypocrites may love ſaints, on account of a civil relation to them; becauſe of their obliging converſation; for the being of the ſame opinion with themſelves in religious matters; and on many other ſuch like accounts, whereby wicked men may be induced to love the godly. But happy they, who can love them for naked grace in them; for their heaven-born temper and diſpoſition: who can pick this pearl out of a dunghill of infirmities in and about them; lay hold on it, and love them for it. (2.) It is a love that will be given to all, in whom the grace of God appears. They that love one ſaint, becauſe he is a ſaint, will have love to all the ſaints, Eph. i. 15. They will love all, who, to their diſcerning, bear the image of God. They that cannot love a gracious perſon in rags, but confine their love to thoſe of them who wear gay clothing, have not this love to the brethren. Theſe who confine their love to a party, to whom God has not confined his grace, are ſouls too narrow to be put among the children. In what points ſoever men differ from us, in their judgment or way, yet if they appear to agree with us in love to God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, and in bearing his image we will love them as brethren, if we ourſelves be of the heavenly family. And, (3.) If this love be in us, the more grace any perſon appears to be poſſeſſed of, he will be the more beloved by us. The more vehemently the holy fire of grace doth flame in any, the hearts of true Chriſtians will be more warmed in love to them. It is not with the ſaints as with many other men, who make themſelves the ſtandard for o-

thers;

thers; and love them ſo far as they think they are like themſelves. But, if they ſeem to outſhine and darken them, their love is turned to hatred and envy, and they endeavour to detract from the due praiſe of their exemplary piety; becauſe nothing reliſheth with them in the practice of religion, that goes beyond their own meaſure; what of the life and power of religion appears in others, ſerves only to raiſe the ſerpentine grudge in their Phariſaical hearts. But, as for them that are born again, their love and affection to the brethren, bears proportion to the degrees of the divine image they diſcern in them.

Now, if ye would improve theſe things to the knowledge of your ſtate, I would adviſe you, (1.) To ſet apart ſome time, when ye are at home, for a review of your caſe, and try your ſtate by what has been ſaid. Many have comfort and clearneſs as to their ſtate, at a ſermon, who in a little time loſe it again; becauſe, while they hear the word preached, they make application of it; but do not conſider of theſe things more deliberately and leiſurely when alone. The action is too ſudden and ſhort, to give laſting comfort; and it is often ſo indeliberate, that it has bad conſequences. Therefore, ſet about this work at home, after earneſt and ſerious prayer to God for his help in it. Complain not of your want of time, while the night follows the buſy day, nor of place, while fields and out-houſes are to be got. (2.) Renew your repentance before the Lord. Guilt lying on the conſcience, unrepented of, may darken all your evidences and marks of grace. It provokes the Spirit of grace to depart; and when he goes, our light ceaſes. It is not fit time for a ſaint to read his evidences, when the candle is blown out by ſome conſcience-wounding guilt. Laſtly, Exert the powers of the new nature; let the graces of the divine Spirit in you, diſcover themſelves by action. If ye would know whether there is a ſacred fire in your breaſt or not, ye muſt blow the coal: yet if it be under the aſhes

aſhes, it will give you no light. Settle in your hearts a firm purpoſe through the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, to comply with every known duty, and watch againſt every known ſin, having a readineſs of mind to be inſtructed in what ye know not. If gracious ſouls would thus manage their enquiries into their ſtate; it is likely they would have a comfortable iſſue; and if others would take ſuch a ſolemn review, and make trial of their ſtate, impartially, ſifting themſelves before the tribunal of their own conſciences, they might have a timely diſcovery of their own naughtineſs: but the neglect of ſelf-examination leaves moſt men under ſad deluſions as to their ſtate, and deprives many ſaints of the comfortable ſight of the grace of God in them.

But, that I may afford ſome further help to true Chriſtians, in their enquiries into their ſtate; I ſhall propoſe and briefly anſwer ſome caſes or doubts, which may poſſibly hinder ſome perſons from the comfortable view of their happy ſtate. The childrens bread muſt not be with-held, though, while it is reached to them, the dogs ſhould ſnatch at it.

CASE 1. "I doubt if I be regenerate; becauſe I "know not the preciſe time of my converſion; nor "can I trace the particular ſteps in the way in which "it was brought to paſs." *Anſ.* Though it is very deſirable to be able to give an account of the beginning, and the gradual advances of the Lord's work upon our ſouls, as ſome ſaints can diſtinctly do, (howbeit the manner of the Spirit's working is ſtill a myſtery,) yet this is not neceſſary to evidence the truth of grace. Happy he that can ſay, in this caſe, as the blind man in the goſpel, "One thing I know, that "whereas I was blind, now I ſee." Likeas, when we ſee flame, we know there is fire, though we know not how or when it began; ſo the truth of grace in us may be diſcerned, though we know not how or when it was dropt into our hearts. If thou canſt perceive the happy change, which is wrought on thy

ſoul; if thou findeſt thy mind is enlightened, thy will inclined to comply with the will of God in all things, eſpecially to fall in with the divine plan of ſalvation, through a crucified Redeemer; in vain doſt thou trouble thyſelf, and refuſe comfort becauſe thou knoweſt not, how and what way it was brought about.

CASE 2. "If I were a new creature, ſin could not "prevail againſt me as it doth." *Anſ.* Though we muſt not lay pillows for hypocrites to reſt their heads upon, who indulge themſelves in their ſins, and make the doctrine of God's grace ſubſervient to their luſts, lying down contentedly in the bond of iniquity, like men that are fond of golden chains; yet it muſt be owned, the juſt man falleth ſeven times a day, and iniquity may prevail againſt the children of God. But, if thou art groaning under the weight of the body of death, the corruption of thy nature, loathing thyſelf for the ſins of thy heart and life, ſtriving to mortify thy luſts, fleeing daily to the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and looking to his Spirit for ſanctification: though thou mayſt be obliged to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, "Iniquities prevail againſt me:" yet thou mayſt add with him, "As for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt "purge them away," Pſal. lxv. 3. The new creature doth not yet poſſeſs the houſe alone: it dwells beſide an ill neighbour; namely, remaining corruption, the reliques of depraved nature. They ſtruggle together for the maſtery: "The fleſh luſteth againſt "the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh," Gal. v. 17. And ſometimes corruption prevails, bringing the child of God into captivity to the law of ſin, Rom. vii. 23. Let not therefore the prevailing of corruption make thee in this caſe conclude, thou art none of God's children; but let it humble thee, to be the more watchful, and to thirſt the more intenſely after Jeſus Chriſt, his blood and Spirit; and that very diſpoſition will evidence a principle of grace in thee,

thee, which ſeeks the deſtruction of ſin, that prevails ſo often againſt thee.

CASE 3. "I find the motions of ſin in my heart "more violent, ſince the Lord began his work on my "ſoul, than they were before that time. Can this "conſiſt with a change of my nautre?" *Anſ.* Dreadful is the caſe of many, who after God has had a remarkable dealing with their ſouls, tending to their reformation, have thrown off all bonds, and have become groſsly and openly immoral and profane; as if the devil had returned into their hearts, with ſeven ſpirits worſe than himſelf. All I ſhall ſay to ſuch perſons is, that their ſtate is exceeding dangerous; they are in danger of ſinning againſt the Holy Ghoſt; therefore let them repent, before it be too late. But, if it be not thus with you, tho' corruption is beſtirring itſelf more violently than formerly, as if all the forces of hell were raiſed, to hold faſt, to bring back a fugitive; I ſay, theſe ſtirrings may conſiſt with a change of your nature. When the reſtraint of grace is newly laid upon corruption, it is no wonder if this laſt acts more vigorouſly than before, "warring a-"gainſt the law of the mind," Rom. vii. 23. The motions of ſin may really be moſt violent, when a new principle is brought in to caſt it out. And, as the ſun, ſending its beams through the window, diſcovers the motes in the houſe, and their motions, which were not ſeen before; ſo the light of grace may diſcover the riſings and actings of corruption, in another manner than ever the man ſaw them before; though they really do nor riſe nor act more vigorouſly. Sin is not quite dead in the regenerate ſoul, it is but dying; and dying a lingering death, being crucified, no wonder there be great fightings, when it is ſick at the heart, and death is at the door. Beſides, temptations may be more in number, and ſtronger, while Satan is ſtriving to bring you back who are eſcaped, than while he endeavoured only to retain you: "After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight

" of afflictions," ſays the apoſtle to the Hebrews, chap. x. 32. But " caſt not away your confidence," ver. 34. Remember his " grace is ſufficient for you, " and the God of peace will bruiſe Satan under your " feet ſhortly." Pharaoh and his Egyptians never made ſuch a formidable appearance againſt the Iſraelites, as at the Red-ſea, after they were brought out of Egypt: but then were the purſuers neareſt to a total overthrow, Exod. xiv. Let not this caſe therefore make you raze foundations: but be ye emptied of yourſelves, and ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and ye ſhall come off victorious.

CASE 4. " But when I compare my love to God " with my love to ſome created enjoyments, I find the " pulſe of my affections beat ſtronger to the creature " than the Creator. How then can I call him Father? " Nay, alas! theſe turnings of heart within me, and " glowings of affection to him, which ſometimes I " had, are gone, ſo that I fear, all the love I ever had " to the Lord, has been but a fit and flaſh of affec- " tion, ſuch as hypocrites often have." *Anſw.* It cannot be denied, that the predominant love of the world is a certain mark of an unregenerate ſtate, 1 John ii. 15. " If any man love the world, the love " of the Father is not in him." Nevertheleſs, theſe are not always the ſtrongeſt affections which are moſt violent. A man's affection may be more moved, on ſome occaſions, by an object that is little regarded, than by another, that is exceedingly beloved; even as a little brook ſometimes makes a greater noiſe than a great river. The ſtrength of our affections is to be meaſured by the firmneſs and fixedneſs of the root, not by the violence of their actings. Suppoſe a perſon meeting with a friend, who has been long abroad, finds his affections more vehemently acting towards his friend on that occaſion, than towards his own wife and children: will he therefore ſay, that he loves his friend more than them? Surely no. Even ſo, altho' the Chriſtian may find himſelf more moved in his love

to the creature, than in his love to God; yet he is not therefore to be ſaid to love the creature more than God; ſeeing love to God is always more firmly rooted in a gracious heart, than love to any created enjoyment whatſoever; as appears, when competition ariſes in ſuch a manner, that the one or the other is to be foregone. Would ye then know your caſe? Retire into your own hearts, and there lay the two in the balance, and try which of them weighs down the other. Aſk thyſelf, as in the ſight of God, whether thou wouldſt part with Chriſt for the creature, or part with the creature for Chriſt, if thou wert left to thy choice in the matter? If you find your heart diſpoſed to part with what is deareſt to you in the world for Chriſt, at his call, you have no reaſon to conclude, you love the creature more than God; but, on the contrary, that you love God more than the creature; albeit you do not feel ſuch violent motions in the love of God, as in the love of ſome created thing, Matth. x. 37. "He that loveth father or mother more than "me, is not worthy of me," Luke xiv. 26. "If any "man come to me, and hate not his father and mo-"ther,—he cannot be my diſciple." From which texts compared, we may infer, that he who hates, i. e. is ready to part with, father and mother for Chriſt, is, in our Lord's account, one that loves them leſs than him; and not one who loves father and mother more than him. Moreover, ye are to conſider there is a twofold love to Chriſt. (1.) There is a ſenſible love to him, which is felt as a dart in the heart, and makes a holy love-ſickneſs in the ſoul, ariſing either from want of enjoyment, as in that caſe of the ſpouſe, Cant. v. 8. "I charge you, O daughters of Jeruſa-"lem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I "am ſick of love;" or elſe from the fulneſs of it, as in that caſe, Cant. ii. 5. "Stay me with flagons, "comfort me with apples; for I am ſick of love." Theſe glowings of affections are uſually wrought in young converts, who are ordinarily made to ſing in the

the days of their youth, Hoſ. ii. 14. While the fire-edge is upon the young convert, he looks upon others, reputed to be godly, and not finding them in ſuch a temper and diſpoſition as himſelf, he is ready to cenſure them, and to think there is far leſs religion in the world than indeed there is. But when his own cup comes to ſettle below the brim, and he finds that in himſelf which made him queſtion the ſtate of others, he is more humbled, and feels more and more the neceſſity of daily recourſe to the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and to the Spirit of Chriſt for ſanctification; and thus grows downwards in humiliation, ſelf-loathing, and ſelf-denial. (2.) There is a rational love to Chriſt, which, without theſe ſenſible emotions felt in the former caſe, evidences itſelf by a dutiful regard to the divine authority and command. When one bears ſuch a love to Chriſt, though the vehement ſtirrings of affection be wanting, yet he is truly tender of offending a gracious God; endeavours to walk before him unto all well-pleaſing; and is grieved at the heart for what is diſpleaſing unto him. 1 John v. 3. "For this is the love of God that we keep his "commandments." Now, although that the ſenſible love doth not always continue with you; yet ye have no reaſon to account it a hypocritical fit, while the rational love remains with you, more than a faithful and loving wife needs queſtion her love to her huſband, when her fondneſs is abated.

CASE 5. "The attainments of hypocrites and a-"poſtates are a terror to me, and come like a ſhak-"ing ſtorm on me, when I am about to conclude, "from the marks of grace, which I ſeem to find in "myſelf, that I am in the ſtate of grace." *Anſw.* Theſe things ſhould indeed ſtir us up to a moſt ſerious and impartial examination of ourſelves, but ought not to keep us in a continued ſuſpenſe as to our ſtate. Sirs, ye ſee the outſide of hypocrites, their duties, their gifts, their tears, &c. but ye ſee not their inſide, ye do not diſcern their hearts, the bias of their ſpirits.

Upon

Upon what ye ſee of them, ye found a judgment of charity, as to their ſtate; and ye do well to judge charitably in ſuch a caſe, becauſe ye cannot know the ſecret ſprings of their actings: but ye are ſeeking, and ought to have a judgment of certainty, as to your own ſtate; and therefore are to look in to that part of religion, which none in the world but yourſelves can diſcern in you, and which ye can as little ſee in others. An hypocrite's religion may appear far greater than that of a ſincere ſoul: but, that which makes the greateſt figure in the eyes of men, is often leaſt worth before God. I would rather utter one of thoſe groans the apoſtle ſpeaks of, Rom. viii. 26. than ſhed Eſau's tears, have Balaam's prophetic ſpirit, or the joy of the ſtony-ground hearers. The fire that ſhall try every man's work, will try, not of what bulk it is, but of what ſort it is, 1 Cor. iii. 13. Now, ye may know what bulk of religion another has: and what though it be more bulky than your own? God doth not regard that; why then do you make ſuch a matter of it? It is impoſſible for you, without divine revelation, certainly to know of what ſort another man's religion is: but ye may certainly know what ſort your own is of, without extraordinary revelation; otherwiſe the apoſtle would not exhort the ſaints to "give diligence to make their calling and election "ſure," 2 Pet. i. 10. Therefore the attainments of hypocrites and apoſtates ſhould not diſturb you, in your ſerious inquiry into your own ſtate. But I will tell you two things, wherein the meaneſt ſaints go beyond the moſt refined hypocrites. (1.) In denying themſelves; renouncing all confidence in themſelves, and their own works; acquieſcing in, being well pleaſed with, and venturing their ſouls upon, God's plan of ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt, Matth. v. 3. "Bleſ-"ſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom "of heaven." And chap. xi. 6. "Bleſſed is he "whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me." Philip. iii. 3. "We are the circumciſion, which worſhip

"God

" God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and " have no confidence in the fleſh." (2.) In a real hatred of all ſin; being willing to part with every luſt, without exception, and to comply with every duty the Lord makes, or ſhall make known to them, Pſal. cxix. 6. " Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when " I have reſpect unto all thy commandments." Try yourſelves by theſe.

CASE 6. " I ſee myſelf fall ſo far ſhort of the " ſaints mentioned in the ſcriptures, and of ſeveral " excellent perſons of my own acquaintance; that, " when I look on them, I can hardly look on myſelf " as one of the ſame family with them." *Anſw.* It is indeed matter of humiliation, that we do not get forward to that meaſure of grace and holineſs, which we ſee is attainable in this life. This ſhould make us more vigorouſly preſs towards the mark: but ſurely it is from the devil, that weak Chriſtians make a rack for themſelves, of the attainments of the ſtrong. And to yield to this temptation, is as unreaſonable, as for a child to diſpute away his relation to his father, becauſe he is not of the ſame ſtature with his elder brethren. There are ſaints of ſeveral ſizes in Chriſt's family; ſome fathers, ſome young men, and ſome little children, 1 John ii. 13, 14.

CASE 7. " I never read in the word of God, nor " did I ever know of a child of God ſo tempted, and " ſo left of God, as I am; and therefore, no ſaint's " caſe being like mine, I cannot but conclude I am " none of their number." *Anſw.* This objection ariſes to ſome from their unacquaintedneſs with the ſcriptures, and with experienced Chriſtians. It is profitable, in this caſe, to impart the matter to ſome experienced Chriſtian friend, or to ſome godly miniſter. This has been a bleſſed mean of peace to ſome perſons; while their caſe, which appeared to them to be ſingular, has been evinced to have been the caſe of other ſaints. The ſcripture gives inſtances of very horrid temptations, wherewith the ſaints have been

aſſaulted.

aſſaulted. Job was tempted to blaſpheme: this was the great thing the devil aimed at, in the caſe of that great ſaint, Job i. 11. "He will curſe thee to thy "face," chap. ii. 9. "Curſe God, and die." Aſaph was tempted to think it was in vain to be religious, which was in effect to throw off all religion, Pſal. lxxiii. 13. "Verily I have cleanſed my heart "in vain." Yea, Chriſt himſelf was tempted to caſt himſelf down from a pinnacle of the temple, and to worſhip the devil, Matth. iv. 6, 9. And many of the children of God have not only been attacked with, but have actually yielded to very groſs temptations for a time. Peter denied Chriſt, and curſed and ſwore that he knew him not, Mark xvi. 71. Paul, when a perſecutor, compelled even ſaints to blaſpheme, Acts xxvi. 10, 11. Many of the ſaints can, from their ſad experience, bear witneſs to very groſs temptations, which have aſtoniſhed their ſpirits, made their very fleſh to tremble, and ſickened their bodies. Satan's fiery darts make terrible work; and will coſt pains to quench them, by a vigorous managing of the ſhield of faith, Eph. vi. 16. Sometimes he makes ſuch deſperate attacks, that never was one more put to it, in running to and fro, without intermiſſion, to quench the fire balls inceſſantly thrown into his houſe by an enemy, deſigning to burn the houſe about him, than the poor tempted ſaint is to repel Satanical injections. But theſe injections, theſe horrid temptations, tho' they are a dreadful affliction; they are not the ſins of the tempted, unleſs they make them theirs, by conſenting to them. They will be charged upon the tempter alone, if they be not conſented to; and will no more be laid to the charge of the tempted party, than a baſtard's being laid down at a chaſte man's door, will fix guilt upon him.

But, ſuppoſe neither miniſter nor private Chriſtian, to whom you go, can tell you of any who has been in your caſe; yet you ought not thence to infer, that your caſe certainly is ſingular, far leſs to give over

hopes; for it is not to be thought, that every godly minister, or private Christian, has had experience of all the cases a child of God may be in: and we need not doubt but some have had distresses known only to God and their own consciences; and so to others these distresses are, as if they had never been. Yea, and though the scriptures do contain suitable directions for every case a child of God can be in; and these illustrated with a sufficient number of examples; yet it is not to be imagined, that there are in the scriptures perfect instances of every particular case incident to the saints. Therefore, howbeit you cannot find an instance of your case in the scripture; yet bring your case to it, and you shall find suitable remedies prescribed there for it. And study rather to make use of Christ, for your case, who has salve for all sores, than to know if ever any was in your case. Though one should shew you an instance of your case, in an undoubted saint; yet none could promise it would certainly give you ease: for a scrupulous conscience would readily find out some difference. And if nothing, but a perfect conformity of another's case to yours, will satisfy, it will be hard, if not impossible, to satisfy you. For it is with people's cases, as with their natural faces. Though the faces of all men are of one make, and some are so very like others, that, at first view, we are ready to take them for the same; yet if you view them more accurately, you will see something in every face, distinguishing it from all others; though possibly you cannot tell what it is. Wherefore I conclude, that if you can find in yourselves the marks of regeneration, proposed to you from the word; you ought to conclude you are in the state of grace, though your case were singular, which is indeed unlikely.

CASE last, "The afflictions I meet with are strange and unusual. I doubt if ever a child of God was trysted with such dispensations of providence as I am." *Ans.* Much of what was said on the preceding case,

caſe, may be helped in this. Holy Job was aſſaulted with this temptation, Job v. 1. "To which of the "ſaints wilt thou turn?" But he rejected it, and held faſt his integrity. The apoſtle ſuppoſeth Chriſtians may be tempted to "think ſtrange concerning "the fiery trial," 1 Pet. iv. 12. But they have need of larger experience than Solomon's, who will venture to ſay, "See this is new," Eccl. i. 10. And what though in reſpect of the outward diſpenſations of providence, "it happen to you according to the "work of the wicked?" you may be juſt notwithſtanding; according to Solomon's obſerve, Eccl. viii. 14. Sometimes we travel in ways, where we cannot perceive the prints of the foot of man nor beaſt; yet we cannot from thence conclude, that there was never any there before us; ſo albeit thou canſt not perceive the footſteps of the flock, in the way of thine affliction, thou muſt not therefore conclude, thou art the firſt that ever travelled that road. But what if it were ſo, that thou wert indeed the firſt? Some one ſaint or other behoved to be firſt, in drinking of each bitter cup the reſt have drunk of. What warrant have you or I to limit the holy One of Iſrael to a trodden path, in his diſpenſation towards us? "Thy way "is in the ſea, and thy path in the great waters: and "thy footſteps are not known," Pſal. lxxvii. 19. If the Lord ſhould carry you to heaven by ſome retired road, and let you in at a back-door, (ſo to ſpeak,) you would have no ground to complain. Learn to allow ſovereignty a latitude; be at your duty; and let no affliction caſt a vail over any evidences you otherwiſe have, for your being in the ſtate of grace: for "no man knoweth either their love or hatred, "by all that is before them," Eccl. ix. 1.

USE II. Ye that are ſtrangers to this new birth, be convinced of the abſolute neceſſity of it. Are all in this ſtate of grace born again? then ye have neither part nor lot in it, who are not born again. I muſt tell you, in the words of our Lord and Saviour, (and

O that he would ſpeak them to your hearts!) " ye " muſt be born again," John iii. 7. And for your conviction conſider theſe few things.

Firſt, Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary to qualify you to do any thing really good and acceptable to God. While you are not born again, your beſt works are but gliſtering ſins; for though the matter of them is good, they are quite marred in the making. Conſider, (1.) That without regeneration there is no faith, and " without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God," Heb. xi. 6. Faith is a vital act of the new-born ſoul. The Evangeliſt, ſhewing the different entertainment our Lord Jeſus had from different perſons, ſome receiving and ſome rejecting him, points at regenerating grace as the true riſe of that difference, without which never one would have received him. He tells us that as many as received him, were theſe who were born of God, John i. 11, 12, 13. Unregenerate men may preſume; but true faith they cannot have. Faith is a flower that grows not in the field of nature. As the tree cannot grow without a root, neither can a man believe without the new nature, whereof the principle of believing is a part. (2.) Without regeneration a man's works are dead works. As is the principle, ſo muſt the effects be; if the lungs be rotten, the breath will be unſavoury; and he who at beſt is dead in ſin, his works at beſt will be but dead works. " Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is no- " thing pure—being abominable, and diſobedient, " and unto every good work reprobate," Tit. i. 15, 16. Could we ſay of a man, that he is more blameleſs in his life, than any other in the world; that he macerates his body with faſting; and has made his knees as horns with continual praying; but he is not born again: that exception would mar all. As if one ſhould ſay, There is a well-proportioned body, but the ſoul is gone; it is but a dead lump. This is a melting conſideration. Thou doſt many things materially good: but God ſaith, all theſe things avail

not,

not, as long as I ſee the old nature reigning in the man, Gal. vi. 15. "For in Jeſus Chriſt neither cir-"cumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, "but a new creature."

If thou art not born again, (1.) All thy reformation is naught in the ſight of God. Thou haſt ſhut the door, but the thief is ſtill in the houſe. It may be thou art not what once thou waſt: yet thou art not what thou muſt be, if ever thou ſeeſt heaven; for "except a man be born again he cannot ſee the king-"dom of God," John iii. 3. (2.) Thy prayers are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv. 8. It may be, others admire thy ſerioufneſs; thou crieſt as for thy life: but God accounts of the opening of thy mouth, as one would account of the opening of a grave full of rottenneſs, Rom. iii. 13. "Their throat "is an open ſepulchre." Others are affected with thy prayers; which ſeem to them as if they would rent the heavens; but God accounts them but as the howling of a dog; "They have not cried unto me "with their heart, when they howled upon their "beds," Hoſ. vii. 14. Others take thee for a wreſt-ler and prevailer with God; but he can take no de-light in thee, nor thy prayers neither, Iſa. lxvi. 3. "He that killeth an ox, is as if he ſlew a man: he "that ſacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck. "He that burneth incenſe, as if he bleſſed an idol." Why but becauſe thou art yet in the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity? (3.) All thou haſt done for God and his cauſe in the world, though it may be followed with temporal rewards, yet is loſt as to di-vine acceptance. This is clear from the caſe of Jehu, who was indeed rewarded with a kingdom for execut-ing due vengeance upon the houſe of Ahab, as being a work good for the matter of it, becauſe it was com-manded of God, as you may ſee, 2 Kings x. 13. yet was he puniſhed for it in his poſterity, becauſe he did it not in a right manner, Hoſ. i. 4. "I will avenge "the blood of Jezreel upon the houſe of Jehu."

God

God looks mainly to the heart: and if ſo, truly albeit thy outward appearance be fairer than many others, yet the hidden man of thy heart is loathſome; thou lookeſt well before men, but art not as Moſes was, fair to God, as the margin hath it, Acts vii. 20. O what a difference is there betwixt the characters of Aſa and Amaziah! "The high places were "not removed: nevertheleſs Aſa's heart was perfect "with the Lord all his days," 1 Kings xv. 14. "Amaziah did that which was right in the ſight of the "Lord, but not with a perfect heart," 2 Chron. xxv. 2. It may be thou art zealous againſt ſin in others, and doſt admoniſh them of their duty, and reprove them for their ſin; and they hate thee, becauſe thou doſt thy duty: but I muſt tell thee, God hates thee too, becauſe thou doſt it not in a right manner; and that thou canſt never do, whilſt thou art not born again. Laſtly, All thy ſtruggles againſt ſin in thine own heart and life, are naught. The proud Phariſee afflicted his body with faſting, and God ſtruck his ſoul in the mean time with a ſentence of condemnation, Luke xviii. Balaam ſtruggled with his covetous temper to that degree, that though he loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs, yet he would not win them by curſing Iſrael: but he died the death of the wicked, Numb. xxxi. 8. All thou doſt, while in an unregenerate ſtate, is for thyſelf; and therefore it will fare with thee as with a ſubject, who having reduced the rebels, puts the crown on his own head; and therefore loſeth all his good ſervice, and his head too.

Object. If it be thus with us, then we need never perform any religious duty at all. *Anſ.* The concluſion is not juſt. No inability of thine can looſe thee from the duty God lays on thee: and there is leſs evil in thy doing thy duty, than there is in the omitting of it. But there is a mids betwixt omitting of duty, and the doing of it as thou doſt it. A man ordereth maſons to build him an houſe. If they quite neglect

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the work, that will not be accepted; if they fall on, and build upon the old rotten foundation, neither will that pleaſe: but they muſt raze the old foundation, and build on firm ground. "Go thou and do like-"wiſe." In the mean time, it is not in vain for thee, even for thee to ſeek the Lord: for though he regards thee not, yet he may have reſpect to his own ordinance, and do thee good thereby, as was ſaid before.

Secondly, Without regeneration there is no communion with God. There is a ſociety on earth, whoſe fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, 1 John i. 3. But out of that ſociety, all the unregenerate are excluded; for they are all enemies to God, as ye heard before at large. Now, "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos iii. 3. They are all unholy: and "what com-"munion hath light with darkneſs,—Chriſt with "Belial?" 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. They may have a ſhew and ſemblance of holineſs; but they are ſtrangers to true holineſs, and therefore without God in the world. How ſad is this caſe, to be employed in religious duties, but to have no fellowſhip with God in them! Ye would not be content with your meat, unleſs it fed you; nor with your cloaths unleſs they kept you warm: and how can you ſatisfy yourſelves with your duties, while they are not effectual to your communion with God?

Thirdly, Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary to qualify you for heaven. None go to heaven but they that are made for it, Col. i. 12. As it was with Solomon's temple, 1 Kings vi. 7. ſo is it with the temple above; it is "built of ſtone made ready before "it is brought thither:" namely, of lively ſtones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. "wrought for the ſelf-ſame thing," 2 Cor. v. 5. for they cannot be laid in that glorious building, juſt as they come out of the quarry of depraved nature. Jewels of gold are not meet for ſwine, and far leſs jewels of glory for unrenewed ſinners. Beg-

gars

gars in their rags are not meet for kings houſes; nor ſinners to enter into the King's palace, without the raiment of needle-work, Pſal. xlv. 14, 15. What wiſe man would bring fiſhes out of the water to feed in his meadow? or ſend his oxen to feed in the ſea? Even as little are the unregenerate meet for heaven, or is heaven meet for them. It would never be liked of by them.

The unregenerate would find fault with heaven on ſeveral accounts. As, (1.) That it is a ſtrange country. Heaven is the renewed man's native country: his Father is in heaven; his mother is Jeruſalem, which is above, Gal. iv. 26. He is born from above, John iii. 3. Heaven is his home, 2 Cor. v. 1. therefore he looks on himſelf as a ſtranger on this earth, and his head is homeward, Heb. xi. 16. "They de- "ſire a better country, that is an heavenly." But the unregenerate man is the man of the earth, Pſal. x. 18. written in the earth, Jer. xvii. 13. Now home is home, be it never ſo homely: therefore he minds earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. There is a peculiar ſweetneſs in our native ſoil; and hardly are men drawn to leave it, and dwell in a ſtrange country. In no caſe does that prevail more than in this; for unre-newed men would quit their pretenſions to heaven, were it not that they ſee they cannot make a better of it. (2.) There is nothing there of what they delight moſt in, as moſt agreeable to the carnal heart, Rev. xxi. 27. "And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it, "any thing that defileth." When Mahomet gave out paradiſe to be a place of ſenſual delights, his religion was greedily embraced; for that is the heaven men naturally chuſe. If the covetous man could get bags full of gold there, and the voluptuous man could promiſe himſelf his ſenſual delights there; they might be reconciled to Heaven, and meet for it too: but ſince it is not ſo, though they may utter fair words about it, truly it has little of their hearts. (3.) Every

very corner there is filled with that, which of all things they have the leaſt liking of; and that is holineſs, true holineſs, perfect holineſs. Were one that ahhors ſwine's fleſh, bidden to a feaſt where all the diſhes were of that ſort of meat, but variouſly prepared; he would find fault with every diſh at the table, notwithſtanding of all the art uſed to make them palatable. It is true, there is joy in heaven, but it is holy joy; there are pleaſures in heaven, but they are holy pleaſures; there are places to ſtand by in heaven, but it is holy ground. That holineſs that caſts up in every place, and in every thing there, would mar all to the unregenerate. (4.) Were they carried thither, they would not only change their place, which would be a great heart-break to them; but they would change their company too. Truly they would never like the company there, who care not for communion with God here; nor value the fellowſhip of his people, at leaſt in the vitals of practical godlineſs. Many indeed mix themſelves with the godly on earth, to procure a name to themſelves, and to cover the naughtineſs of their hearts; but that trade could not be managed there. (5.) They would never like the employment of heaven, they care ſo little for it now. The buſineſs of the ſaints there, would be an intolerable burden to them, ſeeing it is not agreeable to their nature. To be taken up in beholding, admiring, and praiſing of him that ſitteth on the throne, and of the Lamb, would be work unſuitable, and therefore unſavoury to an unrenewed ſoul. Laſtly, They would find this fault with it, that the whole is of everlaſting continuance. This would be a killing ingredient in it to them. How would ſuch as now account the Sabbath-day a burden, brook the celebrating of an everlaſting Sabbath in the heavens?

Laſtly, Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary to your being admitted into heaven, John iii. 3. No heaven without it. Though carnal men could digeſt all theſe

things which make heaven ſo unſuitable for them; yet God will never ſuffer them to come thither. Therefore born again ye muſt be; elſe ye ſhall never ſee heaven, ye ſhall periſh eternally. For, (1.) There is a bill of excluſion againſt you in the court of heaven, and againſt all of your ſort; "Except a "man be born again he cannot ſee the kingdom of "God," John iii. 3. Here is a bar before you, that men and angels cannot remove. And to hope for heaven, over the belly of this peremptory ſentence, is to hope that God will recal his word, and ſacrifice his truth and faithfulneſs to your ſafety; which is infinitely more than to hope, "The earth ſhall be forſak-"en for you, and the rock removed out of his place." (2.) There is no holineſs without regeneration. "It "is the new man, which is created in true holineſs; "for without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord." Heb. xii. 14. Will the gates of pearl be opened, to let in dogs and ſwine? No; their place is without, Rev. xxii. 15. God will not admit ſuch into the holy place of communion with him here, and will he admit them into the holieſt of all hereafter? Will he take the children of the devil, and give them to ſit with him on his throne? Or will he bring the unclean into the city, whoſe ſtreet is pure gold? Be not deceived; grace and glory are but two links of one chain, which God has joined, and no man ſhall put aſunder. None are tranſplanted into the paradiſe above, but out of the nurſery of grace below. If ye be unholy while in this world, ye will be for ever miſerable in the world to come. (3.) All the unregenerate are without Chriſt, and therefore having no hope while in that caſe, Eph. ii. 12. Will Chriſt prepare manſions of glory for them, that refuſe to receive him into their hearts? nay, rather, will he not "laugh at "their calamity, who now ſet at naught all his coun-"ſel?" Prov. i. 25, 26. Laſtly, there is an infallible connection betwixt a finally unregenerate ſtate and damnation, ariſing from the nature of the things themſelves;

ſelves; and from the decree of Heaven, which is fixed and unmoveable as mountains of braſs, John iii. 3. Rom viii. 6. "To be carnally minded is death." An unregenerate ſtate is hell in the bud. It is eternal deſtruction in embryo, growing daily though thou doſt not diſcern it. Death is painted on many a fair face in this life. Depraved nature makes men meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the damned, in utter darkneſs. (1.) The heart of ſtone within thee is a ſinking weight. As a ſtone naturally goes downward; ſo the hard ſtony heart tends downward to the bottomleſs pit. Ye are hardened againſt reproof: though ye are told your danger, yet ye will not ſee it, ye will not believe it. But remember, that the conſcience, its being now ſeared with a hot iron, is a ſad preſage of everlaſting burnings. (2.) Your unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace, fits you for the ax of God's judgment, Matth. iii. 10. "Every "tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn "down and caſt into the fire." The withered branch is fuel for the fire, John xv. 6. Tremble at this, ye deſpiſers of the goſpel: if ye be not thereby made meet for heaven, ye will be like the barren ground, bearing briers and thorns, "nigh unto curſing, whoſe "end is to be burned," Heb. vi. 8. (3.) The helliſh diſpoſitions of mind, which diſcover themſelves in profanity of life, fit the guilty for the regions of horror. A profane life will have a miſerable end. "They which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the "kingdom of God," Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. Think on this, ye prayerleſs perſons, ye mockers of religion, ye curſers and ſwearers, ye unclean, and unjuſt perſons, who have not ſo much as moral honeſty to keep you from lying, cheating and ſtealing. What ſort of a tree think ye it to be, upon which theſe fruits grow? Is it a tree of righteouſneſs, which the Lord hath planted? Or is it not ſuch an one as cumbers the ground, which God will pluck up for fuel to the fire of his wrath. (4.) Your being dead in ſin, makes

you meet to be wrapt in flames of brimſtone, as a winding-ſheet, and to be buried in the bottomleſs pit, as in a grave. Great was the cry in Egypt, when the firſt-born in each family was dead; but are there not many families, where all are dead together? Nay, many there are, who are "twice dead, plucked up "by the roots." Sometime, in their life, they have been rouzed by apprehenſions of death, and its conſequences; but now they are ſo far on in their way to the land of darkneſs, that they hardly ever have the leaſt glimmering of light from heaven. (5.) The darkneſs of your minds preſageth eternal darkneſs. O the horrid ignorance ſome are plagued with; while others who have got ſome rays of reaſon's light into their heads, are utterly void of ſpiritual light in their hearts! If ye knew your caſe, ye would cry out, O darkneſs! darkneſs! making way for the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever! The face-covering is upon you already, as condemned perſons, ſo near are ye to everlaſting darkneſs. It is only Jeſus Chriſt who can ſtop the execution, pull the napkin off the face of the condemned malefactor, and put a pardon in his hand, Iſ. xxv. 7. "And he will deſtroy in this mountain the "face of the covering caſt over all people," i. e. the face covering caſt over the condemned, as in Haman's caſe, Eſth. vii. 8. "As the word went out of the "King's mouth, they covered Haman's face." Laſtly, The chains of darkneſs ye are bound with in the priſon of your depraved ſtate, Iſa. lxi. 1. fits you to be caſt into the burning fiery furnace. Ah miſerable men! ſometimes their conſciences ſtir within them, and they begin to think of amending their ways. But, alas! they are in chains, they cannot do it. They are chained by the heart: their luſts cleave ſo faſt to them, that they cannot, nay they will not ſhake them off. Thus you ſee what affinity there is betwixt an unregenerate ſtate, and the ſtate of the damned, the ſtate of abſolute and irretrievable miſery. Be convinced then, that ye muſt be born again;

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put a high value on the new-birth, and eagerly desire it.

The text tells you that the word is the seed, whereof the new creature is formed: therefore take heed to it, and entertain it, for it is your life. Apply yourselves to the reading of the scripture. Ye that cannot read, cause others read it to you. Wait diligently on the preaching of the word, as, by divine appointment, the special mean of conversion; "it pleased "God by the foolishness of preaching to save them "that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21. Wherefore cast not yourselves out of Christ's way; reject not the means of grace, lest ye be found to judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Attend carefully to the word preached. Hear every sermon as if you were hearing for eternity; and take heed, the fowls of the air pick not up this seed from you, as it is sown. "Give thyself wholly to it." 1 Tim. iv. 15. "Re-"ceive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth "the word of God," 1 Thess. ii. 13. And hear it with application, looking on it as a message sent from Heaven to you in particular; though not to you only Rev. iii. 22. "He that hath an ear, let him hear "what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Lay it up in your hearts, meditate upon it, and be not as the unclean beasts that chew not the cud. But by earnest prayer beg the dew of heaven may fall on thy heart, that the seed may spring up there.

More particularly, (1.) Receive the testimony of the word of God, concerning the misery of an unregenerate state, the sinfulness thereof, and the absolute necessity of regeneration. (2.) Receive its testimony, concerning God, what a holy and just One he is. (3.) Examine thy ways by it: namely the thoughts of thy heart, the expressions of thy lips, and the tenor of thy life. Look back through the several periods of thy life: and see thy sins from the precepts of the word, and learn from its threatenings, what thou art liable to, on the account of these sins. (4.)

View

View the corruption of thy nature, by the help of the ſame word of God; as a glaſs, which repreſents our ugly face in a lively manner. Were theſe things deeply rooted in the heart, they might be the ſeed of that fear and ſorrow, on account of thy ſoul's ſtate, which are neceſſary to prepare and ſtir thee up to look after a Saviour. Fix your thoughts upon him offered to thee in the goſpel, as fully ſuited to thy caſe; having by his obedience to the death, perfectly ſatisfied the juſtice of God, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs. This may prove the ſeed of humiliation, deſire, hope, and faith: and put thee on, to ſtretch out the withered hand unto him, at his own command.

Let theſe things ſink deeply into your hearts, and improve them diligently. Remember whatever ye be, ye "muſt be born again;" elſe it had been better for you ye had never been born. Wherefore, if any of you ſhall live and die in an unregenerate ſtate, ye will be inexcuſable, having been fairly warned of your hazard.

HEAD II.

The MYSTICAL UNION *betwixt Chriſt and Believers.*

JOHN xv. 5.

I am the Vine; ye are the Branches.

HAVING ſpoken of the change made by regeneration, on all thoſe that ſhall inherit eternal life, in oppoſition to their natural real ſtate, the ſtate of

of degeneracy; I proceed to ſpeak of the change made upon them, in their union with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in oppoſition to their natural relative ſtate, the ſtate of miſery. The doctrine of the ſaints union with Chriſt, is very plainly and fully inſiſted on, from the beginning to the 12th verſe of this chapter; which is a part of our Lord's farewel-ſermon to his diſciples. Sorrow had now filled their heart: they were apt to ſay, Alas! what will become of us, when our maſter is taken from our head? who will then inſtruct us? who will ſolve our doubts? how will we be ſupported under our difficulties and diſcouragements? how will we be able to live, without our wonted communication with him? Wherefore our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſeaſonably teaches them the myſtery of their union with him, comparing himſelf to the vine-ſtock, and them to the branches.

He compares, I ſay, (1.) Himſelf to a vine-ſtock; I am the vine. He had been celebrating with his diſciples the ſacrament of his ſupper, that ſign and ſeal of his people's union with himſelf; and had told them, "He would drink no more of the fruit of the "vine, till he ſhould drink it new with them, in his "Father's kingdom:" and now he ſhews himſelf to be the vine, from whence the wine of their conſolation ſhould come. The vine has leſs beauty than many other trees; but is exceeding fruitful; fitly repreſenting the low condition our Lord was then in, yet bringing many ſons to glory. But that which is chiefly aimed at, in his comparing himſelf to a vine, is to repreſent himſelf as the ſupporter and nouriſher of his people, in whom they live, and bring forth fruit. (2.) He compares them to branches, ye are the branches of that vine. Ye are the branches knit to, and growing on this ſtock, drawing all your life and ſap from it. It is a beautiful compariſon; as if he had ſaid, I am as a vine, ye are as the branches of that vine. Now there are two ſorts of branches, (1.) Natural branches, which at firſt ſpring out of the

ſtock,

ſtock. Theſe are the branches which are in the tree, and were never out of it. (2.) There are ingrafted branches, which are branches cut off from the tree, that firſt gave them life, and put into another to grow upon it. Thus, branches come to be on a tree, which originally were not on it. The branches mentioned in the text are of the latter ſort: branches broken off, (as the word in the orginal language denotes,) namely, from the tree that firſt gave them life. None of the children of men are natural branches of the ſecond Adam, viz. Jeſus Chriſt the true vine; they are all the natural branches of the firſt Adam, that degenerate vine: but the elect are all of them, ſooner or later, broken off from their natural ſtock, and ingrafted into Chriſt the true vine.

DOCT. They who are in the ſtate of grace, are ingrafted in, and unite to, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. They are taken out of their natural ſtock, cut off from it; and are now ingrafted into Chriſt, as the new ſtock. In handling of this, I ſhall ſpeak to the myſtical union, (1.) More generally. (2.) More particularly.

A general view of the myſtical union.

I. In the general, for underſtanding the union betwixt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and his elect, who believe in him, and on him.

1. It is a ſpiritual union. Man and wife, by their marriage union, become one fleſh; Chriſt and true believers by this union, become one ſpirit, 2 Cor. vi. 17. As one ſoul or ſpirit actuates both the head, and the members in the natural body; ſo the one Spirit of God dwells in Chriſt and the Chriſtian; for "if "any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is "none of his," Rom. viii. 9. Corporal union is made by contract; ſo the ſtones in a building are united: but this is an union of another nature. Were it poſſible we could eat the fleſh, and drink the blood of

of Chriſt, in a corporal and carnal manner, it would profit nothing, John vi. 63. It was not Mary's bearing him in her womb; but her believing on him, that made her a ſaint, Luke. xi. 27, 28. "A cer-
"tain woman——ſaid unto him, Bleſſed is the
"womb that bare thee; and the paps which thou
"haſt ſucked. But he ſaid, Yea, rather bleſſed
"are they that hear the word of God and keep
"it."

1. It is a real union. Such is our weakneſs, in our preſent ſtate, ſo much are we immerſed in ſin, that we are prone to form in our fancy, an image of every thing propoſed to us: and as to whatſoever that is denied us, we are apt to ſuſpect it to be but a fiction, or what has no reality. But nothing is more real, than what is ſpiritual; as approaching neareſt to the nature of him, who is the fountain of all reality, namely, God himſelf. We do not ſee with our eyes, the union betwixt our own ſoul and body, neither can we repreſent it to ourſelves, truly, by imagination, as we do ſenſible things; yet the reality of it is not to be doubted. Faith is no fancy, but the ſubſtance of things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1. Neither is the union thereby made betwixt Chriſt and believers imaginary, but moſt real: "For we
"are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his
"bones," Eph. v. 30.

3. It is a moſt cloſe and intimate union. Believers, regenerate perſons, who fiducially credit him, and rely on him, have put on Chriſt, Gal. iii. 27. If that be not enough, he is in them, John xvii. 23. formed in them, as the child in the mother's belly, Gal. iv. 19. He is the foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 2. they are the lively ſtones built upon him, 1 Peter ii. 5. He is the head, and they the body, Eph. i. 22, 23. Nay, he liveth in them, as their very ſouls in their bodies, Gal. ii. 20. And, what is more than all this, they are one in the Father and the Son, as the Father is in Chriſt, and Chriſt in the Father,

John xvi. 21. "That they all may be one, as thou, "Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo "may be one in us."

4. Though it is not a mere legal union, yet it is an union ſuſtained in law. Chriſt as the cautioner, the Chriſtian as the principal debtor, are one, in the eye of the law. When the elect had run themſelves, with the reſt of mankind, in debt to the juſtice of God; Chriſt became ſurety for them, and paid the debt. When they believe on him, they are united to him in a ſpiritual marriage-union; which takes effect ſo far, that what he did and ſuffered for them is reckoned in law, as if they had done and ſuffered it themſelves. Hence they are ſaid to be crucified with Chriſt, Gal. ii. 20. buried with him, Col. ii. 12. yea, raiſed up together (namely, with Chriſt,) and made to ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus, Eph. ii. 6. In which places, ſaints on earth, of whom the apoſtle there ſpeaks, cannot be ſaid to be ſitting, but in the way of law-reckoning.

5. It is an indiſſoluble union. Once in Chriſt, ever in him. Having taken up his habitation in the heart he never removes. None can untie this happy knot. Who will diſſolve this union? will he himſelf do it? No, he will not; we have his word for it. "I will not turn away from them," Jer. xxxiii. 40. But perhaps, the ſinner will do this miſchief to himſelf; no, he ſhall not, "they ſhall not depart from "me," ſaith their God. ibid. Can devils do it? No, unleſs they be ſtronger than Chriſt, and his Father too; "Neither ſhall any man pluck them out "of my hand," ſaith our Lord, John x. 28. "And none is able to pluck them out of my Father's "hand," ver. 39. But what ſay you of death, which parts huſband and wife, yea, ſeparates the ſoul from the body? will not death do it? No; the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 38, 39. is perſwaded that neither death, (as terrible as it is,) nor life, (as deſirable as it is,) nor devils, thoſe evil angels; nor the devil's perſecuting

perfecuting agents, though they be principalitie: or powers on earth; nor evil things preſent, already lying on us; nor evil things to come on us; nor the height of worldly felicity, nor depth of worldly miſery; nor any other creature, good or ill, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. As death ſeparated Chriſt's ſoul from his body, but could not ſeparate either the ſoul or body from his divine nature; ſo though the ſaints ſhould be ſeparate from their neareſt relations in the world, and from all their earthly enjoyments; yea, though their ſouls ſhould be ſeparate from their bodies, and their bodies ſeparate in a thouſand pieces, their "bones ſcattered, as when one cutteth or cleaveth wood;" yet ſoul and body, and every piece of the body, the ſmalleſt duſt of it ſhall remain united to the Lord Chriſt: for even in death "they ſleep in Jeſus," 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. and "he keepeth all their bones," Pſal. xxxiv. 20. Union with Chriſt is "the grace wherein we ſtand" firm and ſtable, "as mount Zion, which cannot be re-"moved."

Laſtly, It is a myſterious union. The goſpel is a doctrine of myſteries. It diſcovers to us the ſubſtantial union of the three perſons in one God-head, 1 John v. 7. "Theſe three are one:" the hypoſtatical union of the divine and human natures, in the perſon of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Tim. iii. 16. "God was manifeſt in the fleſh;" and the myſtical union betwixt Chriſt and believers; this is a great myſtery alſo, Eph. v. 32. O what myſteries are here! the head in heaven, the members on earth, yet really united! Chriſt in the believer, living in him, walking in him, and the believer dwelling in God, putting on the Lord Jeſus, eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood! this makes the ſaints a myſtery to the world, yea a myſtery to themſelves.

II. I come now more particularly to ſpeak of this union with, and ingrafting into Jeſus Chriſt. And,

(1.) I ſhall conſider the natural ſtock, which the branches are taken out of. (2.) The ſupernatural ſtock, they are ingrafted into. (3.) What branches are cut off the old ſtock, and put into the new. (4.) How it is done. And, laſtly, The benefits flowing from this union, and ingrafting.

Of the natural and ſupernatural ſtocks, and the branches taken out of the former, and ingrafted into the latter.

I. Let us take a view of the ſtock, which the branches are taken out of. The two Adams, that is, Adam and Chriſt, are the two ſtocks; for the ſcripture ſpeaks of theſe two, as if there had never been more men in the world than they, 1 Cor. xv. 45. "The firſt man Adam was made a living ſoul, "the laſt Adam was made a quickening ſpirit," ver. 47. "The firſt man is of the earth, earthy; the ſecond man is the Lord from heaven." And the reaſon is, there never were any that were not branches of one of theſe two; all men being either in the one ſtock, or in the other; for in theſe two ſorts all mankind ſtands divided, ver. 48. "As is "the earthy, ſuch are they alſo that are earthy: and "as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are hea-"venly." The firſt Adam then is the natural ſtock: on this ſtock are the branches found growing at firſt, which are afterwards cut off, and ingrafted into Chriſt. As for the fallen angels, as they had no relation to the firſt Adam, ſo they have none to the ſecond.

There are four things to be remembered here, (1.) That all mankind (the man Chriſt excepted) are naturally branches of the firſt Adam, Rom. v. 12. "By one man ſin entered into the world, and "death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men." (2.) The bond which knit us unto the natural ſtock, was the covenant of works. Adam being our natural root, was made the moral root alſo, bearing all his

his poſterity, as repreſenting them in the covenant of works. For, "by one man's diſobedience many "were made ſinners," Rom. v. 19. Now there behoved to be a peculiar relation betwixt that one man and the many, as a foundation for imputing his ſin to them. This relation did not ariſe from the mere natural bond betwixt him and us, as of a father to his children; for ſo we are related to our immediate parents, whoſe ſins are not thereupon imputed to us, as Adam's ſin is. It behoved them to ariſe from a moral bond betwixt Adam and us: the bond of a covenant which could be no other than the covenant of works, wherein we were united to him as branches to a ſtock. Hence Jeſus Chriſt, though a ſon of Adam, Luke iii. 23, 38. was none of theſe branches: for ſeeing he came not of Adam, in virtue of the bleſſing of marriage, which was given before the fall, (Gen. i. 28. "Be fruitful and multiply," &c.) but in virtue of a ſpecial promiſe made after the fall, (Gen. iii. 15. "The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe "the ſerpent's head.") Adam could not repreſent him in a covenant made before his fall. (3.) As it is impoſſible for a branch to be on two ſtocks at once, ſo no man can be, at one and the ſame time, both in the firſt and ſecond Adam. (4.) Hence it evidently follows, that all who are not ingrafted in Jeſus Chriſt, are yet branches of the old ſtock, and ſo partake of the nature of the ſame. Now, as to the firſt Adam, our natural ſtock, conſider,

Firſt, What a ſtock he was originally. He was a vine of the Lord's planting, a choice vine, a noble vine, wholly a right ſeed. There was a conſultation of the Trinity at the planting of this vine, Gen. i. 26. "Let us make man in our image, after our "own likeneſs." There was no rottenneſs at the heart of it. There was ſap and juice enough in it to have nouriſhed all the branches, to bring forth fruit unto God. My meaning is, Adam was made able perfectly to keep the commandments of God, which would

would have procured eternal life to himself and to all his posterity: for seeing all die by Adam's disobedience, all should have had life by his obedience, if he had stood. Consider,

Secondly, What that stock now is. Ah! most unlike to what it was, when planted by the author and fountain of all good. A blast from hell, and a bite with the venomous teeth of the old serpent, have made it a degenerate stock, a dead stock; nay, a killing stock.

First, It is a degenerate naughty stock. Therefore the Lord God said to Adam, in that dismal day, "Where art thou?" Gen. iii. 9. In what condition art thou now? "How art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" Or, Where wast thou? Why not in the place of meeting with me? Why so long a coming? What meaneth this fearful change, this hiding of thyself from me? Alas! the stock is degenerate, quite spoilt, become altogether naught, and brings forth wild grapes. Converse with the devil is preferred to communion with God. Satan is believed, and God, who is truth itself, disbelieved. He who was the friend of God, is now in conspiracy against him. Darkness is come into the room of light: ignorance prevails in the mind, where divine knowledge shone: the will, sometime righteous and regular, is now turned rebel against its Lord: and the whole man is in dreadful disorder.

Before I go further, let me stop and observe, Here **is a mirror** both for saints and sinners. Sinners, **stand here and** consider, what you are: and, saints, **learn** ye what once ye were. Ye sinners, are **branches** of a degenerate stock. Fruit you may bear, indeed; but now that your vine is the vine of Sodom, your grapes must of course be grapes of gall, Deut. xxxii. 32. The scripture speaks of two sorts of fruit which grow on the branches upon the natural stock: and it is plain enough they are of the

nature

nature of their degenerate ſtock. (1.) The wild grapes of wickedneſs, Iſ. v. 2. Theſe grow in abundance by influence from hell. See Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. At their gates are all manner of theſe fruits, both new and old. Storms come from heaven to put them back, but ſtill they grow. They are ſtruck at with the ſword of the Spirit, the word of God; conſcience gives them many a ſecret blow, yet they thrive. (2.) Fruit to themſelves, Hoſ. x. 1. What elſe are all the unrenewed man's acts of obedience, his reformation, ſober deportment, his prayers, and good works? They are all done, chiefly for himſelf, not for the glory of God. Theſe fruits are like the apples of Sodom, fair to look at, but fall to aſhes when handled and tried. Ye think ye have not only the leaves of a profeſſion, but the fruits of a holy practice too: but if ye be not broken off from the old ſtock, and ingrafted in Chriſt Jeſus, God accepts not, nor regards your fruits.

Here I muſt take occaſion to tell you, there are five faults will be found in heaven, with your beſt fruits (1.) Their bitterneſs; your "cluſters are bitter," Deut. xxxii. 32. There is a ſpirit of bitterneſs, wherewith ſome come before the Lord, in religious duties, living in malice and envy; and which ſome profeſſors entertain againſt others, becauſe they outſhine them by holineſs of life, or becauſe they are not of their opinion or way. This, whereſoever it reigns, is a fearful ſymptom of an unregenerate ſtate. But I do not ſo much mean this, as that which is common to all the branches of the old ſtock, namely, "the leaven of hypocriſy," Luke xii. 1. which ſours and embitters every duty they perform. The wiſdom, that is full of good fruits, is without hypocriſy, Jam. iii. 17. (2.) Their ill favour. Their works are abominable, for themſelves are corrupt. Pſal. xiv. 1. They all ſavour of the old ſtock, not of the new. It is the peculiar privilege of the ſaints that they are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt

Chriſt, 2 Cor. ii. 15. The unregenerate man's fruits favour not of love to Chriſt, nor of the blood of Chriſt, nor of the incenſe of his interceſſion and therefore will never be accepted of in heaven. (3.) Their unripeneſs. Their grape is an unripe grape, Job xv. 33. There is no influence on them, from the Sun of righteouſneſs, to bring them to perfection. They have the ſhape of fruit, but no more. The matter of duty is in them, but they want right principles and ends: their works are not wrought in God, John ii. 21. Their prayers drop from their lips, before their hearts be impregnate with the vital ſap of the Spirit of ſupplication: their tears fall from their eyes, ere their hearts be truly ſoftened: their feet turn to new paths, and their way is altered, while yet their nature is not changed. (4.) Their lightneſs. Being weighed in the balance, they are found wanting, Dan. v. 27 For evidence whereof you may obſerve, they do not humble the ſoul, but lift it up in pride. The good fruits of holineſs bear down the branches they grow upon, making them to ſalute the ground, 1 Cor. xv. 10. "I laboured more "abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace "of God which was with me." But the blaſted fruits of unrenewed mens performances, hang lightly on branches towering up to heaven, Judges xvii. 13. "Now know I, that the Lord will do me good, ſee-"ing, I have a Levite to my prieſt." They look indeed ſo high, that God cannot behold them; "Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou "ſeeſt not?" Iſa. lviii. 3. The more duties they do, and the better they ſeem to perform them, the leſs are they humbled, the more they are lifted up. This diſpoſition of the ſinner, is the exact reverſe of what is to be found in the ſaint. To men, who neither are in Chriſt, nor are ſolicitous to be found in him, their duties are like windy bladders, wherewith they think to ſwim aſhore to Immanuel's land: but theſe muſt needs break, and they conſequently ſink; be-

cauſe

cauſe they take not Chriſt for the lifter up of their head, Pſal. iii. 3. Laſtly, They are not all manner of pleaſant fruits, Cant. vii. 13. Chriſt, as a King, muſt be ſerved with variety. Where God makes the heart his garden, he plants it as Solomon did his, with trees of all kinds of fruits, Eccl. ii 5. And accordingly it brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in all goodneſs, Eph. v. 9. But the ungodly are not ſo: their obedience is never univerſal; there is always ſome one thing or other excepted. In one word, their fruits are fruits of an ill tree, that cannot be accepted in heaven.

Secondly, Our natural ſtock is a dead ſtock, according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day "thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die." Our root now is rottenneſs; no marvel the bloſſom go up as duſt. The ſtroke has gone to the heart, the ſap is let out, and the tree is withered. The curſe of the firſt covenant, like a hot thunderbolt from heaven, has lighted on it, and ruined it. It is curſed now as that fig-tree, Matth. xxi. 19. "Let no fruit go on "thee henceforward for ever." Now it is good for nothing, but to cumber the ground, and furniſh fuel for Tophet.

Let me enlarge a little here alſo. Every unrenewed man is a branch of a dead ſtock. When thou ſeeſt, O ſinner, a dead ſtock of a tree, exhauſted of all its ſap, having branches on it in the ſame condition, look on it as a lively repreſentation of thy ſoul's ſtate. (1.) Where the ſtock is dead, the branches muſt needs be barren. Alas! the barrenneſs of many profeſſors plainly diſcover on what ſtock they are growing. It is eaſy to pretend to faith, but "ſhew "me thy faith without thy works," if thou canſt, Jam. ii. 18. (2.) A dead ſtock can convey no ſap to the branches, to make them bring forth fruit. The covenant of works was the bond of our union with the natural ſtock; but now it is become weak through the fleſh; that is, through the degeneracy and depra-

vity of human nature, Rom. viii. 3. It is ſtrong enough to command, and to bind heavy burdens on the ſhoulders of thoſe who are not in Chriſt, but it affords no ſtrength to bear them. The ſap, that was once in the root is now gone: and the law, like a mercileſs creditor, apprehends Adam's heirs, ſaying, "Pay what thou oweſt;" when, alas! his effects are riotouſly ſpent. (3.) All pains and coſt are loſt on the tree, whoſe life is gone. In vain do men labour to get fruit on the branches, when there is no ſap in the root. Firſt, The gardener's pains are loſt: miniſters loſe their labour on the branches of the old ſtock, while they continue on it. Many ſermons are preached to no purpoſe; becauſe there is no life to give ſenſation. Sleeping men may be awakened, but the dead cannot be raiſed without a miracle: even ſo the dead ſinner muſt remain, if he be not reſtored to life by a miracle of grace. Secondly, The influences of heaven are loſt on ſuch a tree: in vain doth the rain fall upon it: in vain is it laid open to the winter-cold and froſts. The Lord of the vineyard digs about many a dead ſoul, but it is not bettered. "Bruiſe the fool in a mortar, his folly will not de-"part." Though he meets with many croſſes, yet he retains his luſts: let him be laid on a ſick-bed, he will ly there like a ſick beaſt, groaning under his pain, but not mourning for, nor turning from his ſin. Let death itſelf ſtare him in the face, he will preſumptuouſly maintain his hope, as if he would look the grim meſſenger out of countenance. Sometimes there are common operations of the divine Spirit performed on him: he is ſent home with a trembling heart, and with arrows of conviction ſticking in his ſoul: but at length he prevails againſt theſe things, and turns as ſecure as ever. Thirdly, Summer and winter are alike to the branches on the dead ſtock. When others about them are budding, bloſſoming, and bringing forth fruit, there is no change on them: the dead ſtock has no growing time at all.

Perhaps

Perhaps it may be difficult to know, in the winter, what trees are dead, and what are alive; but the ſpring plainly diſcovers it. There are ſome ſeaſons wherein there is little life to be perceived, even amongſt ſaints; yet times of reviving come at length. But even when "the vine flouriſheth, and the pome-"granates bud forth," (when ſaving grace is diſcovering itſelf by its lively actings, whereſoever it is), the branches on the old ſtock are ſtill withered: when the dry bones are coming together, bone to bone, amongſt ſaints, the ſinners bones are lying ſtill about the grave's mouth. They are trees that cumber the ground, are near to be cut down; and will be cut down for the fire, if God in mercy prevent it not by cutting them off from that ſtock, and ingrafting them into another.

Laſtly, Our natural ſtock is a killing ſtock. If the ſtock die, how can the branches live? If the ſap be gone from the root and heart, the branches muſt needs wither. "In Adam all die," 1 Cor. xv. 22. The root died in paradiſe, and all the branches in it, and with it. The root is empoiſoned, thence the branches come to be infected: "death is in the "pot," and all that taſte of the pulſe, or pottage, are killed.

Know then, that every natural man is a branch of a killing ſtock. Our natural root not only gives us not life, but it has a killing power, reaching all the branches thereof. There are four things which the firſt Adam conveys to all his branches, and they are abiding in, and lying on, ſuch of them as are not ingrafted in Chriſt. Firſt, A corrupt nature. He ſinned, and his nature was therefore corrupted or depraved; and this corruption is conveyed to all his poſterity. He was infected, and the contagion ſpread itſelf over all his ſeed. Secondly, Guilt, that is, an obligation to puniſhment, Rom. v. 21. "By one "man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, "and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have "ſinned."

" finned." The threatenings of the law, as cords of death are twisted about the branches of the old stock, to draw them over the hedge into the fire. And till they be cut off from this stock by the pruning-knife, the sword of vengeance hangs over their heads, to cut them down. Thirdly, This killing stock transmits the curse into the branches. The stock, as the stock (for I speak not of Adam in his personal and private capacity) being cursed, so are the branches, Gal. iii. 10. " For as many as are of the works of the law, " are under the curse." This curse affects the whole man, and all that belongs to him, every thing he possesses; and worketh three ways. (1.) As poison, infecting; thus their blessings are cursed, Mal. ii. 2. Whatever the man enjoys, it can do him no good, but evil, being thus empoisoned by the curse. His prosperity in the world destroys him, Prov. i. 32. The ministry of the gospel is a savour of death unto death, to him, 2 Cor. ii. 16. His seeming attainments in religion are cursed to him: his knowledge serves but to puff him up, and his duties to keep him back from Christ. (2.) It worketh as a moth, consuming and wasting by little and little, Hos. v. 12. " Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth." There is a worm at the root consuming them by degrees. Thus the curse pursued Saul, till it wormed him out of all his enjoyments, and out of the very shew he had of religion. Sometimes they decay like the fat of lambs, and melt away as the snow in a sunshine. (3.) It acteth as a lion rampant, Hos. v. 14. " I will be unto Ephraim as a lion." The Lord " rains on them snares, fire, and brimstone, and an " horrible tempest," in such a manner, that they are hurried away with the stream. He teareth their enjoyments from them in his wrath, pursueth them with terrors, rents their souls from their bodies, and throws the deadened branch into the fire. Thus the curse devours like fire, which none can quench. Lastly, This killing stock transmits death to the

branches

branches upon it. Adam took the poiſonous cup and drunk it off: this occaſioned death to himſelf and us. We came into the world ſpiritually dead, thereby obnoxious to eternal death, and abſolutely liable to temporal death. This root is to us like the Scythian river, which, they ſay, brings forth little bladders every day, out of which come certain ſmall flies, which are bred in the morning, winged at noon, and dead at night: a very lively emblem of our mortal ſtate.

Now, Sirs, is it not abſolutely neceſſary to be broken off from this our natural ſtock? What will our fair leaves of a profeſſion, or our fruits of duties avail, if we be ſtill branches of the degenerate, dead and killing ſtock? But, alas! among the many queſtions toſſed among us, few are taken up about theſe, Whether am I broken off from the old ſtock or not? Whether am I ingrafted in Chriſt, or not? Ah! Wherefore all this waſte? Why is there ſo much noiſe about religion amongſt many who can give no good account of their having laid a good foundation, being mere ſtrangers to experimental religion? I fear, if God do not in mercy timeouſly undermine the religion of many of us, and let us ſee we have none at all, our root will be found rottenneſs, and our bloſſom go up as duſt, in a dying hour. Therefore let us look to our ſtate, that we be not found fools in our latter end.

II. Let us not view the ſupernatural ſtock, in which the branches cut off from the natural ſtock are ingrafted. Jeſus Chriſt is ſometimes called the branch, Zech. iii. 8. So he is in reſpect of his human nature, being a branch, and the top-branch of the houſe of David. Sometimes he is called a root, Iſa. xi. 10. We have both together, Rev. xxii. 16. "I am the "root, and the offspring of David." David's root as God, and his offspring as man. The text tells us, that he is the vine, i. e. he, as a Mediator, is the vine ſtock, whereof believers are the branches. As

they

ſap comes from the earth into the root and ſtock, and from thence is diffuſed into the branches; ſo, by Chriſt as Mediator, divine life is conveyed from the fountain, unto theſe who are united to him by faith, John vi. 57. "As the living Father hath ſent me, and "I live by the Father: ſo he that eateth me, even "he ſhall live by me." Now Chriſt is Mediator, not as God only, as ſome have aſſerted; nor yet as man only, as the Papiſts generally hold: but he is Mediator as God-man, Acts xx. 28.—"The church "of God, which he hath purchaſed by his blood," Heb. ix. 14.—"Chriſt, who, through the eternal "Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God." The divine and human natures have their diſtinct actings, yet a joint operation, in his diſcharging the office of Mediator. This is illuſtrated by the ſimilitude of a fiery ſword, which at once cuts and burns: cutting it burneth, and burning it cutteth; the ſteel cuts, and the fire burns. Wherefore Chriſt, God-man, is the ſtock, whereof believers are the branches: and they are united to whole Chriſt. They are united to him in his human nature, as being "members of his "body, of his fleſh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. And they are united to him in his divine nature; for ſo the apoſtle ſpeaks of this union, Col. i. 27. "Chriſt "in you the hope of glory." And by him they are united to the Father, and to the Holy Ghoſt, 1 John ix. 15. "Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the "Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in "God." Faith, the bond of this union, receives whole Chriſt God-man, and unites us to him as ſuch.

Behold here, O believers, your high privilege. Ye were once branches of a degenerate ſtock, even as others; but ye are, by grace, become branches of the new vine, John xv. 1. Ye are cut off a dead and killing ſtock; and ingrafted in the laſt Adam, who was made a quickening ſpirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Your loſs by the firſt Adam is made up, with great advantage,

tage, by your union with the ſecond Adam, at his beſt eſtate was but a ſhrub, in compariſon with Chriſt the tree of life. He was but a ſervant; Chriſt is the Son, the Heir, and Lord of all things, the Lord from heaven. It cannot be denied that grace was ſhown in the firſt covenant, but it is as far exceeded by the grace of the ſecond covenant, as the twilight is by the light of mid day.

III. What branches are taken out of the natural ſtock and grafted into this vine? *Anſ.* Theſe are the elect and none other. They, and they only are grafted into Chriſt; and conſequently none but they are cut off from the killing ſtock. For them alone he interceeds, "That they may be one in him and his Fa-"ther," John xvii. 9, 23. Faith, the bond of this union, is given to none elſe; it is the faith of God's elect, Tit. i. 1. The Lord paſſeth by many branches growing on the natural ſtock, and cuts off only here one, and there one, and grafts them into the true vine, according as free love hath determined. Oft does he pitch upon the moſt unlikely branch, leaving the top boughs: paſſing by the mighty, and the noble, and calling the weak, baſe, and deſpiſed, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Yea, he often leaves the fair and ſmooth, and takes the rugged and knotty; "and ſuch were ſome of "you; but ye are waſhed," &c. 1 Cor. vi. 11. If we enquire why ſo? we find no other reaſon, but becauſe they were choſen in him, Eph. i. 4. "predeſ-"tinated to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt," verſe 5. Thus are they gathered together in Chriſt, while the reſt are left growing on their natural ſtock, to be afterwards bound up in bundles for the fire. Wherefore, to whomſoever the goſpel may come in vain, it will have a bleſſed effect on God's elect, Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to eternal life, "believed." Where the Lord has much people, the goſpel will have much ſucceſs ſooner or later. Such as are to be ſaved will be added to the myſtical body of Chriſt.

How

How the branches are taken out of the natural ſtock, and ingrafted into the ſupernatural ſtock.

IV. I am to ſhew how the branches are cut off from the natural ſtock, the firſt Adam, and grafted into the true vine, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thanks to the Huſbandman, not to the branch, that is cut off from its natural ſtock, and grafted into a new one. The ſinner, in his coming off from the firſt ſtock, is paſſive, and neither can nor will come off from it of his own accord, but clings to it till almighty power make him to fall off, John vi. 44. "No man can come un-"to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, "draw him." And chap. v. 40. "Ye will not "come to me, that ye might have life." The ingrafted branches are God's-huſbandry, 1 Cor. iii. 9. the planting of the Lord, Iſa. lxi. 3. The ordinary means he makes uſe of in this work, is the miniſtry of the word, 1 Cor. iii. 9. "We are labourers to-"gether with God." But the efficacy thereof is wholly from him, whatever the miniſter's parts or piety be, verſe 7. "Neither is he that planteth a-"ny thing, neither is he that watereth; but God "that giveth the increaſe." The apoſtles preached to the Jews, yet the body of that people remained in infidelity, Rom. x. 16. "Who hath believed our re-"port?" Yea, Chriſt himſelf who ſpoke as never man ſpoke, ſaith concerning the ſucceſs of his own miniſtry, "I have laboured in vain, I have ſpent my "ſtrength for nought," Iſa. xlix. 4. The branches may be hacked by the preaching of the word: but the ſtroke will never go through, till it be carried home on them, by an omnipotent arm. However, God's ordinary way is, "by the fooliſhneſs of "preaching to ſave them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21.

The cutting off of the branch, from the natural ſtock, is performed by the pruning knife of the law in

in the hand of the Spirit of God, Gal. ii. 19. "For "I through the law am dead to the law." It is by the bond of the covenant of works, as I ſaid before, that we are knit to our natural ſtock: and therefore, as a wife, unwilling to be put away, pleads and hangs by the marriage-tye; ſo do men by the covenant of works. They hold by it, like the man who held the ſhip with his hands; and when one hand was cut off, held it with the other; and when both were cut off, held it with his teeth. This will appear from a diſtinct view of the Lord's work on men, in bringing them off from the old ſtock; which now I offer in the following particulars.

Firſt, When the Spirit of the Lord comes to deal with a perſon, to bring him to Chriſt; he finds him in Laodicea's caſe, in a ſound ſleep of ſecurity, dreaming of heaven, and the favour of God, though full of ſin againſt the holy One of Iſrael, Rev. iii. 17. "Thou knoweſt not that thou art miſerable, and "poor, and blind, and naked." And therefore he darts in ſome beams of light into the dark ſoul; and lets the man ſee he is a loſt man, if he turn not over a new leaf, and betake himſelf to a new courſe of life. Thus by the Spirit of the Lord acting as a ſpirit of bondage, there is a criminal court erected in the man's breaſt; where he is arraigned, accuſed, and condemned for breaking the law of God, convinced of ſin and judgment, John xvi. 8. And now he can no longer ſleep ſecurely in his former courſe of life. This is the firſt ſtroke the branch gets, in order to cutting off.

Secondly, Hereupon the man forſakes his former profane courſes, his lying, ſwearing, Sabbath breaking, ſtealing, and ſuch like practices; though they be dear to him, as right eyes, he will rather quit them, than ruin his ſoul. The ſhip is like to ſink, and therefore he throweth his goods over-board, that he himſelf may not periſh. And now he begins to bleſs himſelf in his heart, and look joyfully on his evidences

for heaven; thinking himſelf a better ſervant to God than many others, Luke xviii. 11. "God, I "thank thee that I am not as other men are, extor- "tioners, unjuſt, adulterers," &c. But he ſoon gets another ſtroke with the axe of the law, ſhewing him that it is only he that doth what is written to the law, who can be ſaved by it; and that his negative holineſs is too ſcanty a cover from the ſtorm of God's wrath. And thus, although his ſins of commiſſion only were heavy on him before, his ſins of omiſſion now crowd into his thoughts, attended with a train of law-curſes and vengeance. And each of the ten commands diſcharges thunder-claps of wrath againſt him, for his omitting required duties.

Thirdly, Upon this he turns unto a poſitively holy courſe of life. He not only is not profane, but he performs religious duties: he prays, ſeeks the knowledge of the principles of religion, ſtrictly obſerves the Lord's day, and, like Herod, does many things, and hears ſermons gladly. In one word, there is a great conformity in his outward converſation to the letter of both tables of the law. And now there is a mighty change upon the man, that his neighbours cannot but take notice of. Hence he is cheerfully admitted by the godly into their ſociety, as a praying perſon; and can confer with them about religious matters, yea, and about ſoul-exerciſe, which ſome are not acquainted with; and their good opinion of him, confirms his good opinion of himſelf. This ſtep in religion is fatal to many, who never get beyond it. But here the Lord reacheth the elect branch a further ſtroke. Conſcience flies in the man's face, for ſome wrong ſteps in his converſation, the neglect of ſome duty, or commiſſion of ſome ſin, which is a blot in his converſation: and then the flaming ſword of the law appears again over his head; and the curſe rings in his ears, for that he "continueth not in "ALL

"ALL things written in the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10.

Fourthly, On this account he is obliged to seek another salve for his sore. He goes to God, confesseth his sin, seeks the pardon of it, promising to watch against it for the time to come: and so finds ease, and thinks he may very well take it, seeing the scripture saith, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just "to forgive us our sins," 1 John i. 9. not considering that he grasps at a privilege, which is theirs only who are grafted into Christ, and under the covenant of grace, and which the branches yet growing on the old stock cannot plead. And here sometimes there are formal and express vows made against such and such sins, and binding to such and such duties. Thus many go on all their days, knowing no other religion, but to do duties, and to confess, and pray for pardon of that wherein they fail, promising themselves eternal happiness, though they are utter strangers to Christ. Here many elect ones have been cast down wounded, and many reprobates have been slain, while the wounds of neither of them have been deep enough to cut them off from their natural stock. But the Spirit of the Lord gives yet a deeper stroke to the branch which is to be cut off, shewing him, that as yet, he is but an out-side saint, and discovering to him the filthy lusts lodgest in his heart, which he took no notice of before, Rom. vii. 9. "When the "commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Then he sees his heart a dunghill of hellish lusts, filled with covetousness, pride, malice, filthiness, and the like. Now assoon as the door of the chambers of his imagery is thus opened to him, and he sees what they do there in the dark, his outside religion is blown up as insufficient; and he learns a new lesson in religion, namely, "That he is not a Jew, which is one out-"wardly," Rom. ii. 28.

Fifthly, Upon this he goes further, even to inside religion; sets to work more vigorously than ever,

mourns over the evils of his heart, and ſtrives to bear down the weeds he finds growing in that neglected garden. He labours to curb his pride and paſſion, and to baniſh ſpeculative impurities; prays more fervently, hears attentively, and ſtrives to get his heart affected in every religious duty he performs; and thus he comes to think himſelf not only an outſide, but an inſide Chriſtian. Wonder not at this, for there is nothing in it beyond the power of nature, or what one may attain to under a vigorous influence of the covenant of works; therefore another yet deeper ſtroke is reached. The law chargeth home on the man's conſcience, that he was a tranſgreſſor from the womb; that he came into the world a guilty creature; and that in the time of his ignorance, and even ſince his eyes were opened, he has been guilty of many actual ſins, either altogether overlooked by him, or not ſufficiently mourned over. (For ſpiritual ſores, not healed by the blood of Chriſt, but ſkinned over ſome other way, are eaſily ruffled, and as ſoon break out again.) And therefore the law takes him by the throat, ſaying, "Pay what thou oweſt."

Sixthly, Then the ſinner ſays in his heart, "Have "patience with me, and I will pay thee all;" and ſo falls to work to pacify an offended God, and to atone for theſe ſins. He renews his repentance, ſuch as it is; bears patiently the afflictions laid upon him; yea, he afflicts himſelf, denies himſelf the uſe of his lawful comforts, ſighs deeply, mourns bitterly, cries with tears for a pardon, till he hath wrought up his heart to a conceit of having obtained it: having thus done penance for what is paſt, and reſolving to be a good ſervant to God, and to hold on in outward and inward obedience, for the time to come. But the ſtroke muſt go nearer the heart yet, ere the branch fall off. The Lord diſcovers to him, in the glaſs of the law, how he ſinneth in all he does, even when he does the beſt he can; and therefore the dreadful ſound returns to his ears, Gal. iii. 10. "Curſed is every

"one

" one that continueth not in all things, &c. When ye faſted and mourned," ſaith the Lord, " did ye at all faſt unto me, even to me?" Will muddy water make clean cloaths? Will you ſatisfy for one ſin with another? Were not your affections ſtat in another? Did not your heart give a whoriſh look to ſuch an idol? And did it not riſe in a fit of impatience under ſuch an affliction? " Should I accept this of your hands? " Curſed be the deceiver, which ſacrificeth to the " Lord a corrupt thing," Mal. i. 13, 14. And thus he becomes ſo far broke off, that he ſees he is not able to ſatisfy the demands of the law.

Seventhly, Hence, like a broken man, who finds he is not able to pay all his debt, he goes about to compound with his creditor. And, being in purſuit of eaſe and comfort, he does what he can to fulfil the law? and wherein he fails, he looks that God will accept the will for the deed. Thus doing his duty, and having a will to do better, he cheats himſelf into a perſuaſion of the goodneſs of his ſtate: and hereby thouſands are ruined. But the elect get another ſtroke, which looſeth their hold in this caſe. The doctrine of the law is borne in on their conſciences, demonſtrating to them, that exact and perfect obedience is required by it, under pain of the curſe; and that it is doing, and not wiſhing to do, which will avail. Wiſhing to do better will not anſwer the law's demands; and therefore the curſe ſounds again, " curſed is every one that continueth not—to DO " them;" that is, actually to do them. In vain is wiſhing then.

Eightly, Being broken off from hopes of compounding with the law, he falls a borrowing. He ſees that all he can do to obey the law, and all his deſires to be, and to do better, will not ſave his ſoul: therefore he goes to Chriſt, intreating, that his righteouſneſs may make up what is wanting in his own, and cover all the defects of his doings, and ſufferings, that ſo God for Chriſt's ſake may accept them, and thereupon

upon be reconciled. Thus doing what he can to fulfil the law, and looking to Chriſt to make up all his defects, he comes at length, again to ſleep in a ſound ſkin. Many perſons are ruined this way. This was the error of the Galatians, which Paul, in his epiſtle to them, diſputes againſt. But the Spirit of God breaks off the ſinner from this hold alſo: by bearing in on his conſcience that great truth, Gal. iii. 12. "The law is not of faith, but the man that doth them "ſhall live in them." There is no mixing of the law and faith in this buſineſs: the ſinner muſt hold by one of them, and let the other go. The way of the law, and the way of faith, are ſo far different, that it is not poſſible for a ſinner to walk in the one, but he muſt come off from the other: and if he be for doing, he muſt do all alone; Chriſt will not do a part for him, if he do not all. A garment pieced up of ſundry ſorts of righteouſneſs, is not a garment meet for the court of heaven. Thus the man who was in a dream, and thought he was eating, is awakened by the ſtroke, and behold his ſoul is faint: his heart ſinks in him like a ſtone, while he finds he can neither bear his burden himſelf alone, nor can he get help under it.

Ninthly, What can one do, who muſt needs pay, and yet neither has as much of his own as will bring him out of debt, nor can he get as much to borrow, and to beg he is aſhamed? What can ſuch a one do, I ſay, but ſell himſelf, as the man under the law, that was waxen poor? Lev. xxv. 47. Therefore the ſinner, beat off from ſo many holds, goes about to make a bargain with Chriſt, and to ſell himſelf to the Son of God, (if I may ſo ſpeak,) ſolemnly promiſing and vowing, that he will be a ſervant to Chriſt, as long as he lives, if he will ſave his ſoul. And here oft-times the ſinner makes a perſonal covenant with Chriſt, reſigning himſelf to him on theſe terms: yea, and takes the ſacrament, to make the bargain ſure. Hereupon the man's great care is, how to obey Chriſt,

keep

keep his commands, and to fulfil his bargain. And in this the ſoul finds a falſe unſound peace, for a while; till the Spirit of the Lord fetch another ſtroke, to cut off the man from this refuge of lies likewiſe. And that happens in this manner. When he fails of the duties he engaged to, and falls again into the ſin he covenanted againſt, it is powerfully carried home on his conſcience, that his covenant is broken: ſo all his comforts go, and terrors afreſh ſeize on his ſoul, as one that has broken covenant with Chriſt. And commonly the man, to help himſelf, renews his covenant, but breaks it again as before. And how is it poſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe, ſeeing he is ſtill upon the old ſtock? Thus the work of many, all their days, as to their ſouls, is nothing but a making and breaking ſuch covenants, over and over again.

Object. Some perhaps will ſay, "Who liveth and ſinneth not? Who is there that faileth not of the duties he has engaged to? If you reject this way as unſound, who then can be ſaved?" *Anſ.* True believers will be ſaved, namely, all who do by faith take hold of God's covenant. But this kind of covenant is men's own covenant, deviſed of their own heart; not God's covenant revealed in the goſpel of his grace; and the making of it is nothing elſe but the making of a covenant of works with Chriſt, confounding the law and the goſpel; a covenant he will never ſubſcribe to, though we ſhould own it with our heart's blood, Rom. iv. 14. For if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe made of none effect, v. 16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed, chap. ix. 6. And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwiſe grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work. God's covenant is everlaſting; once in, never out of it again, and the mercies of it are ſure mercies. But that covenant of yours is a tottering covenant, never ſure, but

but broken every day. It is a mere ſervile covenant: giving Chriſt ſervice for ſalvation; but God's covenant is a filial covenant, in which the ſinner takes Chriſt, and his ſalvation freely offered, and ſo becomes a ſon, John i. 12. "But as many as received him, "to them gave he power to become the ſons of "God:" and being become a ſon, he ſerves his Father, not that the inheritance may become his, but becauſe it is his, through Jeſus Chriſt. See Gal. iv. 24. and downward. To enter into that ſpurious covenant, is to buy from Chriſt with money; but to take hold of God's covenant, is to buy of him without money and without price, Iſa. lv. 1. that is to ſay, to beg of him. In that covenant men work for life; in God's covenant they come to Chriſt for life, and work from life. When a perſon under that covenant fails in his duty, all is gone; the covenant muſt be made over again. But under God's covenant, although the man fail in his duty, and for his failures falls under the diſcipline of the covenant; and lies under the weight of it, till ſuch time as he has recourſe anew to the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and renew his repentance; yet all that he truſted to for life and ſalvation, namely, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, ſtill ſtands entire, and the covenant remains firm. See Rom. vii. 24, 25. and viii. 1.

Now, though ſome men ſpend their lives in making and breaking ſuch covenants of their own; the terror upon the breaking of them wearing weaker and weaker by degrees, till at laſt it creates them little or no uneaſineſs: yet the man, in whom the good work is carried on, till it be accompliſhed in cutting him off from the old ſtock, finds theſe covenants to be as rotten cords, broke at every touch; and the terror of God being thereupon redoubled on his ſpirit, and the waters, at every turn, getting in unto his very ſoul, he is obliged to ceaſe from catching hold of ſuch covenants, and to ſeek help ſome other way.

Tenthly,

Tenthly, Therefore the man comes at length to beg at Chriſt's door for mercy; but yet he is a proud beggar, ſtanding on his perſonal worth. For, as the Papiſts have mediators to plead for them with the one only Mediator, ſo the branches of the old ſtock have always ſomething to produce, which, they think, may commend them to Chriſt, and engage him to take their caſe in hand. They cannot think of coming to the ſpiritual market without money in their own hand. They are like perſons who have once had an eſtate of their own, but are reduced to extreme poverty, and forced to beg. When they come to beg, they ſtill remember their former character; and though they have loſt their ſubſtance, yet they retain much of their former ſpirit: therefore they cannot think they ought to be treated as ordinary beggars, but deſerve a particular regard; and, if that be not given them, their ſpirits riſe againſt him to whom they addreſs themſelves for ſupply. Thus God gives the unhumbled ſinner many common mercies, and ſhuts him not up in the pit according to his deſerving: but all this is nothing in his eyes. He muſt be ſet down at the children's table, otherwiſe he reckons himſelf hardly dealt with and wronged: for he is not yet brought ſo low, as to think, God may be juſtified when he ſpeaketh (againſt him,) and clear from all iniquity, when he judgeth him, according to his real demerit, Pſal. li. 4. He thinks perhaps that, even before he was enlightened, he was better than many others: he conſiders his reformation of life, his repentance, the grief and tears his ſin has coſt him, his earneſt deſires after Chriſt, his prayers and wreſtlings for mercy; and uſeth all theſe now as bribes for mercy, laying no ſmall weight upon them in his addreſſes to the throne of grace. But here the Spirit of the Lord ſhoots a ſheaf of arrows in the man's heart, whereby his confidence in theſe things is ſunk and deſtroyed; and inſtead of thinking himſelf better than many, he is made to ſee himſelf worſe than any. The naughti-

neſs of his reformation of life is diſcovered; his repentance appears to him no better than the repentance of Judas; his tears like Eſau's, and his deſires after Chriſt to be ſelfiſh and loathſome, like theirs who ſought Chriſt becauſe of the loaves, John vi. 26. His anſwer from God ſeems now to be, away proud beggar, "how ſhall I put thee among the children?" He ſeems to look ſternly on him, for his ſlighting of Jeſus Chriſt by unbelief, which is a ſin he ſcarce diſcerned before. But now at length he beholds it in its crimſon colours, and is pierced to the heart, as with a thouſand darts, while he ſees he has been going on blindly, ſinning againſt the remedy of ſin, and, in the whole courſe of his life, trampling on the blood of the Son of God. And now he is, in his own eyes, the miſerable object of law-vengeance, yea, and goſpel-vengeance too.

Eleventhly, The man being thus far humbled, will no more plead he is worthy for whom Chriſt ſhould do this thing; but, on the contrary, looks on himſelf as unworthy of Chriſt, and unworthy of the favour of God. We may compare him, in this caſe, to the young man who followed Chriſt, "having a linen "cloth, caſt about his naked body; on whom when "the young men laid hold, he left the linen cloth, "and fled from them naked," Mark xiv. 51, 52. Even ſo the man had been following Chriſt, in the thin and coldrife garment of his own perſonal worthineſs: but by it, even by it, which he ſo much truſted to, the law catcheth hold of him, to make him priſoner; and then he is fain to leave it, and flees away naked: yet not to Chriſt, but from him. If ye now tell him, he is welcome to Chriſt, if he will come to him; he is apt to ſay, can ſuch a vile and unworthy wretch as I, be welcome to the holy Jeſus? If a plaiſter be applied to his wounded ſoul, it will not ſtick. He ſays, "Depart from me, for I am a "ſinful man, O Lord," Luke v. 8. No man needs ſpeak to him of his repentance, for his comfort; he can

can quickly eſpy ſuch faults in it as makes it naught: nor of his tears; for he is aſſured they have never come into the Lord's bottle. He diſputes himſelf away from Chriſt; and concludes, now that he has been ſuch a ſlighter of Chriſt, and is ſuch an unholy and vile creature, he will not, he ought not to come to Chriſt; and that he muſt either be in better caſe, or elſe he will never believe. And hence he now makes his ſtrongeſt efforts to amend what was amiſs in his way before: he prays more earneſtly than ever, mourns more bitterly, ſtrives againſt ſin, in heart and life more vigorouſly, and watcheth more diligently, if by any means he may, at length, be fit to come to Chriſt. One would think the man is well humbled now: but ah! deviliſh pride lurks under the veil of all this ſeeming humility; like a kindly branch of the old ſtock, he adheres ſtill, and will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God, Rom. x. 3. He will not come to the market of free grace without money. He is bidden to the marriage of the King's ſon, where the bridegroom himſelf furniſheth all the gueſts with wedding-garments, ſtripping them of their own: but he will not come, becauſe he wants a wedding garment, howbeit he is very buſy making one ready. This is ſad work; and therefore he muſt have a deeper ſtroke yet, elſe he is ruined. This ſtroke is reached him with the axe of the law, in its irritating power. Thus the law girding the ſoul with cords of death, and holding it in with the rigorous commands of obedience, under the pain of the curſe; and God in his holy and wiſe conduct, withdrawing his reſtraining grace, corruption is irritated, luſts become violent; and the more they are ſtriven againſt, the more they rage, like a furious horſe checked with the bit. Then do corruptions ſet up their heads, which he never ſaw in himſelf before. Here oftimes Atheiſm, blaſphemy; and, in one word, horrible things concerning God, terrible thoughts concerning the faith, ariſe in his breaſt: ſo that his heart is a very hell within him.

Thus, while he is ſweeping the houſe of his heart, not yet watered with goſpel-grace, theſe corruptions which lay quiet before in neglected corners, fly up and down in it like duſt. He is as one who is mending a dam, and while he is repairing breaches in it and ſtrengthening every part of it, a mighty flood comes down, overturns his work, and drives all away before it, as well what was newly laid, as what was laid before. Read Rom. vii. 8, 9, 10, 13. This is a ſtroke which goes to the heart: and by it, his hope of getting himſelf more fit to come to Chriſt is cut off.

Laſtly, Now the time is come, when the man, betwixt hope and deſpair, reſolves to go to Chriſt as he is; and therefore, like a dying man, ſtretching himſelf juſt before his breath goes out. he rallies the broken forces of his ſoul, tries to believe, and in ſome ſort lays hold on Jeſus Chriſt. And now the branch hangs on the old ſtock by one ſingle tack of a natural faith, produced by the natural vigour of one's own ſpirit, under a moſt preſſing neceſſity, Pſal. lxxviii. 34, 35. "When he ſlew them, then they "ſought him, and they returned and enquired early "after God. And they remembred that God was "their rock, and the high God their Redeemer." Hoſ. viii. 2. "Iſrael ſhall cry unto me, My God, we "know thee." But the Lord, minding to perfect his work, fetches yet another ſtroke, whereby the branch falls quite off. The Spirit of God convincingly diſcovers to the ſinner his utter inability to do any thing that is good, and ſo he dieth, Rom. vii. 9. That voice powerfully ſtrikes through his ſoul, "How "can ye believe?" John v. 44. Thou canſt no more believe, than thou canſt reach up thine hand to heaven, and bring Chriſt down from thence. And thus at length he ſees, he can neither help himſelf by working, nor by believing; and having no more to hang by, on the old ſtock, he therefore falls off. And while he is diſtreſſed thus, ſeeing himſelf like to be

be ſwept away with the flood of God's wrath; and yet unable ſo much as to ſtretch forth a hand to lay hold of a twig of the tree of life, growing on the banks of the river, he is taken up, and ingrafted in the true vine, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt giving him the ſpirit of faith.

By what has been ſaid upon this head, I deſign not to rack or diſtreſs tender conſciences; for though there are but few ſuch, at this day, yet God forbid I ſhould offend any of Chriſt's little ones. But, alas! a dead ſleep is fallen upon this generation, they will not be awakened, let us go as near the quick as we will; and therefore I fear there is another ſort of awakening abiding this ſermon-proof generation, which ſhall make the ears of them that hear it to tingle. However, I would not have this to be looked upon as the ſovereign God's ſtinted method of breaking off ſinners from the old ſtock: but, I aſſert this, as a certain truth, that all who are in Chriſt have been broken off from all theſe ſeveral confidences: and that they who were never broken off from them, are yet in their natural ſtock. Nevertheleſs, if the houſe be pulled down, and the old foundation razed, it is all a caſe, whether it was taken down ſtone by ſtone, or whether it was undermined, and all fell down together.

Now it is that the branch is ingrafted in Jeſus Chriſt. And as the law, in the hand of the Spirit of God, was the inſtrument to cut off the branch from the natural ſtock; ſo the goſpel, in the hand of the ſame Spirit, is the inſtrument uſed for ingrafting it in the ſupernatural ſtock, 1 John i. 3. "That which "we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that "ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us; and truly our "fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Je-"ſus Chriſt." See Iſ. lxi. 1, 2, 3. The goſpel is the ſilver cord let down from heaven, to draw periſhing ſinners to land. And, though the preaching of the law prepares the way of the Lord; yet it is in the

the word of the gospel that Christ and a sinner meet. Now, as in the natural grafting, the branch being taken up is put into the stock, and being put into it, takes with it, and so they are united; even so in the spiritual ingrafting, Christ apprehends the sinner, and the sinner, being apprehended of Christ, apprehends him, and so they become one, Philip. iii. 12.

First, Christ apprehends the sinner by his Spirit, and draws him to himself, 1 Cor. xii. 13. "For by "one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." The same Spirit, which is in the Mediator himself, he communicates to his elect in due time, never to depart from them, but to abide in them as a principle of life. Thus he takes hold of them by his own Spirit put into them; and so the withered branch gets life. The soul is now in the hands of the Lord of life, and possessed by the Spirit of life: how can it then but live? The man gets a ravishing sight of Christ's excellency, in the glass of the gospel: he sees him a full, suitable, and willing Saviour; and gets a heart to take him, for and instead of all. The Spirit of faith furnisheth him with feet to come to Christ, and hands to receive him. What by nature he could not do, by grace he can, the Holy Spirit working in him the work of faith with power.

Secondly, The sinner thus apprehended apprehends Christ by faith; and so takes with the blessed stock, Eph. iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in "your hearts by faith." The soul, that before tried many ways of escape, but all in vain, doth now look again with the eye of faith, which proves the healing look. As Aaron's rod, laid up in the tabernacle, budded, and brought forth buds, Numb. xvii. 8. so the dead branch, apprehended by the Lord of life, put into, and bound up with the glorious quickening stock, by the Spirit of life, buds forth in actual believing on Christ, whereby this union is completed. "We having the same spirit of faith——believe," 2 Cor. iv. 13. Thus the stock and the graft are united,

ed, Chriſt and the Chriſtian are married, faith being the ſoul's conſent to the ſpiritual marriage-covenant, which, as it is propoſed in the goſpel to mankind ſinners indefinitely, ſo it is demonſtrated, atteſted, and brought home, to the man in particular, by the holy Spirit: and ſo he being joined to the Lord, is one ſpirit with him. Hereby a believer lives in, and for Chriſt; and Chriſt lives in, and for the believer, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Chriſt: Never-"theleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me." Hoſ. iii. 3. "Thou ſhalt not be for another man, "ſo will I alſo be for thee." The bonds then of this bleſſed union are, the Spirit on Chriſt's part, and faith on the believer's part.

Now both the ſouls and bodies of believers are united to Chriſt. "He that is joined to the Lord, is "one ſpirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. The very bodies of believers have this honour put upon them, that they are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, ver. 19. and the members of Chriſt, ver. 15. When they ſleep in the duſt, they ſleep in Jeſus, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. and it is in virtue of this union they ſhall be raiſed up out of the duſt again, Rom. viii. 11. "He ſhall quicken your "mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." In token of this myſtical union, the church of believers is called by the name of her Head and Huſband, 1 Cor. xii. 12. "For as the body is one, and hath "many members,—ſo alſo is Chriſt."

USE. From what is ſaid, we may draw theſe following inferences.

1. The preaching of the law is moſt neceſſary. He that would ingraft, muſt needs uſe the ſnedding-knife. Sinners have many ſhifts to keep them from Chriſt; many things by which they keep their hold of the natural ſtock; therefore they have need to be cloſely purſued, and hunted out of their ſkulking holes and refuges of lies.

2. Yet it is the goſpel that crowns the work: "the law makes nothing perfect." The law lays

open

open the wound, but it is the gospel that heals. The law "strips a man, wounds him, and leaves him half dead;" the gospel "binds up his wounds, pouring "in wine and oil," to heal them. By the law we are broken off; but it is by the gospel we are taken up, and implanted in Christ.

3. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he "is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. We are told of a monster in nature, having two bodies differently animated, as appeared from contrary affections at one and the same time, but so united, that they were served with the self-same legs. Even so, however men may cleave to Christ, "call themselves of the holy "city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel," Is. xlviii. 2. and they may be bound up as branches in him, John xv. 2. by the outward ties of sacraments, yet if the Spirit, that dwells in Christ, dwell not in them, they are not one with him. There is a great difference between adhesion and ingrafting. The ivy clasps and twists itself about the oak, but it is not one with it, for it still grows on its own root; so, to allude to Isa. iv. 1. many professors take hold of Christ, and eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel, only they are called by his name. They stay themselves upon him, but grow upon their own root: they take him to support their hopes, but their delights are elsewhere.

4. The union betwixt Christ and his mystical members is firm and indissoluble. Were it so, that the believer only apprehended Christ, but Christ apprehended not him, we could promise little on the stability of such an union; it might quickly be dissolved: but, as the believer apprehends Christ by faith, so Christ apprehends him by his Spirit, and none shall pluck him out of his hand. Did the child only keep hold of the nurse, it might at length weary, and let go its hold, and so fall away; but if she have her arms about the child, it is in no hazard of falling away, even though it be not actually holding by

by her. So, whatever ſinful intermiſſions may happen in the exerciſe of faith; yet the union remains ſure, by reaſon of the conſtant indwelling of the ſpirit. Bleſſed Jeſus! "All his ſaints are in thy hand," Deut. xxxiii. 3. It is obſerved by ſome, that the word Abba, is the ſame, whether you read it forward or backward: whatever the believer's caſe be, the Lord is ſtill to him, Abba, Father.

Laſtly, They have an unſure hold of Chriſt, whom he has not apprehended by his Spirit. There are many half marriages here, where the ſoul apprehends Chriſt, but is not apprehended of him. Hence, many fall away, and never riſe again: they let go their hold of Chriſt, and when that is gone, all is gone. Theſe are "the branches in Chriſt, that bear no fruit, "which the Huſbandman taketh away," John xv. 2. Queſt. How can that be? Anſ. Theſe branches are ſet in the ſtock by a profeſſion, or an unſound hypocritical faith; they are bound up with it in the external uſe of the ſacraments; but the ſtock and they are never knit; therefore they cannot bear fruit. And they need not be cut off, nor broken off; they are by the Huſbandman only taken away, or (as the word primarily ſignifies) lifted up, and ſo taken away, becauſe there is nothing to hold them: they are indeed bound up with the ſtock, but they have never united with it.

Queſt. How ſhall I know if I am apprehended of Chriſt? Anſ. You may be ſatisfied in this enquiry, if you conſider and apply theſe two things.

1ſt, When Chriſt apprehends a man by his Spirit, he is ſo drawn, that he comes away to Chriſt with his whole heart, Acts viii. 37. Our Lord's followers are like theſe who followed Saul at firſt, men whoſe hearts God has touched, 1 Sam. x. 26. When the Spirit pours in overcoming grace, they pour out their hearts like water before him, Pſal. lxii. 8. They flow unto him like a river, Iſa. ii. 2. "All nations "ſhall flow unto it," namely, to "the mountain

" of the Lord's houſe." It denotes not only the abundance of converts, but the diſpoſition of their ſouls in coming to Chriſt; they come heartily and freely, as drawn with loving-kindneſs, Jer. xxxi. 3. " Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy pow-" er," Pſal. cx. 3. i. e. free, ready, open-hearted, giving themſelves to thee as free will offerings. When the bridegroom has the bride's heart, it is a right marriage: but ſome give their hand to Chriſt, who give him not their heart. They that are only driven to Chriſt by terror, will ſurely leave him again when that terror is gone. Terrors may break a heart of ſtone, but the pieces into which it is broken ſtill continue to be ſtone: the terrors cannot ſoften it into a heart of fleſh. Yet terror may begin the work which love crowns. The ſtrong wind, the earthquake, and the fire going before, the ſtill ſmall voice, in which the Lord is, may come after them. When the bleſſed Jeſus is ſeeking ſinners to match with him, they are bold and perverſe: they will not ſpeak with him, till he hath wounded them, made them captives, and bound them with the cords of death. When this is done, then it is that he makes love to them, and wins their hearts. The Lord tells us, Hoſ. ii. 16—20. that his choſen Iſrael ſhall be married unto himſelf. But how will the bride's conſent be won? Why, in the firſt place, he will bring her into the wilderneſs, as he did the people, when he brought them out of Egypt, ver. 14. There ſhe will be hardly dealt with, ſcorched with thirſt, and bitten of ſerpents: and then he will ſpeak comfortable to her, or, as the expreſſion is, he will ſpeak upon her heart. The ſinner is firſt driven, and then drawn to Chriſt. It is with the ſoul as with Noah's dove, ſhe was forced back again to the ark, becauſe ſhe could find nothing elſe to reſt upon: but, when ſhe did return, ſhe would have reſted on the outſide of it, if Noah had not put forth his hand, and pulled her in, Gen. viii. 9. The Lord ſends the avenger of blood in purſuit of the criminal;

and

and he, with a ſad heart, leaves his own city, and, with tears in his eyes, parts with his old acquaintances, becauſe he dare not ſtay with them, and he flees for his life to the city of refuge. This is not all his choice, it is forced work; neceſſity has no law. But when he comes to the gates, and ſees the beauty of the place, the excellency and lovelineſs of it charms him; and then he enters it with heart and good will, ſaying, "This is my reſt, and here I will ſtay;" and, as one ſaid in another caſe, "I had periſhed, "unleſs I had periſhed."

2dly, Whe. Chriſt apprehends a ſoul, the heart is diſengaged from, and turned againſt ſin. As in cutting off the branch from the old ſtock, the great idol ſelf is brought down, the man is powerfully taught to deny himſelf: ſo, in the apprehending of the ſinner by the Spirit, that union is diſſolved which was betwixt the man and his luſts, while he was in the fleſh, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, Rom. vii. 5. His heart is looſed from them, though formerly as dear to him as the members of the body; as his eyes, legs, or arms: and, inſtead of taking pleaſure in them, as ſometime he did, he longs to be rid of them. When the Lord Jeſus comes to a ſoul, in the day of converting grace, he finds it like Jeruſalem in the day of her nativity, (Ezek. xvi. 4.) with its navel not cut, drawing its fulſome nouriſhment and ſatisfaction from its luſts; but he cuts off this communication, that he may ſet the ſoul on the breaſts of his own conſolations, and give it reſt in himſelf. And thus the Lord wounds the head and heart of ſin, and the ſoul comes to him, ſaying, "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, "and things wherein there is no profit," Jer. xvi. 19.

Of the benefits flowing to true believers from their union with Chriſt.

V. and laſtly, I come to ſpeak of the benefits flowing to true believers from their union with Chriſt. The chief of the particular benefits believers have by it, are juſtification, peace, adoption, ſanctification, growth in grace, fruitfulneſs in good works, acceptance of theſe good works, eſtabliſhment in a ſtate of grace, ſupport, and a ſpecial conduct of providence about them. As for communion with Chriſt, it is ſuch a benefit, as, being the immediate conſequent of union with him, comprehends all the reſt as mediate ones. For, look as the branch, immediately upon its union with the ſtock, hath communion with the ſtock, in all that is in it; ſo the believer, uniting with Chriſt, hath communion with him; in which he launcheth forth into an ocean of happineſs, is led into a paradiſe of pleaſures, and has a ſaving intereſt in the treaſure hid in the field of the goſpel, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt. As ſoon as the believer is united to Chriſt, Chriſt himſelf, in whom all fulneſs dwells, is his, Cant. ii. 16. "My beloved is "mine, and I am his." And, "how ſhall he not "with him freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the "world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or "things to come, all are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. This communion with Chriſt is the great comprehenſive bleſſing neceſſarily flowing from our union with him. Let us now conſider the particular benefits flowing from it, before mentioned.

The firſt particular benefit that a ſinner hath by his union with Chriſt, is juſtification; for being united to Chriſt, he hath communion with him in his righteouſneſs, 1 Cor. i 30. "But of him are ye in "Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom "and righteouſneſs." He ſtands no more condemned,

ed, but juſtified before God, as being in Chriſt, Rom. viii. 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation "to them who are in Chriſt Jeſus." The branches hereof are, pardon of ſin and perſonal acceptance.

Firſt, His ſins are pardoned, the guilt of them is removed. The bond obliging him to pay his debt is cancelled. God the Father takes the pen, dips it in the blood of his Son, croſſeth the ſinner's accounts, and blotteth them out of his debt-book. The ſinner out of Chriſt is bound over to the wrath of God: he is under an obligation in law to go to the priſon of hell, and there to lie till he has paid the utmoſt farthing. This ariſeth from the terrible ſanction with which the law is fenced, which is no leſs than death, Gen. ii. 17. So that the ſinner, paſſing the bounds aſſigned him, is, a Shimei in another caſe, a man of death, 1 Kings ii. 42. But now, being united to Chriſt, God ſaith, "Deliver him from going down "to the pit: I have found a ranſom," Job xxxiii. 24. The ſentence of condemnation is reverſed, the believer is abſolved, and ſet beyond the reach of the condemning law. His ſins, which ſometimes were ſet before the Lord, Pſal. xc. 8. ſo that they could not be hid, God now takes and caſts them all behind his back, Iſa. xxxvii. 17. Yea, he caſts them into the depth of the ſea, Micah vii. 19. What falls into a brook may be got up again; but what is caſt into the ſea cannot be recovered. Ay, but there are ſome ſhallow places in the ſea: true, but their ſins are not caſt in there, but into the depths of the ſea; and the depths of the ſea are devouring depths, from whence they ſhall never come forth again. But what if they do not ſink? He will caſt them in with force, ſo that they ſhall go to the ground, and ſink as lead in the mighty waters of the Redeemer's blood. They are not only forgiven but forgotten, Jer. xxxi. 34. "I "will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember "their ſin no more." And though their after-ſins do in themſelves deſerve eternal wrath, and do actually

tually make them liable to temporal ſtrokes, and fa-therly chaſtiſements, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, Pſal. lxxxix. 30.—33. yet they can never be actually liable to eternal wrath, or the curſe of the law; for they are dead to the law in Chriſt, Rom. vii. 4. And they can never fall from their union with Chriſt; nor can they be in Chriſt, and yet under condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. "There "is therefore now no condemnation to them which "are in Chriſt Jeſus." This is an inference drawn from that doctrine of the believer's being dead to the law, delivered by the apoſtle, chap. vii. 1.—6. as is clear from the 2d, 3d, and 4th verſes of this eight chapter. And in this reſpect the juſtified man is "the bleſſed man, unto whom the Lord imputeth "not iniquity," Pſal. xxxii. 2. as one who has no deſign to charge a debt on another, ſets it not down in his count-book.

2dly, The believer is accepted as righteous in God's ſight, 2 Cor. v. 21. for he is "found in Chriſt, not "having his own righteouſneſs, but that which is "through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which "is of God by faith, Phil. iii. 9. He could never be accepted of God, as righteous, upon the account of his own righteouſneſs: becauſe, at beſt, it is but imperfect; and all righteouſneſs, properly ſo called, which will abide a trial before the throne of God, is perfect. The very name of it implies perfection: for unleſs a work be perfectly conform to the law, it is not right, but wrong; and ſo cannot make a man righteous before God, whoſe judgment is according to truth. Yet if juſtice demand a righteouſneſs of one that is in Chriſt, upon which he may be account-ed righteous before the Lord, "Surely ſhall ſuch an "one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs," Iſ. xlv. 24. The law is fulfilled, its commands are obeyed, its ſanction is ſatisfied. The believer's cautioner has paid the debt. It was exacted, and he anſwered for it.

Thus

Thus the perſon united to Chriſt is juſtified. You may conceive of the whole proceeding herein in this manner. The avenger of blood purſuing the criminal Chriſt, as the Saviour of loſt ſinners, doth by the Spirit apprehend him, and draw him to himſelf; and he by faith lays hold on Chriſt: ſo the Lord our righteouſneſs and the unrighteous creature, unite. From this union with Chriſt reſults a communion with him in his unſearchable riches, and conſequently in his righteouſneſs, that white raiment which he has for cloathing of the naked, Rev. iii. 18. Thus the righteouſneſs of Chriſt becomes his: and becauſe it is his by unqueſtionable title, it is imputed to him; it is reckoned his in the judgment of God, which is always according to the truth of the thing. And ſo the believing ſinner, having a righteouſneſs which fully anſwers the demands of the law, he is pardoned and accepted as righteous. See Iſa. xlv. 22, 24, 25. Rom. iii. and chap. v. 1. Now he is a free man. Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of theſe whom God juſtifieth? Can juſtice lay any thing to their charge? No, for it is ſatisfied. Can the law? No, for it has got all its demands of them in Jeſus Chriſt, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Chriſt." What can the law require more, after it has wounded their head, poured in wrath in full meaſure into their ſoul, and cut off their life, and brought it into the duſt of death, in ſo far as it has done all this to Jeſus Chriſt, who is their head, Eph. i. 22. their ſoul, Acts ii. 25. 27. and their life? Col. iii. 4. What is become of the ſinner's own hand-writing, which would prove the debt upon him? Chriſt has blotted it out, Col. ii. 14. But, it may be, juſtice may get its eye upon it again. No, he took it out of the way. But, O that it had been torn in pieces! may the ſinner ſay: Yea, ſo it is; the nails that pierced Chriſt's hands and feet are driven through it; he nailed it. But what if the torn pieces be ſet together again? That cannot be; for he nailed it to his croſs, and his croſs

was

was buried with him, but will never rife more, feeing Chriſt dieth no more. Where is the face-covering that was upon the condemned man? Chriſt has deſtroyed it, Iſa. xxv. 7. Where is death that ſtood before the ſinner with a grim face, and an open mouth, ready to devour him? Chriſt has ſwallowed it up in victory, verſe 8. Glory, glory, glory to him that thus loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.

The ſecond benefit flowing from the ſame ſpring of union with Chriſt, and coming by the way of juſtification, is peace; peace with God, and peace of conſcience, according to the meaſure of the ſenſe the juſtified have of their peace with God, Rom. v. 1. "Therefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace "with God." Chap. xiv. 17. "For the kingdom "of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs "and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt." Whereas God was their enemy before, now he is reconciled to them in Chriſt: they are in a covenant of peace with him; and as Abraham was, ſo they are the friends of God. He is well pleaſed with them in his beloved Son. His word, which ſpoke terror to them formerly, now ſpeaks peace, if they rightly take up its language. And there is love in all his diſpenſations towards them, which makes all things work together for their good. Their conſciences are purged of that guilt and filthineſs that ſometime lay upon them: his conſcience purifying blood ſtreams through their ſouls, by virtue of their union with him, Heb. ix. 14. "How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt—purge "your conſcience from dead works, to ſerve the living God?" The bonds laid on their conſciences by the Spirit of God, acting as the ſpirit of bondage are taken off, never more to be laid on by that hand, Rom. viii. 15. "For ye have not received the Spirit "of bondage again to fear." Hereby the conſcience is quieted, as ſoon as the ſoul becomes conſcious of the application of that blood; which falls out ſooner

or

or later, according to the meaſure of faith, and as the only wiſe God ſees meet to time it. Unbelievers may have troubled conſciences, which they may get quieted again: but alas! their conſciences become peaceable, ere they become pure; ſo their peace is but the ſeed of greater horror and confuſion. Careleſsneſs may give eaſe for a while, to a ſick conſcience; men neglecting its wounds, they cloſe again of their own accord, before the filthy matter is purged out. Many bury their guilt in the grave of an ill memory: conſcience ſmarts a little; at length the man forgets his ſin, and there is an end of it; but that is only an eaſe before death. Buſineſs, or the affairs of life, often give eaſe in this caſe. When Cain is baniſhed from the preſence of the Lord, he falls a building of cities. When the evil ſpirit came upon Saul, he calls not for his bible, nor for the prieſts to converſe with him about his caſe; but for muſic, to play it away. So many, when their conſciences begin to be uneaſy, they fill their heads and hands with buſineſs, to divert themſelves, and to regain eaſe at any rate. Yea, ſome will ſin over the belly of their convictions, and ſo get ſome eaſe to their conſciences, as Hazael gave to his maſter, by ſtifling him. Again, the performing of duties may give ſome eaſe to a diſquieted conſcience: and this is all that legal profeſſors have recourſe to, for quieting of their conſciences. When conſcience is wounded, they will pray, confeſs, mourn, and reſolve to do ſo no more: and ſo they become whole again, without an application of the blood of Chriſt, by faith. But they, whoſe conſciences are rightly quieted, come for peace and purging to the blood of ſprinkling. Sin is a ſweet morſel, that makes God's elect ſick ſouls, ere they get it vomited up. It leaves a ſting behind it, which ſome one time or other, will create them no little pain.

Elihu ſhews us both the caſe and cure, Job xxxiii. Behold the caſe one may be in, whom God has thoughts of love to. He darteth convictions into hi

conſcience; and makes them ſtick ſo faſt, that he cannot rid himſelf of them, ver. 16. "He openeth "the ears of men, and ſealeth their inſtruction." His very body ſickens, ver. 19. "He is chaſtened "alſo with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of "his bones with ſtrong pain." He loſeth his ſtomach, ver. 20. "His life abhorreth bread, and his "ſoul dainty meat." His body pines away, ſo that there is nothing on him but ſkin and bone, ver. 21. His fleſh is conſumed away, that it cannot be ſeen, and his bones that were not ſeen ſtick out. Though he is not prepared for death, he has no hopes of life, ver. 22. His ſoul draweth near unto the grave, and (which is the height of his miſery) his life to the deſtroyers; he is looking every moment when devils, theſe deſtroyers, Rev. ix. 11. theſe murderers or man-ſlayers, John viii. 44. will come and carry away his ſoul to hell. O dreadful caſe! yet there is hope. God deſigns to keep back his ſoul from the pit, ver. 18. although he bring him forward to the brink of it. Now ſee how the ſick man is cured. The phyſician's art cannot prevail here: the diſeaſe lies more inward, than that his medicines can reach it. It is ſoul-trouble that has brought the body into this diſorder: and therefore the remedies muſt be applied to the ſick man's ſoul and conſcience. The phyſician, for this caſe, muſt be a ſpiritual phyſician; the remedies muſt be ſpiritual, a righteouſneſs, a ranſom, or atonement. Upon the application of theſe, the ſoul cured, the conſcience is quieted; and the body recovers, ver. 23, 24, 25, 26. "If there be a meſſen-"ger with him, an interpreter, one among a thou-"ſand, to ſhew unto man his uprightneſs: then he "is gracious unto him, and ſaith, Deliver him from "going down to the pit, I have found a ranſom. His "fleſh ſhall be freſher than a child's; he ſhall return "to the days of his youth. He ſhall pray unto God, "and he ſhall be favourable unto him, and he ſhall "ſee his face with joy." The proper phyſician for this

this patient, is a meſſenger, an interpreter, ver. 23. that is, as ſome expoſitors not without ground underſtand it, the great Phyſician Jeſus Chriſt, whom Job had called his Redeemer, chap. xix. 15. He is a meſſenger, the meſſenger of the covenant of peace, Mal. iii. 1. who comes ſeaſonably to the ſick man. He is an interpreter, the great interpreter of God's counſels of love to ſinners, John i. 18. One among a thouſand, even the chief among ten thouſand, Cant. v. 10. One choſen our of the people, Pſal. lxxxix. 29. One to whom the Lord hath given the tongue of the learned,——to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary, If. l. 4, 5, 6. It is he that is with him, by his Spirit, now, to convince him of righteouſneſs, John xvi. 8. as he was with him before, to convince him of ſin and of judgment. His work now is, to ſhew unto him his uprightneſs, or his righteouſneſs, i. e. the interpreter Chriſt his righteouſneſs; which is the only righteouſneſs, ariſing from the paying of a ranſom, and upon which a ſinner is delivered from going down to the pit, ver. 24. And thus Chriſt is ſaid to declare God's name, Pſal. xxii. 22, and to preach righteouſneſs, Pſal. xl. 9. The phraſe is remarkable: it is not to ſhew unto the man, but unto man, his righteouſneſs; which not obſcurely intimates, that he is more than a man, who ſhews or declareth this righteouſneſs. Compare Amos iv. 13. "He that formeth the mountains, and createth "the wind, and declareth unto man what is his "thought." There ſeems to be in it a ſweet alluſion to the firſt declaration of this righteouſneſs unto man, or as the word is, unto Adam, after the fall, while he lay under terror from apprehenſions of the wrath of God: which declaration was made by the meſſenger, the interpreter, namely, he eternal Word, the Son of God, called the voice of the Lord God, Gen. iii. 8. and by him appearing, probably, in human ſhape. Now, while he, by his Spirit, is the preacher of righteouſneſs to the man, it is ſuppoſed the man

lays hold on the offered righteouſneſs: whereupon the ranſom is applied to him, and he is delivered from going down to the pit: for God hath a ranſom for him. This is intimate to him: God ſaith, Deliver him, ver. 24. Hereupon his conſcience, being purged by the blood of atonement, is pacified, and ſweetly quieted. He ſhall pray unto God—and ſee his face with joy, which before he beheld with horror, ver. 26. that is, in New-Teſtament language, "having an high-prieſt over the houſe of God," he ſhall "draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance "of faith, having his heart ſprinkled from an evil "conſcience," Heb. x. 21, 22. But then, what becomes of the body, the weak and weary fleſh? Why his fleſh ſhall be freſher than a child's, he ſhall return to the days of his youth, ver. 25. Yea, all his bones (which were chaſtened with ſtrong pain, ver. 19.) ſhall ſay, Lord, who is like unto thee? Pſal. xxxv. 10.

A third benefit flowing from union with Chriſt, is adoption. Believers being united to Chriſt, become children of God, and members of the family of heaven. By their union with him, who is the Son of God by nature, they become the ſons of God by grace, John i. 12. As when a branch is cut off from one tree, and grafted in the branch of another: the ingrafted branch, by means of its union with the adopting branch (as ſome not unfitly have called it,) is made a branch of the ſame ſtock, with that into which it is ingrafted: ſo ſinners being ingrafted into Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe name is the Branch, his Father is their Father, his God their God, John xx. 17. And thus they, who are by nature children of the devil, become children of God. They have the Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15. namely, the Spirit of his Son, which brings them to God, as children to a Father; to pour out their complaints in his boſom, and to ſeek neceſſary ſupply, Gal. iv. 6. "Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit

"of

" of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Under all their weakneſſes, they have fatherly pity and paſſion ſhewn them, Pſal. ciii. 13. " Like as a " father pitieth his children: ſo the Lord pitieth them " that fear him." Although they were but fundlings, found in a defert land; yet now that to them belongs the adoption, he keeps them as the apple of his eye, Deut. xxxii. 10. Whoſoever purſue them, they have a refuge, Prov. xiv. 26. His children ſhall have a place of refuge. In a time of common calamity, they have chambers of protection, where they may be hid, until the indignation be overpaſt, Iſa. xxvi. 20. And he is not only their refuge of protection, but their portion of proviſion, in that refuge; Pſal. cxliii. 5. Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. They are provided for, for eternity, Heb. xi. 16. He hath prepared for them a city. And what he ſees they have need of for time, they ſhall not want, Matth. vi. 31, 32. Take no thought ſaying, What ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things. Seaſonable correction is likewiſe their privilege as ſons: ſo they are not ſuffered to paſs with their faults, as happens to others who are not children, but ſervants of the family, and will be turned out of doors for their miſcarriages at length, Heb. xii. 7. If ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you, as with ſons; for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not? They are heirs of, and ſhall inherit the promiſe, Heb. vi. 12. Nay, they are heirs of God, who himſelf is the portion of their inheritance, Pſal. xvi. 6. and joint-heirs with Chriſt, Rom. viii. 17. And becauſe they are the children of the great King, and young heirs of glory, they have angels for their attendants, who are ſent forth to miniſter for them, that ſhall be heirs of ſalvation, Heb. i. 14.

A fourth benefit is ſanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made

made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification. Being united to Chriſt, they partake of his Spirit, which is the Spirit of holineſs. There is a fulneſs of the Spirit in Chriſt, and it is not like the fulneſs of a veſſel which only retains what is poured into it; but it is the fulneſs of a fountain for diffuſion and communication, which is always ſending forth its waters, and yet is always full. The Spirit of Chriſt, that ſpiritual ſap, which is in the ſtock, and from thence is communicate to the branches, is the Spirit of grace, Zech. xii. 10. And where the Spirit of grace dwells, there will be found a complication of all graces. Holineſs is not one grace only, but all the graces of the Spirit: it is a conſtellation of graces: it is all the graces in their ſeed and root. And as the ſap conveyed from the ſtock into the branch goes through it, and through every part of it: ſo the Spirit of Chriſt ſanctifies the whole man. The poiſon of ſin was diffuſed through the whole ſpirit, ſoul and body of the man; and ſanctifying grace purſues it into every corner, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. Every part of the man is ſanctified, though no part is perfectly ſo. The truth we are ſanctified by, is not held in the head, as in a priſon: but runs with its ſanctifying influences, though heart and life. There are indeed ſome graces, in every believer, which appears as top-branches above the reſt: as meekneſs in Moſes, patience in Job: but ſeeing there is in every child of God, a holy principle going along with the holy law in all the parts thereof, loving, liking, and approving of it; as appears from their univerſal reſpect to the commands of God: it is evident they are endowed with all the graces of the Spirit: becauſe there can be no leſs in the effect, than there was in the cauſe.

Now, this ſanctifying ſpirit, whereof believers partake, is unto them, (1.) A ſpirit of mortification: "through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the "body," Rom. viii. 13. Sin is crucified in them,

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Gal. v. 24. They are planted together (namely with Chriſt) in the likeneſs of his death, which was a lingering death, Rom. vi. 4. Sin in the ſaint, though not quite dead, yet is dying. If it were dead, it would be taken down from the croſs, and buried out of his ſight; but it hangs there as yet, working and ſtruggling under its mortal wounds. Look, as when a tree has got ſuch a ſtroke as reaches the heart of it, all the leaves and branches thereof begin to fade and decay; ſo, when the ſanctifying Spirit comes, and breaks the power of ſin, there is a gradual ceaſing from it, and dying to it, in the whole man: ſo that he no longer lives in the fleſh to the luſts of men. He does not make ſin his trade and buſineſs; it is not his great deſign to ſeek himſelf, and to ſatisfy his corrupt inclinations; but he is for Immanuel's land, and is walking in the high-way to it, the way which is called the way of holineſs: though the wind from hell, that was on his back before, blows now full in his face, makes his travelling uneaſy, and often drives him off the highway. (2.) This Spirit is a Spirit of vivification to them; for he is the Spirit of life, and makes them live unto righteouſneſs, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe "you to walk in my ſtatutes." Theſe that have been planted together with Chriſt, in the likeneſs of his death, ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection, Rom. vi. 5. At Chriſt's reſurrection, when his ſoul was reunited with his body, every member of that bleſſed body was enabled again to perform the actions of life: ſo, the ſoul, being influenced by the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt, is enabled more and more to perform all the actions of ſpiritual life. And as the whole of the law, and not ſome ſcraps of it only, is written on the holy heart; ſo believers are enabled to tranſcribe the law, in their converſation. And although they cannot write one line of it, without blots; yet God, for Chriſt's ſake, accepts of the performances, in point of ſanctification; they being

ing disciples of his own Son, and led by his own Spirit.

This sanctifying Spirit, communicate by the Lord Jesus, to his members, is the spiritual nourishment, the branches have from the stock into which they are ingrafted; whereby the life of grace, given them in regeneration, is preserved, continued, and actuated. It is the nourishment whereby the new creature liveth, and is nourished up towards perfection. Spiritual life needs to be fed, and must have supply of nourishment: and believers derive the same from Christ their head, whom the Father has constituted the head of influences, to all his members, Col. ii. 19. "And "not holding the head, from which all the body, by "joints and bands, having nourishment ministered," or supplied, &c. Now this supply is the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 19. The saints feed richly, eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood for their spiritual nourishment; yet our Lord himself teacheth us, that it is the Spirit that quickeneth, even the Spirit that dwells in that blessed body, John vi. 63. The human nature is united in the divine nature in the person of the Son, and so (like the bowl in Zecharia's candlestick, Zech. iv.) lies at the fountain-head, as the glorious means of conveyance of influences from the fountain of the Deity; and receives not the Spirit by measure, but ever hath a fulness of the Spirit by reason of that personal union. Hence, believers being united to Christ, (as the seven lamps to the bowl by their seven pipes, Zech. iv. 2.) his flesh is to them meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; for feeding on that blessed body, (i. e. effectually applying Christ to their souls by faith), they partake more and more of that Spirit who dwelleth therein to their spiritual nourishment. The holiness of God could never admit of an immediate union with the sinful creature, not, consequently, an immediate communion with it; yet the creature could not live the life of grace, without communion with

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the fountain of life. Therefore, that the honour of God's holineſs, and the ſalvation of ſinners, might jointly be provided for, the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity, took into a perſonal union with himſelf a ſinleſs human nature; that ſo this holy, harmleſs, and undefiled humanity, might immediately receive a fulneſs of the Spirit, of which he might communicate to his members, by his divine power and efficacy. And like as, if there was a tree, having its root in the earth, and its branches reaching to heaven; the vaſt diſtance betwixt the root and the branches would not interrupt the communication betwixt the root and the top branch; even ſo the diſtance betwixt the man Chriſt, who is in heaven, and his members, who are on earth, cannot hinder the communication betwixt them. What though the parts of myſtical Chriſt (viz. the head and the members) are not contiguous, as joined together in the way of a corporal union? The union is not therefore the leſs real and effectual. Yea, our Lord himſelf ſhews us, that albeit we ſhould eat his fleſh, in a corporal and carnal manner, yet it would profit nothing, John vi. 36. we would not be one whit holier thereby. But the members of Chriſt on earth, are united to their head in heaven, by the inviſible bond of the ſelf-ſame Spirit dwelling in both; in him as the head, and in them as the members; even as the wheels in Ezekiel's viſion, were not contiguous to the living creatures, yet were united to them, by an inviſible bond of one ſpirit in both; ſo that, "when "the living creatures went, the wheels went by them, "and when the living creatures were lift up from the "earth, the wheels were left up," Ezek. i. 19. For, ſays the prophet, "the Spirit of the living creature "was in the wheels," verſe 20.

Hence we may ſee the difference betwixt true ſanctification, and that ſhadow of it, which is to be found amongſt ſome ſtrict profeſſors of Chriſtianity, who yet are not true Chriſtians, are not regenerate by the Spi-

rit of Chriſt, and is of the ſame kind with what has appeared in many ſober Heathens. True ſanctification is the reſult of the ſoul's union with the holy Jeſus, the firſt and immediate receptacle of the ſanctifying Spirit; out of whoſe fulneſs, his members do, by virtue of their union with him, receive ſanctifying influences. The other is the mere product of the man's own ſpirit, which, whatever it has or ſeems to have of the matter of true holineſs, yet does not ariſe from the ſupernatural principles, nor to the high aims and ends thereof: for, as it comes from ſelf, ſo it runs into the dead ſea of ſelf again; and lies as wide of true holineſs, as nature doth of grace. They who have this baſtard holineſs, are like common boat-men, who ſerve themſelves with their own oars: whereas the ſhip bound for Immanuel's land, fails by the blowings of the divine Spirit. How is it poſſible there ſhould be true ſanctification, without partaking of the Spirit of holineſs? Can we partake of that ſpirit, but by Jeſus Chriſt, the way, the truth, and the life? the falling dew ſhall ſooner make its way through the flinty rock, as influences of grace ſhall come from God to ſinners, any other way, but through him whom the Father hath conſtituted the head of influences, Col. i. 19. "For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould "all fulneſs dwell:" and chap. ii. 19. "And not "holding the head, from which all the body by joints "and bands, having nouriſhment miniſtred and knit "together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God." Hence ſee, how it comes to paſs, that many fall away from their ſeeming ſanctification, and never recover: it is becauſe they are not branches truly knit to the true vine. Mean while, others recover from their decays; becauſe of their union with the life giving-ſtock, by the quickening Spirit, 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; "for if they had been of us, they would no doubt "have continued with us."

A fifth benefit is growth in grace. "Having

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" nouriſhment miniſtred, they increaſe with the in-
" creaſe of God," Col. ii. 19. " The righteous ſhall
" flouriſh like the palm-tree: he ſhall grow like a ce-
" dar in Lebanon," Pſal. xcii. 12. Grace is of a growing nature: in the way to Zion they go from ſtrength to ſtrength. Though the holy man be at firſt a little child in grace, yet at length he becomes a young man, a father, 1 John ii. 13. Though he does but creep in the way to heaven ſometimes; yet afterwards he walks, he runs, he mounts up with wings as eagles. Iſa. xl. 31. If a branch grafted into a ſtock never grows, it is a plain evidence of its not having knit with the ſtock.

But ſome may perhaps ſay, " If all true Chriſtians
" be growing ones: what ſhall be ſaid of theſe, who
" inſtead of growing are going back?" I anſwer, Firſt, there is a great difference betwixt the Chriſtian's growing ſimply, and his growing at all times. All true Chriſtians do grow, but I do not ſay they grow at all times. A tree, that has life and nouriſhment, grows to its perfection, yet it is not always growing; it grows not in the winter. Chriſtians alſo have their winters, wherein the influences of grace, neceſſary for growth, are ceaſed. Cant. v. 2. " I ſleep." It is by faith the believer derives gracious influences from Jeſus Chriſt: likeas each lamp in the candleſtick, received oil from the bowl, by the pipe going betwixt them, Zech. iv. 2. Now, if that pipe be ſtopt, if the ſaint's faith lie dormant and inactive; then all the reſt of the graces will become dim, and ſeem ready to be extinguiſhed. In conſequence whereof, depraved nature will gather ſtrength, and become active. What then will become of the ſoul? Why, there is ſtill one ſure ground of hope. The ſaint's faith is not as the hypocrite's like a pipe laid ſhort of the fountain, whereby there can be no conveyance, it ſtill remains a bond of union betwixt Chriſt and the ſoul: and therefore, becauſe Chriſt lives, the believer ſhall live alſo, John xiv. 19. The Lord Jeſus puts in his hand by the hole of the door, and clears the means of con-

veyance: and then influences for growth flow, and believers graces look freſh and green again, Hoſ. xiv. 7. "They that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall return: "they ſhall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." In the worſt of times, the ſaints have a principle of growth in them, 1 John iii. 9. "His ſeed remaineth "in him." And therefore, after decays, they revive again; namely, when the winter is over, and the ſun of righteouſneſs returns to them with his warm influences. Mud thrown into a pool may lie there at eaſe; but if it be caſt into a fountain, the ſpring will at length work it out, and run clear as formerly. Secondly, Chriſtians may miſtake their growth, and that two ways. (1.) By judging of their caſe according to their preſent feeling. They obſerve themſelves, and cannot perceive themſelves to be growing, but there is no reaſon thence to conclude they are not growing, Mark iv. 27. "The ſeed ſprings and grows "up, he knoweth not how." Should one fix his eye never ſo ſtedfaſtly, on the ſun running his race, or on a growing tree; he would not perceive the ſun moving, nor the tree growing: but if he compare the tree as it now is, with what it was ſome years ago; and conſider the place of the heavens, where the ſun was in the morning; he will certainly perceive the tree has grown, and the ſun has moved. In like manner may the Chriſtian know, whether he be in a growing or declining ſtate, by comparing his preſent, with his former condition. (2.) Chriſtians may miſtake their caſe, by meaſuring their growth by the advances of the top only, not of the root. Though a man be not growing taller, he may be growing ſtronger. If a tree be taking with the ground, fixing itſelf in the earth, and ſpreading out its roots; it is certainly growing, although it be nothing taller than formerly. So albeit the Chriſtian may want the ſweet conſolation, and flaſhes of affection, which ſometimes he has had; yet if he be growing in humility, ſelf-denial, and ſenſe of needy dependance on Jeſus Chriſt, he is a growing

Chriſtian

Chriſtian, Hoſ. xiv. 5. "I will be as the dew unto Iſ-
"rael, he ſhould caſt forth his roots as Lebanon."

Queſt. But do hypocrites grow at all? And if ſo, how ſhall we diſtinguiſh betwixt their growth, and true Chriſtian growth? Anſ. To the firſt part of the queſtion; hypocrites do grow. The tares have their growth, as well as the wheat: and the ſeed that fell among thorns did ſpring up, Luke viii. 7. Only it did bring no fruit to perfection, verſe 14. Yea, a true Chriſtian may have a falſe growth. James and John ſeemed to grow in the grace of holy zeal, when their ſpirits grew ſo hot in the cauſe of Chriſt, that they would have fired whole villages, for not receiving their Lord and Maſter, Luke ix. 54. "They ſaid, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come "down from heaven and conſume them, even as Eli-"as did?" But it was indeed no ſuch thing; and therefore he rebuked them, verſe 55. "and ſaid, Ye "know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of." To the ſecond part of the queſtion, it is anſwered, that there is a peculiar beauty in true Chriſtian growth, diſtinguiſhing it from all falſe growth; it is univerſal, regular, proportionable. It is a growing up into him in all things, which is the head, Eph. iv. 15. The growing Chriſtian grows proportionably in all the parts of the new man. Under the kindly influences of the Sun of righteouſneſs, believers grow up as calves of the ſtall, Mal. iv. 2. Ye would think it a monſtrous growth, in theſe creatures, if ye ſaw their heads grow, and another not: if all the parts do not grow proportionably. Ay, but ſuch is the growth of many in religion. They grow like rickety children who have a big head, but a ſlender body: they get more knowledge into their heads, but no more holineſs into their hearts and lives. They grow very hot outwardly, but very cold inwardly; like men in a fit of the ague. They are more taken up about the externals of religion, than formerly; yet as great ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs as ever. If a garden

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is watered with the hand, ſome of the plants will readily get much, ſome little, and ſome no water at all; and therefore ſome wither, while others are coming forward: but after a ſhower from the clouds, all come forward together. In like manner, all the graces of the Spirit grow proportionably, by the ſpecial influences of divine grace. The branches ingrafted in Chriſt, growing aright, do grow in all the ſeveral ways of growth at once. They grow inward, growing into Chriſt, (Eph. iv. 15.) uniting more cloſely with him; and cleaving more firmly to him, as the head of influences, which is the ſpring of all other true Chriſtian growth. They grow outward, in good works, in their life and converſation. They not only, with Naphtali, give goodly words; but, like Joſeph, they are fruitful boughs. They grow upward in heavenly mindedneſs, and contempt of the world; for their converſation is in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. And finally, they grow downward in humility and ſelf-loathing. The branches of the largeſt growth in Chriſt, are in their own eyes "leſs than the leaſt of "all ſaints," Eph. iii. 8. "the chief of ſinners," 1 Tim. i. 15. "more brutiſh than any man," Prov. xxx. 2. They ſee they can do nothing, no not ſo much as to think any thing, as of themſelves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. that they deſerve nothing, being not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies ſhewed unto them, Gen. xxxii. 10. and that they are nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 2.

A ſixth benefit is fruitfulneſs. The branch ingrafted into Chriſt is not barren, but brings forth fruit, John xv. 5. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, "the ſame bringeth forth much fruit." For that very end are ſouls married to Chriſt, that they may bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4. They may be branches in Chriſt, by profeſſion, but not by real implantation, that are barren branches. Whoſoever are united to Chriſt, bring forth the fruit of goſpel-obedience, and true holineſs. Faith is always follow-

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ed with good works. The believer is not only come out of the grave of his natural ſtate; but he has put off his grave-clothes, namely, reigning luſts, in the which he walked ſometime like a ghoſt; being dead while he lived in them, Col. iii. 7, 8. For Chriſt has ſaid of him as of Lazarus, "Looſe him, and let "him go." And now that he has put on Chriſt, he perſonates him, (ſo to ſpeak,) as a beggar in borrowed robes, repreſents a king on the ſtage, walking as he alſo walked. Now the fruit of the Spirit in him, is in all goodneſs, Eph. v. 9. The fruits of holineſs will be found in the hearts, lips, and lives of thoſe who are united to Chriſt. The hidden man of the heart, is not only a temple built for God, and conſecrated to him: but uſed and employed for him, where love, fear, truſt, and all the other parts of unſeen religion are exerciſed, Phil. iii. 3. "For we "are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in the "Spirit." The heart is no more the devil's common, where thoughts go free; for there even vain thoughts are hated, Pſal. cxix. 113. But it is God's incloſure, hedged about as a garden for him. Cant. iv. 16. It is true, there are weeds of corruption there, becauſe the ground is not yet perfectly healed; but the man in the day of his new creation, is ſet to dreſs it, and keep it. A live-coal from the altar has touched his lips, and they are purified, Pſal. xv. 1, 2, 3. "Lord, who ſhall abide in thy tabernacle? "Who ſhall dwell in thy holy hill? He that ſpeaketh "the truth in his heart: he that backbiteth not with "his tongue, nor taketh up a reproach againſt his "neighbour." There may be indeed a very ſmooth tongue where there is a falſe heart. The voice may be Jacob's, while the hands are Eſau's. But, "If "any man among you ſeem to be religious, and "bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own "heart, this man's religion is vain," James i. 26. The power of godlineſs will rule over the tongue, though a world of iniquity. If one be a Galilean, his

his ſpeech will bewray him; he will ſpeak not the language of Aſhdod, but the language of Canaan. He will neither be dumb in religion; nor will his tongue walk at random, ſeeing to the double guard nature hath given the tongue, grace hath added a third. The fruits of holineſs will be found in his outward converſation, for he hath clean hands, as well as a pure heart, Pſal. xxiv. 4. He is a godly man, and religiouſly diſcharges the duties of the firſt table of the law; he is a righteous man, and honeſtly performs the duties of the ſecond table. In his converſation he is a good Chriſtian, and a good neighbour too. He carries it towards God, as if men's eyes were upon him; and towards men, as believing God's eye to be upon him. Theſe things which God hath joined in his law, he dare not, in his practice, put aſunder.

Thus the branches in Chriſt are full of good fruits; and thoſe fruits are a cluſter of vital actions, whereof Jeſus Chriſt is the principle and end: the principle; for he lives in them, and the life they live is by faith in the Son of God, Gal. ii. 20. the end; for they live to him, and to them to live is Chriſt, Phil. i. 21. The duties of religion are in the world like fatherleſs children, in rags; ſome will not take them in, becauſe they never loved them, nor their father; ſome take them in, becauſe they may be ſerviceable to them; but the ſaints take them in for their Father's ſake, that is for Chriſt's ſake; and they are lovely in their eyes, becauſe they are like him. O! whence is this new life of the ſaints! Surely it could never have been hammered out of the natural powers of their ſouls, by the united force of all created power. In eternal barrenneſs ſhould their womb have been ſhut up; but that being married to Chriſt, they bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4.

If ye aſk me, How your nouriſhment, growth, and fruitfulneſs may be forwarded? I offer theſe few advices. (1.) Make ſure work, as to your knitting with

with the ſtock, by faith unfeigned; and beware of hypocriſy: a branch that is not found at the heart, will certainly wither. The trees of the Lord's planting are trees of righteouſneſs, Iſ. lxi. 3. So when others fade, they bring forth fruit. Hypocriſy is a diſeaſe in the vitals of religion, which will conſume all at length. It is a leak in the ſhip, that will certainly ſink it. Sincerity of grace will make it laſting, be it never ſo weak; as the ſmalleſt twig that is found at the heart, will draw nouriſhment from the ſtock, and grow, while the greateſt bough that is rotten can never recover, becauſe it receives no nouriſhment. (2.) Labour to be ſtedfaſt in the truths and way of God. An unſettled and wavering judgment, is a great enemy to Chriſtian growth and fruitfulneſs, as the apoſtle teaches, Eph. iv. 15. "That we hence-"forth be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and "carried about with every wind of doctrine. But "ſpeaking the truth in love, may grow up into him "in all things, which is the head, even Chriſt." A rolling ſtone gathers no fog, and a wavering judgment makes a fruitleſs life. Though a tree be never ſo ſound; yet how can it grow, or be fruitful, if ye be ſtill removing it out of one ſoil into another? (3.) Endeavour to cut off the ſuckers, as gardeners do, that their trees may thrive. Theſe are unmortified luſts. Therefore mortify your members that are upon the earth, Col. iii. 5.

When the Iſraelites got meat to their luſts, they got leanneſs to their ſouls. She that hath many hungry children about her hand, and muſt be ſtill putting into their mouths, will have much ado to get a bit put into her own. They muſt refuſe the cravings of inordinate affections, who would have their ſouls to proſper. Laſtly, Improve, for theſe ends, the ordinances of God. The courts of our God are the place where the trees of righteouſneſs flouriſh, Pſal. xcii. 13. The waters of the ſanctuary are the means appointed of God, to cauſe his people grow as

willows by the water-courſes. Therefore drink in with deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. Come to theſe wells of ſalvation; not to look at them only, but to draw water out of them. The ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper is in a ſpecial manner appointed for theſe ends. It is not only a ſolemn public profeſſion, and a ſeal of our union and communion with Chriſt: but it is a means of moſt intimate communion with him, and ſtrengthens our union with him, our faith, love, repentance, and other graces, 1 Cor. x. 16. "The "cup of bleſſing, which we bleſs, is it not the com-"munion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which "we break, is it not the communion of the body of "Chriſt?" And chap. xii. 13. "We have been all "made to drink into one Spirit." Give yourſelves unto prayer: open your mouths wide, and he will fill them. By theſe means the branches in Chriſt may be further nouriſhed, grow up, and bring forth much fruit.

A ſeventh benefit is, The acceptance of their fruits of holineſs before the Lord. Though they be very imperfect, they are accepted, becauſe they favour of Chriſt the bleſſed ſtock, which the branches grow upon; while the fruits of others are rejected of God, Gen. iv. 4, 5. "And the Lord had reſpect unto A-"bel and to his offering: but unto Cain and his of-"fering he had not reſpect." Compare Heb. xi. 3. "By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent "ſacrifice than Cain." O how defective are the ſaints duties in the eye of the law! The believer himſelf eſpies many faults in his beſt performances: yet the Lord graciouſly receives them. There is no grace planted in the heart, but there is a weed of corruption hard by its ſide, while the ſaints are in this lower world. Their very ſincerity, is not without a mixture of diſſimulation or hypocriſy, Gal. ii. 13. Hence there are defects in the exerciſe of every grace, as well as in the performance of every duty: depraved

depraved nature always drops ſomething to ſtain their beſt works. There is ſtill ſome mixture of darkneſs with their cleareſt light. Yet this does not mar their acceptance, Cant. vi. 10. "Who is ſhe that looketh "forth as the morning?" or, as the dawning? Behold how Chriſt's ſpouſe is eſteemed and accepted of her Lord, even when ſhe looks forth as the morning, whoſe beauty is mixed with the blackneſs of the night! When the morning was looking out, as the word is, Judges xix. 26. i. e. in the dawning of the day, as we read it. So the very dawning of grace, and good will to Chriſt, grace peeping out from under a maſs of darkneſs in believers, is pleaſant and acceptable to him, as the break of day is to the weary traveller. Though the remains of unbelief make their hand of faith to ſhake and tremble: yet the Lord is ſo well pleaſed with it, that he employs it to carry away pardons and ſupplies of grace, from the throne of grace, and the fountain of grace. His faith was effectual, who cried out, and ſaid, with tears, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," Mark ix. 24. Though the remains of ſenſual affections make the flame of their love weak and ſmoaky; he turns his eyes from the ſmoke, and beholds the flame, how fair it is, Cant. iv. 10. "How fair is "thy love, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe!" The ſmell of their under garments of inherent holineſs, as imperfect as it is, is like the ſmell of Lebanon, ver. 11. and that becauſe they are covered with their elder brother's cloaths, which makes the ſons of God to ſmell as a field which the Lord hath bleſſed. Their good works are accepted; their cups of cold water, given to a diſciple in the name of a diſciple, ſhall not want a reward. Though they cannot offer for the tabernacle, gold, ſilver, and braſs, and onyx-ſtones, let them come forward with what they have; if it were but goats hair, it ſhall not be rejected; if it were but rams-ſkins, they ſhall be kindly accepted; for they are dyed red, dipt by faith in the Mediator's

blood, and ſo preſented unto God. A very ordinary work done in faith, and from faith, if it were but the building of a wall about the holy city, is a great work, Neh. vi. 3. If it were but the beſtowing of a box of ointment on Chriſt, it ſhall never be forgotten, Matth. xxvi. 13. "Even a cup of cold water "only given to one of Chriſt's little ones, in the "name of a diſciple, ſhall be rewarded," Matth. x. 42. Nay, not a good word for Chriſt, ſhall drop from their mouths, but it ſhall be regiſtrated in God's book of remembrance, Mal. iii. 16. Nor ſhall a tear drop from their eyes for him, but he will put it in his bottle, Pſal. lxvi. 8. Their will is accepted for the deed; their ſorrow for the want of will, for the will itſelf, 2 Cor. viii. 12. "For if there be firſt a "willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man "hath, and not according to that he hath not." Their groanings, when they cannot well word their deſires, are heard in heaven; the meaning of theſe groans is well known there, and they will be returned like the dove with an olive branch of peace in her mouth. See Rom. viii. 26, 27. Their mites are better than other men's talents. Their liſping and broken ſentences are more pleaſant to their Father in heaven, than the moſt fluent and flouriſhing ſpeeches of theſe that are not in Chriſt. Their voice is ſweet, even when they are aſhamed it ſhould be heard; their countenance is comely, even when they bluſh, and draw a veil over it, Cant. ii. 14. The Mediator takes their petition, blots out ſome parts, rectifies others, and then preſents them to the Father, in conſequence whereof they paſs in the court of heaven.

Every true Chriſtian is a temple of God. If ye look for ſacrifices, they are not wanting there; they offer the ſacrifice of praiſe, and they do good; with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed, Heb. xiii. 15, 16. Chriſt himſelf is the altar that ſanctifies the gift, ver. 10. But what comes of the ſkin and dung of their ſacrifices? They are carried away without the camp.

If we look for incenſe, it is there too. The graces of the Spirit are found in their hearts: and the Spirit of a crucified Chriſt fires them, and puts them in exerciſe; like as the fire was brought from the altar of burnt-offering, to ſet the incenſe in flame: then they mount heaven-ward, like pillars of ſmoke, Cant. iii. 6. But the beſt of incenſe will leave aſhes behind it: yes indeed: but as the prieſt took away the aſhes of the incenſe in a golden diſh, and threw them out; ſo our great High-prieſt takes away the aſhes and refuſe of all the ſaints ſervices, by this mediation in their behalf.

An eighth beneſit flowing from union with Chriſt, is eſtabliſhment. The Chriſtian cannot fall away, but muſt perſevere unto the end, John x. 28. "They "ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any man pluck them "out of my hand." Indeed if a branch do not knit with the ſtock,, it will fall away when ſhaking winds ariſe: but the branch knit to the ſtock ſtands faſt, whatever winds blow. Sometimes a ſtormy wind of temptation blows from hell, and toſſeth the branches in Chriſt the true vine: but their union with him is their ſecurity: moved they may be, but removed they never can be. The Lord will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, 1 Cor. x. 13. Calms are never of a continuance: there is almoſt always ſome wind blowing, and therefore branches are rarely altogether at reſt. But ſometimes violent winds ariſe, which threaten to rend them from off their ſtock. Even ſo it is with ſaints; they are daily put to it, to keep their ground againſt temptation: but ſometimes the wind from hell riſeth ſo high, and blows ſo furiouſly, that it makes even top-branches to ſweep the ground: yet being knit to Chriſt their ſtock, they get up again, in ſpite of the moſt violent efforts of the prince of the power of the air, Pſal. xciv. 18. "When I ſaid, My foot ſlippeth, thy mercy, O "Lord, held me up." But the Chriſtian improves by this trial: and is ſo far from being damaged, that he

he is benefited by it. in ſo far as it diſcovers what hold the ſoul has of Chriſt, and what hold Chriſt has of thé ſoul. And look as the wind in the bellows, which would blow out the candle, blows up the fire, even ſo it often comes to paſs, that ſuch temptations do enliven the true Chriſtian, awakening the graces of the Spirit in him; and, by that means, diſcover both the reality, and the ſtrength of grace in him. And hence, as Luther, that great man of God, ſaith, "One Chriſtian, who hath had experience of temptation, is worth a thouſand others."

Sometimes a ſtormy wind of trouble and perſecution from the men of the world, blows upon the vine, i. e. myſtical Chriſt: but union with the ſtock is a ſufficient ſecurity to the branches. In a time of the church's peace and outward proſperity, while the angels hold the winds, that they blow not, there are a great many branches taken up, and put into the ſtock, which never knit with it, nor live by it, though they be bound up with it, by the bonds of external ordinances. Now, theſe may ſtand a while on the ſtock; and ſtand with great eaſe while the calm laſts. But when once the ſtorms ariſe, and the winds blow, they will begin to fall off, one after another; and the higher the wind riſeth, the greater will the number be that falls. Yea, ſome ſtrong boughs of that ſort, when they fall, will, by their weight, carry others of their own kind quite down to the earth with them; and will bruiſe and preſs down ſome true branches, in ſuch a manner, that they would alſo fall off, were it not for their being knit to the ſtock; in virtue whereof they get up their heads again, and cannot fall off, becauſe of that faſt hold the ſtock has of them. Then it is that many branches, ſometimes high and eminent, are found lying on the earth withered, and fit to be gathered up and caſt into the fire, Matth. xiii. 6. "And when the "ſun was up, they were ſcorched: and becauſe they "had not root, they withered away." John xv. 6. "If

"If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a "branch, and is withered, and men gather them in- "to the fire, and they are burned." But however violently the winds blow, none of the truly ingrafted branches, that are knit with the ſtock, are found miſſing, when the ſtorm is changed into a calm, John xvii. 12. "Thoſe that thou gaveſt me, I have kept, "and none of them is loſt." The leaſt twig growing in Chriſt ſhall ſtand it out, and——ſubſiſt; when the talleſt cedars, growing on their own root, ſhall be laid flat on the ground, Rom. viii. 35. "Who "ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tri- "bulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or "nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword?" See ver. 36, 37, 38, 39. However ſeverely Iſrael be ſifted, yet ſhall not the leaſt grain (or as it is in the original language, a little ſtone) fall upon the earth, Amos ix 9. It is an alluſion to the ſifting of fine peeble-ſtones from among heaps of duſt and ſand: though the ſand and duſt fall to the ground, be blown away with the wind, and trampled under foot; yet there ſhall not fall on the earth ſo much as a little ſtone, ſuch is the exactneſs of the ſieve, and care of the ſifter. There is nothing more ready to fall on the earth, than a ſtone: yet if profeſſors of religion be lively ſtones built on Chriſt the chief corner ſtone; although they be little ſtones, they ſhall not fall to the earth, whatever ſtone beat upon them. See 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 6. All the good grain in the church of Chriſt is of this kind: they are ſtones in reſpect of ſolidity; and lively ſtones in reſpect of activity. If men be ſolid ſubſtantial Chriſtians, they will not be like chaff toſſed to and fro with every wind; having ſo much of the livelineſs, that they have nothing of the ſtone; and if they be lively Chriſtians, whoſe ſpirit will ſtir in them, as Paul's did, when he ſaw the city wholly given to idolatry, Acts xvii. 16. they will not lie like ſtones, to be turned over, hither and thither, cut and carved, according to the luſts of men; having ſo much

much of the ſtone as leaves nothing of livelineſs in them.

Our God's houſe is a great houſe, wherein are not only veſſels of gold, but alſo of earth, 2 Tim. ii. 20. Both theſe are apt to contract filthineſs; and therefore when God brings trouble upon the church, he hath an eye to both. As for the veſſels of gold, they are not deſtroyed; but purged by a fiery trial in the furnace of affliction, as goldſmiths purge their gold, Iſa. i. 25. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and "purely purge away thy droſs." But deſtruction is to the veſſels of earth; they ſhall be broken in ſhivers, as a potter's veſſel, ver. 28. "And the deſtruc-"tion (or breaking) of the tranſgreſſors, and of the "ſinners, ſhall be together." It ſeems to be an alluſion to that law, for breaking the veſſels, of earth, when unclean; while veſſels of wood, and conſequently veſſels of gold, were only to be rinſed, Lev. xv. 21.

A ninth benefit is ſupport. If thou be a branch ingrafted in Chriſt, the root beareth thee. The believer leans on Chriſt, as a weak woman, in a journey leaning upon her beloved huſband, Cant. viii. 5. He ſtays himſelf upon him, as a feeble old man ſtays himſelf on his ſtaff, Iſa. l. 10. He rolls himſelf on him, as one rolls a burden he is not able to walk under, off his own back, upon another who is able to bear it, Pſal. xxii. 8. There are many weights to hang upon, and preſs down the branches in Chriſt the true vine. But, ye know, whatever weights hang on branches, the ſtock bears all; it bears the branch and the weight that is upon it too.

1ſt, Chriſt ſupports believers in him, under a weight of outward troubles. That is a large promiſe, Iſa. xliii. 2. "When thou paſſeſt through the waters, "I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they "ſhall not overflow thee." See how David was ſupported under a heavy load, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. His city Ziklag was burnt, his wives were taken captives, his

his men ſpoke of ſtoning him; nothing was left him but his God and his faith; but by his faith he encouraged himſelf in his God. The Lord comes and lays his croſs on his people's ſhoulders; it preſſeth them down; they are like to ſink under it, and therefore cry, "Maſter, ſave us, we periſh:" but he ſupports them under their burden; he bears them up, and they bear their croſs. Thus the Chriſtian having a weight of outward troubles upon him, goes lightly under his burden, having withal the "everlaſting "arms underneath him." The Chriſtian has a ſpring of comfort, which he cannot loſe; and therefore never wants ſomething to ſupport him. If one have all his riches in money, robbers may take theſe away; and then "what has he more?" But though the landed man be robbed of his money, yet his lands remain for his ſupport. They that build their comfort on worldly goods, may quickly be comfortleſs: but they that are united to Chriſt, ſhall find comfort when all the ſtreams of worldly enjoyments are dried up, Job vi. 13. "Is not my help in me? And is "wiſdom driven quite from me?" *q. d.* Though my ſubſtance is gone; though my ſervants, my children, my health, and ſoundneſs of body, are all gone; yet my grace is not gone too. Though the Sabeans have driven away my oxen and aſſes, and the Chaldeans have driven away camels; they have not driven away my faith and my hope too; theſe are yet in me, they are not driven from me; ſo that by them I can fetch comfort from heaven, when I can have none from earth.

2dly, Chriſt ſupports his people under a weight of inward troubles and diſcouragements. Many times heart and fleſh faileth them, but then God is the ſtrength of their heart, Pſal. lxxiii. 26. They may have "a weight of guilt" preſſing them. This is a load that will make their back to ſtoop, and the ſpirits to ſink: but he takes it off, and puts a pardon in their hand, while they caſt their burden over upon

him. Chriſt takes the ſoul, as one marries a widow, under a burden of debt: and ſo when the creditors come to Chriſt's ſpouſe, ſhe carries them to her huſband, confeſſeth the debt, declares ſhe is not able to pay, and lays all over upon him. The Chriſtian ſometimes, through careleſſneſs, loſeth his diſcharge; he cannot find it however he ſearch for it. The law takes that opportunity; and bends up a proceſs againſt him for a debt paid already. God hides his face, and the ſoul is diſtreſſed. Many arrows go through the heart now; many long accounts are laid before the man, which he reads and acknowledges. Often does he ſee the officers coming to apprehend him, and the priſon door open to receive him. What elſe keeps him from ſinking utterly under diſcouragements in this caſe, but that the everlaſting arms of a Mediator are underneath him, and that he relies upon the great Cautioner? Further, they may have a weight of ſtrong luſts preſſing them. They have a body of death upon them. Death is a weight that preſſeth the ſoul out of the body. A leg or an arm of death (if I may ſo ſpeak) would be a terrible load. (One lively luſt will ſometimes ly ſo heavy on a child of God, that he can no more remove it, than a child could throw a giant from off him.) How then are they ſupported under a whole body of death? Why, their ſupport is from the root that bears them, from the everlaſting arm that is underneath them. His grace is ſufficient for them, 2 Cor. xiii. 9. The great ſtay of the believer is not the grace of God within him, that is a well, whoſe ſtreams ſometimes run dry: but it is the grace of God without him, the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt; which is an overflowing fountain, to which the believer can never come amiſs. For the apoſtle tells us in the ſame verſe, it is the power of Chriſt. "Moſt gladly therefore," ſaith he, "will "I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of "Chriſt may reſt upon me, or tabernacle above me," as the cloud of glory did on the Iſraelites, which God

ſpread

ſpread for a covering, or ſhelter to them in the wilderneſs, Pſal. cv. 39. compare Iſa. iv. 5, 6. So that the believer in this combat, like the eagle, firſt flies aloft (by faith,) and then comes down on the prey, Pſal. xxxiv. 5. "They looked to him and were lightened." And finally, they have a weight of weakneſs and wants upon them, but they caſt over that burden on the Lord their ſtrength, and he ſuſtains them, Pſal. lv. 22. With all their wants and weakneſs, they are caſt upon him; as the poor weak and naked babe coming out of the womb, is caſt into the lap of one appointed to take care of it, Pſal. xxii. 10. Though they be deſtitute, (as a ſhrub in the wilderneſs, which the foot of every beaſt may tread down,) the Lord will regard them, Pſal. cii. 17. It is no marvel, the weakeſt plant be ſafe in a garden: but our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is a hedge for protection to his weak and deſtitute ones, even in a wilderneſs.

Object. But if the ſaints be ſupported, how is it that they fall ſo often under temptations and diſcouragements? *Anſ.* (1.) How low ſoever they fall at any time, they never fall off; and that is a great matter. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation, 1 Pet. i. 5. Hypocrites may ſo fall, ſo as to fall off, and fall into the pit, as a bucket falls into a well when the chain breaks. But though the child of God may fall, and that ſo low as the waters go over his head: yet there is ſtill a bond of union betwixt Chriſt and him, the chain is not broken; he will not go to the ground; he will be drawn up again, Luke xxii. 31, 32. "And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Si-"mon, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may "ſift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that "thy faith fail not." (2.) The falls of the ſaints flow from their not improving their union with Chriſt, their not making uſe of him by faith, for ſtaying or bearing them up, Pſal. xxvi. 13. "I had fainted, "unleſs I had believed." While the nurſe holds the child in her arms, it cannot fall to the ground; yet

if the unwary child hold not by her; it may fall backwards in her arms to its great hurt. Thus David's fall broke his bones, Pſal. li. 8. But it did not break the bond of union betwixt Chriſt and him; the holy Spirit, the bond of that union, was not taken from him, verſe 11.

The laſt benefit I ſhall name, is, the ſpecial care of the huſbandman, John xv. 1, 2. "I am the true "vine and my Father is the huſbandman——Every "branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may "bring forth more fruit." Believers, by virtue of their union with Chriſt, are the objects of God's ſpecial care and providence. Myſtical Chriſt is God's vine; other ſocieties in the world are but wild olive-trees. The men of the world are but God's outfield; the ſaints are his vineyard, which he has a ſpecial propriety in, and a ſpecial concern for, Cant. viii. 12. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me." He that ſlumbers not, nor ſleeps, is the keeper of it, he does keep it; leſt any hurt it, he will keep it night and day: he in whoſe hand is the dew of heaven, will water it every moment, Iſa. xxvii. 3. He dreſſeth and purgeth it, in order to further its fruitfulneſs, John xv. 2. He cuts off the luxuriant twigs that mar the fruitfulneſs of the branch. This is done, eſpecially by the word, and by the croſs of afflictions; the ſaints need the miniſtry of the word, as much as the vineyard needeth one to dreſs and prune the vines, 1 Cor. iii. 9. "We are labourers toge-"ther with God: ye are God's huſbandry, ye are "God's building." And they need the croſs too, 1 Pet. i. 6.

And therefore, if we ſhould reckon the croſs amongſt the benefits flowing to believers from their union with Chriſt, I judge, we ſhould not reckon it amiſs. Sure I am, in their ſufferings they ſuffer with him, Rom. viii. 17. And the aſſurances they have of the croſs, have rather the nature of a promiſe, as

of

of a threatning, Pſal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33. "If "his children forſake my law,—then will I viſit their "tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquity with "ſtripes. Nevertheleſs, my loving kindneſs will "I not utterly take from him: nor ſuffer thy "faithfulneſs to fail." This looks like a tutor's engaging to a dying father, to take care of the children left upon him; and to give them both nurture and admonition, for their good. The covenant of grace does truly beat the ſpears of affliction into pruning hooks, to them that are in Chriſt, Iſa. xxvii. 9. "By this therefore ſhall the iniquity "of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take "away his ſin." Why then ſhould we be angry with our croſs? Why ſhould we be frighted at it? The believer muſt "take up his croſs," and follow his leader, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He muſt take up his ilk-day's croſs, Luke ix. 23. "If any man will come "after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his "croſs daily." Yea, he muſt take up his holy-day's croſs too, Lam. ii. 22. "Thou haſt called, as in a "ſolemn day, my terrors round about." The church of the Jews had, of a long time, many a pleaſing meeting at the temple, on ſolemn days, for the worſhip of God: but they got a ſolemnity of another nature, when God called together, about the temple and city, the Chaldean army that burnt the temple, and laid Jeruſalem on heaps. And now, that the church of God is yet militant in this lower region, how can it be but the clouds will return after the rain? But the croſs of Chriſt (which name the ſaints troubles do bear) is a kindly name to the believer. It is a croſs indeed; but not to the believer's graces, but to his corruptions. The hypocrite's ſeeming graces may indeed breathe out their laſt on a croſs, as theſe of the ſtony-ground hearers did, Mat. xiii. 6. "And when the ſun (of perſecution, ver. "26.) was up, they were ſcorched: And becauſe "they had not root, they withered away." But never

ver did one of the real graces in a believer die upon the croſs yet. Nay, as the candle ſhines brighteſt in the night, and the fire burns fierceſt in intenſe froſt; So the believer's graces are ordinarily moſt vigorous in a time of trouble.

There is a certain pleaſure and ſweetneſs in the croſs to them who have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern, and to find it out. There is a certain ſweetneſs in one's ſeeing himſelf upon his trials for heaven, and ſtanding candidate for glory. There is a pleaſure in travelling over theſe mountains where the Chriſtian can ſee the prints of Chriſt's own feet, and the foot-ſteps of the flock, who have been there before him. How pleaſant is it to a ſaint in the exerciſe of grace, to ſee how a good God croſſeth his corrupt inclinations, and prevents his folly! How ſweet is it to behold theſe thieves upon the croſs! How refined a pleaſure is there in obſerving how God draws away proviſion from unruly luſts, and ſo pincheth them, that the Chriſtian may get them governed! Of a truth, there is a paradiſe within this thorn hedge. Many a time the people of God are in bonds; which are never looſed, till they be bound with cords of affliction. God takes them, and throws them into a fiery furnace, that burns off their bonds; and then like the three children, Dan. iii. 25. they are looſe, walking in the midſt of the fire. God gives his children a potion, with one bitter ingredient: If that will not work upon them, he will put in a ſecond, a third, and ſo on, as there is need, that they may work together, for their good, Rom. viii. 28. With croſs-winds he haſtens them to the harbour. They are often found in ſuch ways, as that the croſs is the happieſt foot they can meet with: and well may they ſalute it, as David did Abigail, ſaying, "Bleſſed be "the Lord God of Iſrael, which ſent thee this day to "meet me," 1 Sam. xxv. 32. Worldly things are often ſuch a load to the Chriſtian, that he moves but very ſlowly heaven-ward. God ſends a wind of trou-

ble,

ble, that blows the burden off the man's back: and then he walks more ſpeedily on his way; after God hath drawn ſome gilded earth from him, that was drawing his heart away from God, Zeph. iii. 12. "I will alſo leave in the midſt of thee, an afflicted "and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name "of the Lord." It was an obſerve of an heathen moraliſt, "That no hiſtory makes mention of any "man, who hath been made better by riches." I doubt if our modern hiſtories can ſupply the defect of ancient hiſtories in this point. But ſure I am, many have been the worſe of riches: thouſands have been hugged to death in the embraces of a ſmiling world; and many good men have got wounds from outward proſperity, that behoved to be cured by the croſs. I remember to have read of one, who having an impoſthume in his breaſt, had in vain uſed the help of phyſicians: but being wounded with a ſword, the impoſthume broke; and his life was ſaved by that accident, which threatned immediate death. Often have ſpiritual impoſthumes gathered in the breaſts of God's people in the time of outward proſperity, and been thus broken and diſcuſſed by the croſs. It is kindly for believers to be healed by ſtripes; although they are uſually ſo weak as to cry out for fear, at the ſight of the pruning hook, as if it were the deſtroying ax: and to think the Lord is coming to kill them, when he is indeed coming to cure them.

I ſhall now conclude, addreſſing myſelf in a few words, firſt to ſaints, and next to ſinners.

I. To you that are ſaints, I ſay,

Firſt, Strive to obtain and keep up actual communion and fellowſhip with Jeſus Chriſt; that is, to be ſtill deriving freſh ſupplies of grace, from the fountain thereof in him, by faith: and making ſuitable returns of them, in the exerciſe of grace, and holy obedience. Beware of eſtrangement betwixt Chriſt and your ſouls. If it has got in already, (which ſeems to be the caſe of many this day) endeavour to get it removed.

There

There are multitudes in the world that ſlight Chriſt, though ye ſhould not ſlight him: many have turned their backs on him, that ſometimes looked fair for heaven. The warm ſun of outward peace and proſperity, has cauſed ſome caſt their cloke of religion from them, who held it faſt when the wind of trouble was blowing upon them: and "will ye alſo go "away?" John vi. 67. The baſeſt ingratitude inſtamped on your ſlighting of communion with Chriſt, Jer. ii. 31. Have I been a wilderneſs unto Iſrael; a land of darkneſs? Wherefore ſay my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee? Oh! beloved, is this your kindneſs to your friend? It is unbecoming any wife to ſlight converſe with her huſband, but her eſpecially who was taken from a priſon or a dunghill, as ye were by your Lord. But remember, I pray you, this is a very ill choſen time to live at a diſtance from God: it is a time in which divine providence frowns upon the land we live in; the clouds of wrath are gathering, and are thick above our heads? It is not a time for you to be out of your chambers, Iſ. xxvi. 20. They that now are walking moſt cloſely with God, may have enough ado to ſtand when the trial comes: how hard will it be for others then, who are like to be ſurpriſed with troubles, when guilt is lying on their conſciences unremoved? to be awakened out of a ſound ſleep, and caſt into a raging ſea, as Jonah was, will be a fearful trial. To feel trouble before we ſee it coming, to be paſt hope before we have any fear, is a very ſad caſe. Wherefore break down your idols of jealouſy, mortify theſe luſts, theſe irregular appetites and deſires, that have ſtolen away your hearts, and left you like Sampſon, without his hair; and ſay, "I will go and return to my firſt "huſband; for then was it better with me than now," Hoſ. ii. 7.

Secondly, Walk as becomes theſe that are united to Chriſt. Evidence your union with him by walking as he alſo walked, 1. John ii. 6. If ye be brought from

from under the power of darkneſs, let your light ſhine before men. Shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, as the lanthorn holds the candle, which being in it, ſhines through it, Phil. ii. 15. 16. Now that ye profeſs Chriſt to be in you, let his image ſhine forth in your converſation, and remember the buſineſs of your lives is to prove, by practical arguments, what ye profeſs.

1. You know the character of a wife, "She "that is married, careth how ſhe may pleaſe her "huſband." Go you and do likewiſe; "walk wor-"thy of the Lord unto all pleaſing," Col. i. 10. This is the great buſineſs of life: you muſt pleaſe him, though it ſhould diſpleaſe all the world. What he hates muſt be hateful to you, becauſe he hates it. Whatever luſts come in ſuit of your hearts, deny them, ſeeing the grace of God has appeared, teaching ſo to do, and you are joined to the Lord. Let him be a covering to your eyes; for you have not your choice to make, it is made already; and you muſt not diſhonour your head. "Shall I then take the "members of Chriſt, and make them the members "of an harlot? God forbid," ſays the apoſtle, 1 Cor. vi. 15. Wilt thou take that heart of thine, which is Chriſt's dwelling-place, and lodge his enemies there? Wilt thou take that body, which is his temple, and defile it, by uſing the members thereof as inſtruments of ſin?

2. Be careful to bring forth fruit, and much fruit. The branch well laden with fruit, is the glory of the vine, and of the huſbandman too, John xv. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples. A barren tree ſtands ſafer in a wood than in an orchard; and branches in Chriſt that bring not forth fruit, will be taken away and caſt into the fire.

3. Be heavenly minded, and maintain a holy contempt of the world. Ye are united to Chriſt: he is your head and huſband, and is in heaven: wherefore

your hearts ſhould be there alſo, Col. iii. 1. "If ye "then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which "are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of "God." Let the ſerpent's ſeed go on their belly, and eat the duſt of this earth: but let the members of Chriſt be aſhamed to bow down, and feed with them.

4. Live and act dependently, depending by faith upon Jeſus Chriſt. That which grows upon its own root, is a tree, not a branch. It is of the nature of a branch, to depend on the ſtock for all, and to derive all its ſap from thence. Depend on him for life, ſtrength, and all ſpiritual benefits, Gal. ii. 20. "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." For this cauſe, in the myſtical union, ſtrength is united to weakneſs, life to death, and heaven to earth: that weakneſs, death, and earth, may mount up on borrowed wings. Depend on him for temporal benefits alſo, Matth. vi. 2. "Give us this day our daily bread." If we have truſted him with our eternal concerns, let us be aſhamed to diſtruſt him in the matter of our proviſion in the world.

Laſtly, Be of a meek diſpoſition, and an uniting temper with the fellow-members of Chriſt's body as being united to the meek Jeſus, the bleſſed center of union. There is a prophecy to this purpoſe concerning the kingdom of Chriſt, Iſ. ii. 6. "The wolf "ſhall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard ſhall lie "down with the kid." It is an alluſion to the beaſts in Noah's ark, the beaſts of prey that were wont to kill and devour others, when once they came into the ark, lay down in peace with them: the lamb was in no hazard with the wolf there; nor the kid by the leopard. There was a beautiful accompliſhment of it in the primitive church, Acts iv. 32. "And the "multitude of them that believed, were of one heart "and of one ſoul." And this prevails in all the members

members of Chriſt, according to the meaſure of the grace of God in them. Man is born naked into this world, as if God deſigned him for the picture of peace: and ſurely when he is born again, he comes not into the new world of grace, with claws to tear, a ſword to wound, and a fire in his hand, to burn up his fellow-members in Chriſt, becauſe they cannot ſee with his light. Oh! it is ſad to ſee Chriſt's lillies as thorns in one another's ſides, Chriſt's lambs devouring one another like lions, and God's diamonds cutting one another; yet it muſt be remembered, that ſin is no proper cement for the members of Chriſt, though Herod and Pontius Pilate may be made friends that way. The apoſtle's rule is plain, Heb. xii. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holineſs. To follow peace no further than our humour, credit, and ſuch like things will allow us, is too ſhort: to purſue it further than holineſs, that is, conformity to the divine will, allows us, is too far. Peace is precious, yet it may be bought too dear: wherefore we muſt rather want it, than purchaſe it at the expence of truth or holineſs. But otherwiſe it cannot be over dear bought; and it will always be precious in the eyes of the ſons of peace.

II. And now, ſinners, what ſhall I ſay to you? I have given you ſome view of the privileges of theſe in the ſtate of grace ye have ſeen them afar off. But alas! they are not yours, becauſe ye are not Chriſt's. The ſinfulneſs of an unregenerate ſtate is yours; and the miſery of it is yours alſo: but ye have neither part nor lot in this matter. The guilt of all your ſins lies upon you; ye have no part in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. There is no peace to you, no peace with God, no true peace of conſcience: for ye have no ſaving intereſt in the great peace-maker. Ye are none of God's family; the adoption we ſpoke of, belongs not to you. Ye have no part in the Spirit of ſanctification: and, in one word, ye have no inheritance among them that are ſanctified. All I can

ſay to you in this matter, is, that the caſe is not deſperate. they may yet be yours, Rev. iii. 20. "Behold I ſtand at the door and knock: if any man "hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in "to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me." Heaven is propoſing an union with earth ſtill, the potter is making ſuit to his own clay, and the gates of the city of refuge are not yet cloſed. O that we could compel you to come in.

Thus far of the ſtate of grace.

STATE

STATE IV.

NAMELY,

The *Eternal State* or *State of conſummate Happineſs or Miſery.*

HEAD I.

Of *Death.*

Job xxx. 23.

For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the houſe appointed for all living.

I COME now to diſcourſe of man's eternal ſtate, into which he enters by death. Of this entrance Job takes a ſolemn ſerious view, in the words of the text, which contain a general truth, and a particular application of it. The general truth is ſuppoſed; namely, that all men muſt die, by death, remove out of this world; they muſt die. But whither muſt they go? They muſt go to the houſe appointed for all living; to the grave, that darkſome, gloomy, ſolitary houſe, in the land of forgetfulneſs. Whereſoever the body is laid up till the reſurrection; thither, as to a dwelling houſe, death brings us home. While we are in the body, we are but in a lodging houſe; in an inn, on our way homeward. When we come to our grave, we come to our home, our long home, Eccleſ. xii. 5. All living muſt be inhabitants of this houſe, good and bad, old and young. Man's life is a ſtream, running into death's devouring deeps. They who now live in palaces, muſt quit them and go

go home to this houſe; and theſe who have not where to lay their heads, ſhall thus have a houſe at length. It is appointed for all, by him whoſe counſel ſhall ſtand. This appointment cannot be ſhifted; it is a law which mortals cannot tranſgreſs. Job's application of this general truth to himſelf, is expreſsed in theſe words; "I know that thou wilt bring "me to death," &c. He knew, that he behoved to meet with death; that his ſoul and body behoved to part; that God who had ſet the tryſt, would certainly ſee it kept. Sometimes Job was inviting death to come to him, and carry him home to his houſe; yea, he was in hazard of running to it, before the time, Job vii. 15. "My ſoul chooſeth ſtrangling and death, "rather than my life." But here he conſiders God would bring him to it: yea, bring him back to it as the word imports. Whereby he ſeems to intimate, that we have no life in this world but as run-aways from death, which ſtretched out its cold arms, to receive us from the womb: but though we do then narrowly eſcape its clutches, we cannot eſcape long; we will be brought back again to it. Job knew this, he had laid his account with it, and was looking for it.

DOCTRINE.

All muſt die.

Although this doctrine be confirmed by the experience of all former generations, ever ſince Abel entered into the houſe appointed for all living; and though the living know that they ſhall die, yet it is needful to diſcourſe of the certainty of death, that it may be impreſſed on the mind, and duly conſidered.

Wherefore conſider, firſt, There is an unalterable ſtatute of death under which men are concluded. "It is appointed unto men once to die," Heb. xi. 27. It is laid up for them, as parents lay up for their children:

dren: they may look for it, and cannot miſs it, ſeeing God has deſigned and reſerved it for them. There is no peradventure in it: we muſt needs die, 2 Sam. xiv. 14. Though ſome men will not hear of death, yet every man muſt ſee death, Pſal. lxxxix. 48. Death is a champion all muſt grapple with: we muſt enter the liſts with it, and it will have the maſtery, Eccleſ. viii. 8. "There is no man that hath power over the ſpirit, "to retain the ſpirit; neither hath he power in the "day of death." They indeed who are found alive at Chriſt's coming, ſhall all be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51. But that change will be equivalent to death, will anſwer the purpoſes of it. All other perſons muſt go the common road, the way of all fleſh. Secondly, let us conſult daily obſervation. Every man ſeeth that wiſe men die, likewiſe the fool and brutiſh perſon, Pſal. xlix. 10. There is room enough, on this earth, for us notwithſtanding of the multitudes, that were upon it before us; they are gone to make room for us; as we muſt depart to leave room for others. It is long ſince death began to tranſport men into another world, and vaſt ſhoals or multitudes are gone thither already: yet the trade is going on ſtill; death is carrying off new inhabitants daily, to the houſe appointed for all living. Who could ever hear the grave ſay, It is enough? Long has it been getting, but ſtill it aſketh. This world is like a great fair or market, where ſome are coming in, others going out, while "the aſſembly that is in it is confuſed, "and the more part know not wherefore they are "come together;" or, like a town ſituate on the road to a great city, through which ſome travellers are paſt, ſome are paſſing, while others are only coming in, Eccleſ. i. 4. "One generation paſſeth away, "and another generation cometh; but the earth a-"bideth for ever." Death is an inexorable, irreſiſtable meſſenger, who cannot be diverted from executing his orders by the force of the mighty, the bribes of the rich, nor the intreaties of the poor. It doth not

not reverence the hoary head, nor pity the harmleſs babe. The bold and daring cannot outbrave it; nor can the faint hearted obtain a diſcharge in this war. Thirdly, the human body conſiſts of periſhing principles, Gen. iii 19. "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt "thou ſhalt return." The ſtrongeſt are but brittle earthen veſſels, eaſily broken in ſhivers. The ſoul is but meanly houſed, while in this mortal body, which is not a houſe of ſtone, but a houſe of clay: the mud walls cannot but moulder away; eſpecially ſeeing the foundation is not on a rock, but in the duſt; they are cruſhed before the moth, though this inſect be ſo tender, that the gentleſt touch of a finger will diſpatch it, Job iv. 19. Theſe principles are like gun-powder, a very ſmall ſpark lighting on them, will ſet them on fire, and blow up the houſe: the ſtone of a raiſin, or a hair in milk have choaked men, and laid the houſe of clay in the duſt. If we conſider the frame and ſtructure of our bodies, how fearfully and wonderfully we are made; and on how regular and exact a motion of the fluids, and balance of humours, our life depends: and that death has as many doors to enter in by, as the body hath pores; and if we compare the ſoul and body together, we may juſtly reckon, there is ſomewhat more aſtoniſhing in our life, than in our death; and that it is more ſtrange, to ſee duſt walking up and down on the duſt, than lying down in it. Though the lamp of our life be not violently blowing out, yet the flame muſt go out at length for want of oil. And what are thoſe diſtempers and diſeaſes we are liable to, but death's harbingers, that come to prepare its way? They meet us, as ſoon as we ſet our foot on earth; to tell us at our entry, that we do but come into the world to go out again. Howbeit, ſome are ſnatched away in a moment, without being warned by ſickneſs or diſeaſe. Fourthly, We have ſinful ſouls, and therefore have dying bodies: death follows ſin, as the ſhadow follows the body. The wicked muſt die, by virtue of the threatning

ning of the covenant of works, Gen. ii. 17. "In the "day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die." And the godly muſt die too: that as death entered by ſin, ſin may go out by death. Chriſt has taken away the ſting of death, as to them; albeit he has not as yet removed death itſelf. Wherefore, though it faſten on them, as the viper did on Paul's hand. it ſhall do them no harm; but becauſe the leproſy of ſin is in the walls of the houſe, it muſt be broken down, and all the materials thereof carried forth. Laſtly, Man's life in this world, according to the ſcripture account of it, it is but a few degrees remove from death. The ſcripture repreſents it is a vain and empty thing, ſhort in its continuance, and ſwift in its paſſing away.

Firſt, Man's life is a vain and empty thing: while it is, it vaniſheth away; and lo! it is not. Job vii. 6. "My days are vanity." If we ſuſpect afflicted Job of partiality in this matter, hear the wiſe and proſperous Solomon's character of the days of his life, Eccl. vii. 15. "All things have I ſeen in the days of "my vanity, i. e. my vain days." Moſes, who was a very active man, compares our days to a ſleep, Pſal. xc. 5. "They are as a ſleep," which is not noticed till it be ended.. The reſemblance is pat; few men have right apprehenſions of life, until that death awaken them; then we begin to know we were living. "We ſpend our years as a tale that is told," verſe 9. When an idle tale is a telling, it may affect a little: but when it is ended, it is forgot: and ſo is man forgotten, when the fable of his life is ended. It is a dream or viſion of the night, in which there is nothing ſolid: when one awakes, all evaniſheth, Job xx. 8. "He ſhall fly away as a dream, and ſhall not be found; yea, he ſhall be chaſed away as a viſion of the night." It is but a vain ſhow, or image. Pſal. xxxix. 6. "Surely every man walketh in a vain ſhew." Man, in this world, is but, as it were, a walking ſta-

tue: his life is but an image of life, there is ſo much of death in it.

If we look on our life, in the ſeveral periods of it, will find it in a heap of vanities. Childhood and youth are vanity, Eccl. xi. 10. We come into the world the moſt helpleſs of all animals: young birds and beaſts can do ſomething for themſelves, but infant man is altogether unable to help himſelf. Our childhood is ſpent in pitiful trifling pleaſures, which become the ſcorn of our own after-thoughts. Youth is a flower that ſoon withereth, a bloſſom that quickly falls off; it is a ſpace of time in which we are raſh, fooliſh, and inconſiderate, pleaſing ourſelves with a variety of vanities, and ſwimming as it were through a flood of them. But ere we are aware, it is paſt, and we are in middle age, encompaſſed with a thick cloud of cares, through which we muſt grope: and finding ourſelves beſet with pricking thorns of difficulties, through them we muſt force our way to accompliſh the projects and contrivances of our riper thoughts. And the more we ſolace ourſelves in any earthly enjoyment we attain to, the more bitterneſs do we find in parting with it. Then comes old age, attended with its own train of infirmities, labour and ſorrow, Pſal. xc. 10. and ſets us down next door to the grave. In a word, "All fleſh is graſs," Iſa. xl. 6. Every ſtage or period in life, is vanity. "Man "at his beſt ſtate," (his middle age, when the heat of youth is ſpent, and the ſorrows of old age have not overtaken him) "is altogether vanity," Pſal. xxxix. 4. Death carries off ſome in the bud of childhood, others in the bloſſom of youth, and others when they are come to their fruit; few are left ſtanding, till, like ripe corn, they forſake the ground: all die one time or other.

Secondly, Man's life is a ſhort thing; it is not only a vanity, but a ſhort-lived vanity. Conſider, firſt, How the life of a man is reckoned in the ſcriptures. It was indeed ſometimes reckoned by hundreds of

years;

years: but no man every arrived at a thouſand; which yet bears no proportion to eternity. Now hundreds are brought down to ſcores; threeſcore and ten, or fourſcore, is the utmoſt length, Pſal. xc. 10. But few men arrive at that length of life. Death does but rarely wait, till men be bowing down, by reaſon of age, to meet the grave. Yet, as if years were too big a word for ſuch a ſmall thing as the life of man on earth; we find it counted by months, Job. xiv. 5. "The number of his months are with thee." Our courſe, like that of the moon, is run in a little time: we are always waxing or weaning, till we diſappear. But frequently it is reckoned by days; and theſe but few, Job xiv. 1. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days." Nay, it is but one day in ſcripture-account; and that a hireling's day, who will preciſely obſerve when his days end, and give over his work, verſe 6. "Till he ſhall accompliſh as an "hireling his day." Yea, the ſcripture brings it down to the ſhorteſt ſpace of time, and calls it a moment, 2 Cor. iv. 1. "Our light affliction (though it laſt all our life long) is but for a moment." But elſewhere it is brought down to yet a lower pitch, farther than which one cannot carry it, Pſal. xxxix. 5. "Mine age is as nothing before thee." Agreeable to this, Solomon tells us, Eccl. iii. 2. there is "a "time to be born, and a time to die;" but makes no mention of a time to live, as if our life were but a ſkip from the womb to the grave. Secondly, Conſider the various ſimilitudes by which the ſcripture repreſents the ſhortneſs of man's life. Here Hezekiah, Iſa. xxxviii. 12. "Mine age is departed, and is re-"moved from me as a ſhepherd's tent: I have cut off, "like a weaver, my life." The ſhepherd's tent is ſoon removed; for the flocks muſt not feed long in one place: ſuch is a man's life on this earth, quickly gone. It is a web he is inceſſantly working; he is not idle ſo much as for one moment: in a ſhort time it is wrought and then it is cut off. Every

breathing is a thread in this web; when the laſt breath is drawn, the web is woven out, he expires, and then it is cut off, he breathes no more. Man is like graſs, and like a flower, Iſa. xl. 6. "All fleſh (even the ſtrongeſt and moſt healthy fleſh) is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field." The graſs is flouriſhing in the morning, but in the evening, being cut down by the mowers, it is withered: ſo man ſometimes is walking up and down at eaſe in the morning, and in the evening is lying a corpſe, being knocked down by a ſudden ſtroke, with one or other of death's weapons. The flower, at beſt, is but a weak and tender thing, of ſhort continuance, wherever it grows; but obſerve, man is not compared to the flower of the garden; but to the flower of the field, which the foot of every beaſt may tread down at any time. Thus is our life liable to a thouſand accidents every day, any of which may cut us off. But though we ſhould eſcape all theſe, yet at length this graſs withereth, this flower fadeth of itſelf. It is carried off, as the cloud is conſumed, and vaniſheth away, Job vii. 9 It looks big as the morning cloud, which promiſeth great things, and raiſeth the expectations of the huſbandman; but the ſun riſeth, and the cloud is ſcattered; death comes and man evaniſheth. The apoſtle James propoſeth the queſtion, "What is our life?" chap. iv. 14. Hear his own anſwer, "It is even a vapour that appeareth "for a little time, and then vaniſheth away." It is as ſmoke, which goes out of the chimney, as if it would darken the face of the heavens: but quickly it is ſcattered, and appears no more: thus goeth man's life, and where is he? It is a wind, Job vii. 7. "O remember that my life is wind." It is but a paſſing blaſt, a ſhort puff, a wind that paſſeth away, and cometh not again, Pſal. lxxviii. 39. Our breath is in our noſtrils, as it were always upon the wing to depart; ever paſſing and repaſſing, like a traveller; until

until it go away for good and all, not to return till the heavens be no more.

Laſtly, Man's life is a ſwift thing; not only a paſſing but a flying vanity. Have you not obſerved how ſwiftly a ſhadow hath run along the ground, in a cloudy and windy day, ſuddenly darkening the places beautified before with the beams of the ſun; but as ſuddenly diſappearing? Such is the life of man on the earth, for "he flieth as a ſhadow, and continueth not," Job xvi. 2. A weaver's ſhuttle is very ſwift in its motion; in a moment it is thrown from one ſide of the web to the other: yet our days are ſwifter than a weaver's ſhuttle, chap vii. 6. How quickly is man toſſed through time into eternity! See how Job deſcribes the ſwiftneſs of the time of life, chap. ix. 25. "Now, my days are ſwifter than a poſt: they flee away, they ſee no good." Verſe 26. "They are "paſſed away as the ſwift ſhips; as the eagle that "haſteth to the prey." He compares his days with a poſt, a foot-poſt; a runner, who runs ſpeedily to carry tidings, and will make no ſtay. But though the poſt were like Ahimaaz, who over-ran Cuſhi; our days would be ſwifter than he; for they flee away, like a man fleeing for his life before the purſuing enemy; he runs with his utmoſt vigour, yet our days run as faſt as he. Howbeit, that is not all. Even he who is fleeing for his life, cannot run always; he muſt needs ſometimes ſtand ſtill, lie down, or turn in ſomewhere, as Siſera did into Jael's tent, to refreſh himſelf; but our time never halts. Therefore it is compared to ſhips, which can ſail night and day without intermiſſion, till they be at their port; and to ſwift ſhips, ſhips of deſire, in which men quickly arrive at the deſired haven; or, ſhips of pleaſure, that ſail more ſwiftly than ſhips of burden. Yet the wind failing, the ſhip's courſe is marred: but our time always runs with a rapid courſe. Therefore it is compared to the eagle flying; not with his ordinary flight, for that is not ſufficient to repreſent the ſwiftneſs of

our days; but when he flies upon his prey, which is with an extraordinary fwiftnefs. And thus, even thus, our days fly away.

Having thus difcourfed of death, let us improve it, in difcerning the vanity of the world; in bearing up with Chriftian contentment and patience, under all troubles and difficulties in it; in mortifying our lufts; in cleaving unto the Lord with purpofe of heart, on all hazards; and in preparing for death's approach.

And firft, Let us hence, as in a looking-glafs, behold the vanity of the world, and of all thefe things in it, which men fo much value and eſteem; and therefore fet their hearts upon. The rich and the poor are equally intent upon this world; they bow the knee to it; yet it is but a clay god; they court this bulky vanity, and run keenly to catch this fhadow. The rich man is hugged to death in its embraces; and the poor man wearies himfelf in the fruitlefs purfuit. (What wonder if the world's fmiles overcome us, when we purfue it fo eagerly, even while it frowns upon us?) But look into the grave, O man, conſider and be wife; liften to the doctrine of death; and learn, (1.) That, hold as faft as thou canft, thou fhalt be forced to let go thy hold of the world at length. Though thou load thyfelf with the fruits of this earth; yet all fhall fall off when thou comeft to creep into thy hole, the houſe under ground, appointed for all living. When death comes, thou muft bid an eternal farewel to thy enjoyments in this world; thou muft leave thy goods to another; and whofe fhall thofe things be which thou haft provided? Luke xii. 20. (2.) Thy portion of theſe things fhall be very little ere long. If thou lie down on the grafs, and ftretch thyſelf at full length, and obſerve the print of thy body when thou rifeft, thou mayeft fee how much of this earth will fall to thy fhare at laft. It may be thou fhalt get a coffin, and a winding-fheet; but thou art not fure of that: many who have had abundance of wealth, yet have not had

ſo much when they took up their new houſe in the land of ſilence. But however that be, more ye cannot expect. It was a mortifying leſſon, Saladine, when dying, gave to his ſoldiers: He called for his ſtandard-bearer, and ordered him to take his winding-ſheet upon his pike; and go out to the camp with it, and tell them, that of all his conqueſts, victories, and triumphs, he had nothing now left him but that piece of linen to wrap his body in for burial. Laſtly, This world is a falſe friend, who leaves a man in time of greateſt need, and flees from him when he has moſt to do. When thou art lying on a death-bed, all thy friends and relations cannot reſcue thee; all thy ſubſtance cannot ranſom thee, nor procure a reprieve for one day; nay, not for one hour. Yea, the more thou poſſeſſeſt of this world's goods, thy ſorrow at death is like to be the greater: for though one may live more commodiouſly in a palace than in a cottage, yet he may die more eaſily in the cottage, where he has very little to make him fond of life.

Secondly, It may ſerve as a ſtorehouſe for Chriſtian contentment and patience under worldly loſſes and croſſes. A cloſe application of the doctrine of death is an excellent remedy againſt fretting, and gives ſome eaſe to a rankled heart. When Job had ſuſtained very great loſſes, he ſat down contented, with this meditation, Job i. 21. "Naked came I out of my "mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; "bleſſed be the name of the Lord." When providence brings a mortality or murrain among your cattle, how ready are you to fret and complain! but the ſerious conſideration of your own death, (to which you have a notable help from ſuch providential occurrences,) may be of uſe to ſilence your complaints, and quiet your rankled ſpirits. Look to "the houſe "appointed for all living," and learn, (1.) That ye muſt abide a ſorer thruſt, than the loſs of worldly goods. Do not cry out for a thruſt in the leg or

arm:

arm: for ere long there will be a home-thruſt at the heart. You may loſe your deareſt relations: the wife may loſe her huſband, and the huſband his wife; the parents may loſe their dear children, and the children their parents. But if any of theſe trials happen to you, remember you muſt loſe your own life at laſt; and wherefore doth a living man complain? Lam. iii. 39. It is always profitable to conſider, under affliction, how our caſe might have been worſe than it is. Whatever be conſumed, or taken from us, it is of the Lord's mercies that we ourſelves are not conſumed, verſe 22. (2) It is but for a ſhort ſpace of time we are to be in this world. It is but little our neceſſities require in this ſhort ſpace of time: when death comes, we will ſtand in need of none of theſe things. Why ſhould men rack their heads with cares how to provide for to-morrow? while they know not if they ſhall need any thing to-morrow? Though a man's proviſion for his journey be near ſpent, he is not diſquieted, if he think he is near home. Are you working with candle light, and is there little of your candle left? It may be there is as little ſand in your glaſs; and if ſo, ye have little uſe for it. (3.) Ye have matters of greater weight that challenge your care. Death is at the door, beware ye loſe not your ſouls. If blood break out at one part of the body, they uſe to open a vein in another part of it, to turn the ſtream of blood, and thus to ſtop it. Thus the Spirit of the Lord ſometimes cures men of ſorrow for earthly things, by opening the heart vein to bleed for ſin. Did we purſue heavenly things the more vigorouſly that our affairs in this life proſper not, we ſhould thereby gain a double advantage: our worldly ſorrow would be diverted, and our beſt treaſure increaſed. (4.) Croſſes of this nature will not laſt long. The world's ſmiles and frowns will be quickly buried together in everlaſting forgetfulneſs. Its ſmiles go away as the foam on the water: and its frowns are as a paſſing ſtitch in a man's ſide. Time flies away with

ſwift

ſwift wings, and carries our earthly comforts, and croſſes too, along with it: neither of them will accompany us into the houſe appointed for all living, Job iii. 17. "There the wicked ceaſe from trou-
"bling, and there the weary be at reſt." Ver. 18. "There the priſoners reſt together, they hear not the
"voice of the oppreſſor." Ver. 19. "The ſmall and
"great are there, and the ſervant is free from his
"maſter." Caſt your eyes on eternity, and ye will ſee, affliction here is but for a moment. The truth is, our time is ſo very ſhort, that it will not allow either our joys or griefs to come to perfection. Wherefore, let them that weep, be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, &c. 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. (5.) Death will put all men on a level. The king and the beggar muſt dwell in one houſe, when they come to their journey's end, though their entertainment by the way be very different. The ſmall and the great are there, Job iii. 19. We are in this world as on a ſtage: it is no great matter, whether a man act the part of a prince or a peaſant; for when they have acted their parts, they both get behind the curtain, and appear no more. Laſtly, If thou be not in Chriſt, whatever thy afflictions now be, troubles, a thouſand times worſe, are abiding thee in another world. Death will turn thy croſſes into pure unmixed curſes: and then how gladly wouldſt thou return to thy former afflicted ſtate; and purchaſe it at any rate; were there any poſſibility of ſuch a return. If thou be in Chriſt, thou mayſt well bear thy croſs. Death will put an end to all thy troubles. If a man on a journey be not well accommodated, where he lodgeth only for a night, he will not trouble himſelf much about the matter: becauſe he is not to ſtay there; it is not his home. Ye are on the road to eternity; let it not diſquiet you, that you meet with ſome hardſhips in the inn of this world. Fret not, becauſe it is not ſo well with you as with ſome others. One man

travels with a cane in his hand: his fellow-traveller (perhaps) has but a common ſtick, or ſtaff: either of them will ſerve the turn. It is no great matter which of them be yours; both will be laid aſide when you come to your journey's end.

Thirdly, It may ſerve for a bridle, to curb all manner of luſts, particularly thoſe converſant about the body. A ſerious viſit made to cold death, and that ſolitary manſion, the grave, might be of good uſe to repreſs them.

1ſt, It may be of uſe to cauſe men remit of their inordinate care of the body; which is to many the bane of their ſouls. Often do theſe queſtions, "What ſhall we eat? what ſhall we drink? and "wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed?" leave no room for another of more importance, viz. "Wherewith-"al ſhall I come before the Lord?" the ſoul is put to the rack, to anſwer theſe mean queſtions in favour of the body: while its own eternal intereſts are neglected. But ah! why are men ſo buſy to repair the ruinous cottage; leaving the inhabitant to bleed to death of his wounds, unheeded, unregarded. Why ſo much care for the body, to the neglecting of the concerns of the immortal ſoul? Oh! be not ſo anxious for what can only ſerve your bodies; ſince, ere long, the clods of cold earth will ſerve for back and belly too.

2dly, It may abate your pride on account of bodily endowments, which vain man is apt to glory in. Value not yourſelves on the bloſſom of youth; for while ye are in your blooming years, ye are but ripening for a grave; and death gives the fatal ſtroke, without aſking any body's age. Glory not in your ſtrength, it will quickly be gone: the time will ſoon be, when ye ſhall not be able to turn yourſelves on a bed; and ye muſt be carried by your grieving friends to your long home. And what ſignifies your healthful conſtitution? Death does not always enter in ſooneſt where it begins ſooneſt to knock at the door;

but

but makes as great diſpatch with ſome in a few hours, as with others in many years. Value not yourſelves on your beauty, which ſhall conſume in the grave, Pſal. xlix. 14. Remember the change death makes on the faireſt face, Job xiv. 20. "Thou "changeſt his countenance, and ſendeſt him away." Death makes the greateſt beauty ſo loathſome, that it muſt be buried out of ſight. Could a looking-glaſs be uſed in the houſe appointed for all living; it would be a terror to theſe, who now look oftener into their glaſſes than into their Bibles. And what though the body be gorgeouſly arrayed? The fineſt clothes are but badges of our ſin and ſhame; and in a little time, will be exchanged for a winding ſheet; when the body will become a feaſt to the worms.

3dly, It may be a mighty check upon ſenſuality and fleſhly luſts, 1 Pet. ii. 11. "I beſeech you, as "ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, "which war againſt the ſoul." It is hard to cauſe wet wood take fire; and when the fire doth take hold of it, it is ſoon extinguiſhed. Senſuality makes men moſt unfit for divine communications, and is an effectual means to quench the Spirit. Intemperance in eating and drinking, carries on the ruin of ſoul and body at once: and haſtens death, while it makes the man moſt unmeet for it. Therefore, take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and ſo that day come upon you unawares, Luke xxi. 34. But, O how often is the ſoul ſtruck through with a dart, in gratifying the ſenſes! At theſe doors deſtruction enters in. Therefore Job made a covenant with his eyes, chap xxxi. "The mouth of a ſtrange woman "is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord, ſhall "fall therein," Prov. xxii. 14. "Let him that "ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall." Beware of laſciviouſneſs; ſtudy modeſty, in your apparel, words, and actions. The ravens of the valley of death will at length pick out the wanton eye; the obſcene filthy

tongue will at length be quiet, in the land of silence: and grim death embracing the body, in its cold arms, will effectually allay the heat of all fleshly lusts.

Lastly, In a word, it may check our earthly mindedness; and at once knock down, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Ah! if we must die, why are we thus? Why so fond of temporal things; so anxious to get them, so eager in the embraces of them, so mightily touched with the loss of them? Let me, upon a view of the house appointed for all living, bespeak the worldling, in the words of Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 5. "Wilt thou set "thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches cer- "tainly make themselves wings, they flee away as "an eagle towards heaven." Riches, and worldly things, are but a fair nothing: they are that which is not. They are not what they seem to be: they are but gilded vanities, that deceive the eye Comparatively they are not; there is infinitely more of nothingness and not being, than of being or reality, in the best of them. What is the world, and all that is in it, but a fashion, or fair show, such as men make on a stage, a passing show? 1 Cor. vii. 31. Royal pomp is but gaudy show, or appearance, in God's account, Acts xxv. 23. The best name they get is good things: but, observe it, they are only the wicked man's good things, Luke xvi. 25. "Thou in thy "life time receivedst thy good things," says Abraham, in the parable, to the rich man in hell. And well may the men of the world, call these things their goods; for there is no other good in them, about them, nor attending them. Nor wilt thou set thine eyes upon empty shows and fancies? Wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly on them, as the world is? Shall men's hearts fly out at their eyes upon them, as a ravenous bird on its prey? If they do, let them know, that at length, these shall fly as fast away from them, as ever their eyes flew upon them: like a flock of fair feathered birds, that settle on a fool's ground

ground; the which, when he runs to catch them as his own, do immmediately take wing, fly away, and ſitting down upon his neighbour's ground, elude his expectation. Luke xii. 20. "Thou fool, this night thy ſoul "ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall theſe "things be?" Though you do not make wings to them, as many do; they make themſelves wings, and fly away; not as a tame houſe-bird, which may be catched again; nor as an hawk, that will ſhow where ſhe is by her bells, and be called again with the lure: but as an eagle, which quickly flies out of ſight, and cannot be recalled. Forbear thou to behold theſe things. O mortal! there is no reaſon, thou ſhould ſet thine eyes upon them. This world is a great inn, in the road to eternity, to which thou art travelling. Thou art, attended by theſe things, as ſervants belonging to the inn where thou lodgeſt: they wait upon thee, while thou art there; and when thou goeſt away, they will convoy thee to the door. But they are not thine, they will not go away with thee; but return to wait on other ſtrangers, as they did on thee.

Fourthly, It may ſerve as a ſpring of Chriſtian reſolution, to cleave to Chriſt, adhere to his truths, and continue in his ways; whatever we may ſuffer for ſo doing. It would much allay the fear of man, that bringeth a ſnare. "Who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt "be afraid of a man that ſhall die?" Iſ. li. 12. Look on perſecutors as pieces of brittle clay, that ſhall be daſhed in pieces: for then ſhall ye deſpiſe them as foes that are mortal; whoſe terror, to others in the land of the living, ſhall quickly die with themſelves. The ſerious conſideration of the ſhortneſs of our time, and the certainty of death, will teach us, that all the advantage we can make by our apoſtacy, in time of trial, is not worth the while; it is not worth going out of our way to get it: and what we refuſe to forego for Chriſt's ſake, may quickly be taken from us by death. But we can never loſe it ſo honourably, as for the cauſe of Chriſt, and his goſpel:

pel: for what glory is it, that ye give up what ye have in the world; when God takes it from you by death, whether you will or not? This conſideration may teach us to undervalue life itſelf, and chooſe to forego it, rather than ſin. The worſt that men can do, is to take away that life which we cannot long keep, though all the world ſhould conſpire to help us to retain the ſpirit. And if we refuſe to offer it up to God, when he calls for it in defence of his honour, he can take it from us another way; as it fared with him, who could not burn for Chriſt, but was afterwards burnt by an accidental fire in his houſe.

Laſtly, It may ſerve for a ſpur, to incite us to prepare for death. Conſider, (1) Your eternal ſtate will be according to the ſtate in which ye die: death will open the doors of heaven or hell to you. As the tree falls, ſo it ſhall ly through eternity. If the infant be dead-born, the whole world will not raiſe it to life again: and if one die out of Chriſt, in an unregenerate ſtate, there is no more hope of him for ever. (2.) Seriouſly conſider, what it is to go into another world; a world of ſpirits, wherewith we are very little acquainted. How frightful is converſe with ſpirits, to poor mortals in this life! and how dreadful is the caſe, when men are hurried away into another world, not knowing but devils may be their companions for ever! Let us then give all diligence to make and advance our acquaintance with the Lord of that world. (3.) It is but a ſhort time ye have to prepare for death: therefore, now or never: ſeeing the time aſſigned for preparation will ſoon be over: Eccleſ. ix. 10 "Whatſoever thy hand "findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no "work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in "the grave, whither thou goeſt." How can we be idle, having ſo great a work to do, and ſo little time to do it in? But if the time be ſhort, the work of preparation for death, though hard work, will not laſt long. The ſhadows of the evening make the labourer

bourer work chearfully; knowing the time to be at hand, when he will be called in from his labour. (4.) Much of our ſhort time is over already; and the youngeſt of us all cannot aſſure himſelf, that there is as much of his time to come, as is paſt. Our life in the world is but a ſhort preface to long eternity; and much of the tale is told. Oh! ſhall we not double our diligence, when ſo much of our time is ſpent and ſo little of our work is done? (5.) The preſent time is flying away: and we cannot bring back time paſt, it hath taken an eternal farewell of us: there is no kindling the fire again that is burnt to aſhes. The time to come is not ours: and we have no aſſurance of a ſhare in it when it comes. We have nothing we can call ours, but the preſent moment; and that is flying away: how ſoon our time may be at an end, we know not. Die we muſt: but who can tell us when? If death kept one ſet time for all, we were in no hazard of a ſurpriſe: but daily obſervation ſhows us, there is no ſuch thing. Now the flying ſhadow of our life allows no time for loitering. The rivers run ſpeedily into the ſea, from whence they came, but not ſo ſpeedily as a man to the duſt from whence he came. The ſtream of time is the ſwifteſt current, and quickly runs out to eternity. Laſtly, if once death carry us off, there is no coming back again to mend our matters, Job xiv. 14. If a man die, ſhall he live again? Dying is a thing we cannot get a trial of; it is what we can only do once, Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto men *once* to die. And that which can be but once done, and yet is of ſo much importance, that our all depends on our doing it right; we have need to uſe the utmoſt diligence, that we may do it well. Therefore prepare for death, and do it timeouſly.

If ye, who are unregenerate, aſk me, what ye ſhall do to prepare for death, that ye may die ſafely? I anſwer, I have told you already, what muſt be done. And that is, your nature and ſtate muſt be changed:

ye

ye muſt be born again; ye muſt be united to Jeſus Chriſt by faith. And till this is done, ye are not capable of other directions, which belong to one's dying comfortably; whereof we may diſcourſe afterwards in the due place.

HEAD II.

The *Difference* betwixt the *Righteous* and the *Wicked* in their *Death*.

PROVERBS xiv. 32.

The wicked is driven away in his wickedneſs; But the righteous hath hope in his death.

THIS text looks like the cloud betwixt the Iſraelites and Egyptians: having a dark ſide towards the latter, and a bright ſide towards the former. It repreſents death like Pharaoh's jailor, bringing the chief butler, and the chief baker out of one priſon; the one to be reſtored to his office, and the other to be led to execution. It ſhows the difference betwixt the godly and ungodly in their death; who, as they act a very different part in life; ſo, in death, have a vaſtly different exit.

Firſt, As to the death of a wicked man: here is (1.) The manner of his paſſing out of the world. He is driven away: namely, in his death, as is clear from the oppoſite clauſe. He is forcibly thruſt out of his place in this world: driven away as chaff before the wind. (2.) The ſtate he paſſeth away in. He dies in a ſinful and hopeleſs ſtate. Firſt, In a ſinful ſtate: he is driven away in his wickedneſs. He lived in it, and he dies in it; his filthy garments of ſin, in which

which he wrapt up himſelf in his life, are his priſon-garments, in which he ſhall ly wrapt up for ever. Secondly, In a hopeleſs ſtate; but the righteous hath hope in his death; which plainly imports the hopeleſſneſs of the wicked in their death. Whereby is not meant, that no wicked man ſhall have any hope at all, when he is a-dying; but ſhall die in deſpair. No: ſometimes it is ſo indeed; but frequently it is otherwiſe: fooliſh virgins may, and often do hope to the laſt breath. But the wicked man has no ſolid hope; and as for the deluſive hopes he entertains himſelf with death will root them up, and he ſhall be forever irretrievably miſerable.

Secondly, As to the death of a righteous man; he hath hope in his death. This is uſhered in with a *but*, importing a removal of theſe dreadful circumſtances, with which the wicked man is attended, who is driven away in his wickedneſs: but the godly are not ſo. Not ſo, (1.) In the manner of their paſſing out of the world. The righteous is not driven away as chaff before the wind, but led away as a bride to the marriage-chamber, carried away by the angels into Abraham's boſom, Luke xvi. 22. (2.) Not ſo as to their ſtate, when paſſing out of this life. The righteous man dies. (1.) Not in a ſinful, but in a holy ſtate. He goes not away in his ſin, but out of it. In his life he was putting off the old man, changing his priſon garments, and now the remaining rags of them are removed, and he is adorned with robes of glory. (2.) Not in a hopeleſs, but a hopeful ſtate. He hath hope in his death: he has the grace of hope, and the well founded expectation of better things, than ever he had in this world: and though the ſtream of his hope at death may run ſhallow; yet he has ſtill as much of it, as makes him venture his eternal intereſt upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

DOCTRINE I.

The wicked dying, are driven away in their wickedneſs, and in a hopeleſs ſtate.

In ſpeaking to this doctrine, (1.) I ſhall ſhew how, and in what ſenſe, the wicked are driven away in their wickedneſs, at death. (2.) I ſhall diſcover the hopeleſſneſs of their ſtate at death. And laſtly, Apply the whole.

I. How, and in what ſenſe the wicked are driven away in their wickedneſs. In diſcourſing of this matter, I ſhall briefly enquire, (1.) What is meant by their being driven away. (2.) Whence they ſhall be driven, and whither. (3.) In what reſpects they may be ſaid to be driven away in their wickedneſs. But, before I proceed, let me advertiſe you; that you are miſtaken, if you think that no perſons are to be called wicked, but they who are avowedly vitious and prophane; as if the devil could dwell in none but thoſe whoſe name is legion. In ſcripture account; all who are not righteous, in the manner hereafter explained, are reckoned wicked. And therefore the text divides the whole world into two ſorts, the righteous, and the wicked; and ye will ſee the ſame thing in that other text, Mal. iii. 18. Then ſhall ye return, and diſcern between the righteous and the wicked. Wherefore if ye be not righteous, ye are wicked. If ye have not an imputed righteouſneſs and alſo an implanted righteouſneſs, or holineſs; if ye be yet in your natural ſtate, unregenerated, not united to Chriſt by faith: howſoever moral and blameleſs, in the eyes of men, your converſation may be; ye are the wicked, who ſhall be driven away in your wickedneſs, if death find you in that ſtate. Now,

Firſt, As to the meaning of this phraſe "driven "away:" there are three things in it: The wicked ſhall

ſhall be taken away ſuddenly, violently, and irreſiſtibly.

Firſt, Unrenewed men ſhall be taken away ſuddenly at death. Not that all wicked men die ſuddenly: nor that they are all wicked, who die ſo. God forbid! But, (1.) Death commonly comes upon them unexpected and ſo ſurprizeth them; as the deluge came ſurprizingly on the old world, though they were forewarned of it long before it came; and as travail cometh on a woman with child, with ſurprizing ſuddenneſs; although looked for and expected, 1 Theſſ. v. 3. Death ſeizeth them as a creditor doth his debtor, to hale him to priſon, Pſal. lv. 15. and that when they are not aware. Death comes in, as a thief, at the window, and finds them full of buſy thoughts about this life, which that very day periſh. (2.) Death always ſeizeth them unprepared for it: the old houſe falls down about their ears, before they have another provided. When death caſts them to the door, they have not where to lay their heads; unleſs it be on a bed of fire and brimſtone. The ſoul and body are, as it were, hugging one another in mutual embraces: when death comes like a whirlwind and ſeparates them. (3.) Death hurries them away in a moment to deſtruction, and makes a moſt diſmal change: the man for the moſt part, never knows where he is, till in hell he lifts up his eyes, Luke xvi. 23. The floods of wrath ſuddenly overwhelm his ſoul; and ere he is aware, he is plunged in the bottomleſs pit.

Secondly, The unrenewed man is taken away out of the world violently. Driving is a violent action: he is chaſed out of the world, Job xviii. 18. Fain would he ſtay, if he could; but death drags him away, like a malefactor, to the execution. He ſought no other portion, than the profits and pleaſures of this world; he hath no other; he really deſires no other; how can then go away out of it, if he were not driven?

Queſt. *But may not a wicked man be willing to die?*

Anſ. He may indeed be willing to die; but (obſerve) it is only in one of three caſes. (1.) In a fit of paſſion, by reaſon of ſome trouble that he is impatient to be rid of. Thus many perſons, when their paſſion has got the better of their reaſon, and when, on that account, they are moſt unfit to die, will be ready to cry, "O to be gone!" but ſhould their deſire be granted, and death come at their call, they would quickly ſhow they were not in earneſt; and that if they go, they muſt be driven away againſt their wills. (2.) When they are brimful of deſpair, they may be willing to die. Thus Saul murdered himſelf; and Spira wiſhed to be in hell, that he might know the uttermoſt of what he believed he was to ſuffer. In this manner many ſeek after death, while it flies from them. But fearful is the violence theſe do undergo whom the terrors of God do thus drive. (3.) When they are dreaming of happineſs after death. Fooliſh virgins under the power of deluſion, as to their ſtate, may be willing to die, having no fear of lying down in ſorrow. How many are there, who can give no ſcripture-ground for their hope, who have yet no hands in their death! many are driven to darkneſs ſleeping: they go off like lambs, who would roar like lions, did they but know what place they are going to: though the chariot in which they are, drives furiouſly to the depths of hell; yet they fear not, becauſe they are faſt aſleep.

Laſtly, The unregenerate man is taken away irreſiſtibly. He muſt go, though ſore againſt his will. Death will take no refuſal, nor admit of any delay: though the man has not lived half his days, according to his own computation. If he will not bow, it will break him: if he will not come forth, it will pull the houſe down about his ears; for there he muſt not ſtay. Although the phyſician help, friends groan, the wife and the children cry, and the man himſelf uſe his utmoſt efforts to retain the ſpirit, his ſoul is required,

required of him; yield he muſt, and go, where he ſhall never more ſee light.

Secondly, Let us conſider, whence they are driven, and whither. When the wicked die, (1.) They are driven out of this world, where they ſinned; into the other world, where they muſt be judged, and receive their particular ſentences, Heb. ix. 27. "It "is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the "judgment." They ſhall no more return to their beloved earth. Though their hearts are wedded to their earthly enjoyments, they muſt leave them, they can carry nothing hence. How ſorrowful muſt their departure be, when they have nothing in view, ſo good as that which they leave behind them! (2.) They are driven out of the ſociety of the ſaints on earth, into the ſociety of the damned in hell, Luke xvi. 22. "The rich man alſo died and was buried." Ver. 23. "And in hell he lift up his eyes." What a multitude of the devil's goats do now take place among Chriſt's ſheep! but at death they ſhall be led forth with the workers of iniquity, Pſal. cxxv. 5. There is a mixed multitude in this world, but no mixture in the other: each party is there ſet by themſelves. Though hypocrites grow here as tares among the wheat, death will root them up, and they ſhall be bound in bundles for the fire. (3.) They are driven out of time into eternity. While time laſts with them, there is hope: but when time goes, all hope goes with it. Precious time is now laviſhly ſpent: it lies ſo heavy upon the hands of many, that they think themſelves obliged to take ſeveral ways to drive away time. But beware of being at a loſs what to do in life: improve time for eternity, whilſt you have it: for ere long death will drive it from you, and you from it, ſo as ye ſhall never meet again. (4.) They are driven out of their ſpecious pretences to piety. Death ſtrips them of the ſplendid robes of a fair profeſſion, with which ſome of them are adorned; and turns them off the ſtage, in the rags of a wicked heart and life. The word hypocrite properly ſignifies a ſtage-

player,

player, who appears to be what indeed he is not. This world is the ſtage on which theſe children of the devil perſonate the children of God. Their ſhew of religion is the player's coat, under which one muſt look, who will judge of them aright. Now death turns them out of their coat, and then they appear in their native dreſs: it unveils them, and takes off their maſk. There are none in the other world, who pretend to be better than they really are. Depraved nature acts in the regions of horror, unallayed and undiſguiſed. Laſtly, They are driven away from all means of grace; and are ſet beyond the line, quite out of all proſpect of mercy. There is no great opportunity to buy oil for the lamp; it is gone out at death, and can never be lighted again. There may be offers of mercy and peace made after they are gone; but they are to others, not to them: there are no ſuch offers in the place to which they are driven; theſe offers are only made in that place from which they are driven away.

Laſtly, In what reſpects may they be ſaid to be driven away in their wickedneſs? Anſw. (1.) In reſpect of their being driven away, in their ſinful unconverted ſtate. Having lived enemies to God, they die in a ſtate of enmity to him: for none are brought into the eternal ſtate of conſummate happineſs, but by the way of the ſtate of grace, or begun recovery in this life. The child dead in the womb, is born dead, and is caſt out of the womb into the grave: ſo he who is dead while he liveth, or is ſpiritually dead, is caſt forth of the womb of time, in the ſame ſtate of death, into the pit of utter miſery. O miſerable death, to die in the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity! it had been incomparably better for ſuch as die thus, that they had never been born. (2.) In regard they die ſinning, acting wickedly againſt God, in contradiction to the divine law; for they can do nothing but ſin while they live: ſo death takes them in the very act of ſinning; violently draws them from the

the embraces of their luſts, and drives them away to the tribunal to receive their ſentence. It is a remarkable expreſſion, Job xxxvi. 14. "They die in "youth:" the marginal reading is, "their ſoul dieth "in youth: their luſts being lively, their deſires vi-"gorous, and expectations big, as is common in youth. "And their life is among the unclean;" or, "And "the company (or herd) of them" dieth "among "the Sodomites," i. e. is taken away in the heat of their ſin and wickedneſs, as the Sodomites were, Gen. xix. Luke vii. 28, 29. (3.) In as much as they are driven away, loaded with the guilt of all their ſins; this is the winding-ſheet, that ſhall lie down with them in the duſt, Job xx. 11. Their works follow them into the other world; they go away with the yoke of their tranſgreſſion wreathed about their necks. Guilt is a bad companion in life, but how terrible will it be in death! It lies now, perhaps, like cold brimſtone on their benumbed conſciences: but when death opens the way for ſparks of divine vengeance, like fire, to fall upon it, it will make dreadful flames in the conſcience, in which the ſoul will be, as it were, wrapt up for ever. Laſtly, The wicked are driven away in their wickedneſs, in ſo far as they die, under the abſolute power of their wickedneſs. While there is hope, there is ſome reſtraint on the worſt of men: and theſe moral endowments, which God gives to a number of men, for the benefit of mankind in this life, are ſo many allays and reſtraints upon the impetuous wickedneſs of human nature. But all hope being cut off, and theſe gifts withdrawn; the wickedneſs of the wicked will then arrive at its perfection. As the ſeeds of grace, ſown in the hearts of the elect, come to their full maturity at death; ſo wicked and helliſh diſpoſitions in the reprobate come then to their higheſt pitch. Their prayers to God will then be turned to horrible curſes, and their praiſes to hideous blaſphemies, Matth. xxii. 13. "There ſhall be weep-"ing and gnaſhing of teeth." This gives a diſmal, but

but genuine view of the ſtate of the wicked in another world.

II. I ſhall diſcover the hopeleſſneſs of the ſtate of unrenewed men at death. It appears to be very hopeleſs, if we conſider theſe four things.

Firſt, Death cuts off their hopes and proſpects of peace and pleaſure in this life. Luke xii. 19. "Soul, "thou haſt much goods laid up for many years, take "thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry." Ver. 20. "But God ſaid unto him, Thou fool, this night thy "ſoul ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall "thoſe things be, which thou haſt provided?" They look for great matters in this world, they hope to increaſe their wealth, to ſee their families proſper, and to live at eaſe: but death comes like a ſtormy wind, and ſhakes off all their fond hopes; like green fruit from off a tree. When he is about to fill his belly, God ſhall caſt the fury of his wrath upon him. Job xx. 23. He may begin a web of contrivances, for advancing his worldly intereſt: but before he gets it wrought out, death comes and cuts it out. "His "breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in "that very day his thoughts periſh," Pſal. cxlvi 4.

Secondly, When death comes, they have no ſolid grounds to hope for eternal happineſs. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his ſoul. Job xxvii. 8. Whatever hopes they fondly entertain, they are not founded on God's word, which is the only ſure ground of hope: if they knew their own caſe, they would ſee themſelves only happy in a dream. And indeed what hope can they have? The law is plain againſt them, and condemns them. The curſes of it (theſe cords of death) are about them already. The Saviour whom they ſlighted, is now their Judge; and their Judge is their enemy. How then can they hope? They have bolted the door of mercy againſt themſelves by their unbelief. They have deſpiſed the remedy, and therefore muſt die without mercy. They

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have no ſaving intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, the only channel of conveyance, in which mercy flows: and therefore they can never taſte of it. The ſword of juſtice guards the door of mercy, ſo as none can enter in, but the members of the myſtical body of Chriſt, over whoſe heads is a covert of atoning blood, the Mediator's blood. Theſe indeed may paſs without harm, for juſtice has nothing to require of them. But others cannot paſs, ſince they are not in Chriſt; death comes to them with the ſting in it, the ſting of unpardoned guilt. It is armed againſt them with all the force the ſanction of a holy law can give it, 1 Cor. xv. 56. "The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength "of ſin is the law. When that law was given on "Sinai, the whole mount quaked greatly," Exod. xix. 18. When the Redeemer was making ſatisfaction for the elect's breaking of it, "the earth did "quake, and the rocks rent," Matth. xxvii. 51. What poſſible ground of hope then is there to the wicked man, when death comes upon him armed with the force of this law? How can he eſcape that fire, which burnt unto the midſt of heaven? Deut. iv. 11. How ſhall he be able to ſtand in that ſmoke, that aſcended as the ſmoke of a furnace? Exod. xix. 18. How will he endure the terrible thunders and lightnings, ver. 16. and dwell in the darkneſs, clouds, and thick darkneſs? Deut. iv. 11. All theſe reſemblances heaped together, do but faintly repreſent the fearful tempeſt of wrath and indignation, which ſhall purſue the wicked to the loweſt hell: and for ever abide on them, who are driven to darkneſs or death.

Thirdly, Death roots up their deluſive hopes of eternal happineſs: then it is their covenant with death, and agreement with hell, is broken. They are awakened out of their golden dreams, and at length lift up their eyes; Job viii. 14. "Whoſe hope ſhall "be cut off, and whoſe truſt ſhall be a ſpider's web." They truſt all ſhall be well with them after death:

but this their truſt is but a web woven out of their own bowels, with a great deal of art and induſtry. They wrapt themſelves up in this their hope, as the ſpider wraps herſelf in her web. But it is but a weak and ſlender defence; for however it may withſtand the threatnings of the word of God; death, that be-ſom of deſtruction, will ſweep them and it both away, ſo as there ſhall not be the leaſt ſhred of it left them; but he who this moment will not let his hope go, ſhall next moment be utterly hopeleſs. Death over-turns the houſe built on the ſand; it leaves no man under the power of deluſion.

Laſtly, Death makes their ſtate abſolutely and for ever hopeleſs. Matters cannot be retrieved and a-mended after death. For (1.) Time once gone can never be recalled. If cries or tears, price or pains, could bring time back again; the wicked man might have hope in his death. But tears of blood will not prevail; nor will his roaring for millions of ages, cauſe it to return. The ſun will not ſtand ſtill until the ſluggard awake, and enter on his journey; and when once it is gone down, he needs not expect the night to be turned into day for his ſake: he muſt lodge through the long night of eternity where his time left him. (2.) There is no returning to this life, to mend what is amiſs: it is a ſtate of probation and trial, which terminates at death; and therefore we cannot return to it again: it is but once we thus live, and once we die. Death carries the wicked man to his own place, Acts i. 25. This life is our working day; death cloſeth our day and work toge-ther. We may readily imagine the wicked might have ſome hope in their death; if, after death has o-pened their eyes, they could return to life, and have but the trial of one Sabbath, one offer of Chriſt, one day, or but one hour more, to make up their peace with God: but man lieth down, and riſeth not till the heavens be no more; they ſhall not awake, nor be raiſed out of their ſleep, Job. xiv. 12. Laſtly, In

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the other world, men have no acceſs to get their ruined ſtate and condition retrieved, if they never ſo fain would. For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt, Eccleſ. ix. 10. Now a man may flee from the wrath to come; now he may get into a refuge: but when once death has done its work, the door is ſhut: there are no more offers of mercy, no more pardons: where the tree is fallen, there it muſt ly.

Let what has been ſaid be carefully pondered, and that it may be of uſe, let me exhort you,

Firſt, To take heed that ye entertain no hopes of heaven, but what are built on a ſolid foundation: tremble to think what fair hopes of happineſs death ſweeps away like cobwebs; how the hopes of many are cut off, when they ſeem to themſelves to be at the very threſhold of heaven; how, in the moment they expected to be carried by angels into Abraham's boſom, into the regions of bliſs and peace, they are carried by devils into the ſociety of the damned in hell, into the place of torment, and regions of horror. I beſeech you to beware, (1.) Of a hope built up, where the ground was never cleared." The wiſe builder digged deep, Luke vi. 48. Were your hopes of heaven never ſhaken; but have ye had good hopes all your days? Alas for it? you may ſee the myſtery of your caſe explained, Luke xi. 21. When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. But if they have been ſhaken, take heed leſt there have only ſome breaches been made in the old building, which you have got repaired again, by ways and means of your own. I aſſure you, your hope (howſoever fair a building it is) is not to truſt to; unleſs your old hopes have been razed, and you have built on a foundation quite new. (2.) Beware of that hope which looks briſk in the dark: but loſeth all its luſtre when it is ſet in the light of God's word, when it is examined and tried by the touchſtone of divine revelation, John iii. 10. For every one that

doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved. Ver. 21. But he that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God. That hope, which cannot abide ſcripture trial, but ſinks when ſearched into by ſacred truths, is a deluſion and not a true hope: for God's word is always a friend to the graces of God's Spirit, and an enemy to deluſion. (2.) Beware of that hope, which ſtands without being ſupported by ſcripture evidences. Alas! many are big with hopes, who cannot give, becauſe they really have not any ſcripture grounds for them. Thou hopeſt that all ſhall be well with thee after death; but what word of God is it, on which thou haſt been cauſed to hope? Pſal. cxix. 49. What ſcripture-evidence haſt thou to prove, that thy hope is not the hope of the hypocrite? What haſt thou, after impartial ſelf examination, as in the ſight of God, found in thyſelf, which the word of God determines to be a ſure evidence of his right to eternal life, who is poſſeſſed of it: Numbers of men are ruined with ſuch hopes as ſtand unſupported by ſcripture-evidence. Men are fond and tenacious of theſe hopes; but death will throw them down, and leave the ſelf-deceiver hopeleſs. Laſtly, Beware of that hope of heaven, which never makes your ſoul more holy. 1 John iii. 3. "Every "man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, "even as he is pure." The hope of the moſt part of men is, rather a hope to be free of pain and torment in another life; than a hope of true holineſs, the nature whereof is not underſtood and diſcerned: and therefore it ſlakes down in ſloth and indolence, and does not excite to mortification and a heavenly life. So far are they from hoping aright for heaven; that they muſt own, if they ſpeak their genuine ſentiments, removing out of this world into any other place whatſoever, is rather their fear than their hope. The glory of the heavenly city does not at all draw their hearts upwards towards it: nor do they lift up

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their heads with joy, in the prospect of arriving at it. If they had the true hope of the marriage day, they would, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, be making themselves ready for it, Rev. xix. 7. But their hopes are produced by their sloth, and their sloth is nourished by their hopes. O! Sirs, as ye would not be driven away hopeless in your death, beware of these hopes. Raze them now, and build on a new foundation; lest death leave not one stone of them upon another, and ye never be able to hope any more.

Secondly, Hasten, O sinners, out of your wickedness, out of your sinful state, and out of your wicked life; if ye would not at death be driven away in your wickedness. Remember the fatal end of the wicked man, as the text represents it. I know there is a great difference in the death of the wicked, in respect of some circumstances: but all of them, in their death, agree in this, that they are driven away in their wickedness. Some of them die resolutely, as if they scorned to be afraid. Some in raging despair, so filled with horror, that they cry out, as if they were already in hell: others in sullen despondency, oppressed with fears insomuch that their hearts are sunk within them, upon the remembrance of mispent time, and the view they have of eternity; having neither head nor heart to do any thing for their own relief. And others die stupid: they lived like beasts; and they die like beasts, without any concern on their spirits about their eternal state. They groan under their bodily distress, but have no sense of the danger of their souls. One may with almost as much prospect of success speak to a stone, as speak to them: vain is the attempt to teach them; nothing that can be said moves them. To discourse to them, either of the joys of heaven, or the torments of hell, is to plow on a rock or beat the air. Some die like the foolish virgins, dreaming of heaven; their foreheads are steeled against the fears of hell, with presumptuous hopes

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of heaven. Their buſineſs, who would be uſeful to them, is not to anſwer doubts about the caſe of their ſouls; but to diſpute them out of their falſe hopes. But which way ſoever the unconverted man dies, he is driven away in his wickedneſs. O dreadful caſe! O, let the conſideration of ſo horrible a departure out of this world, move you to betake yourſelves to Jeſus Chriſt, as an all ſufficient Saviour, an almighty Redeemer. Let it prevail to drive you out of your wickedneſs, to holineſs of heart and life. Though you reckon it pleaſant to live in wickedneſs; you cannot but own, it is bitter to die it. And if you leave it not in time, you ſhall go in your wickedneſs to hell, the proper place of it, that it may be ſet there on its own baſe. For when you are paſſing out of this world, all your ſins, from the eldeſt to the youngeſt of them, will ſwarm about you, hang upon you, accompany you to the other world; and, as ſo many furies, ſurround you there forever.

Laſtly, O be concerned for others, eſpecially for your relations, that they may not continue in their ſinful natural ſtate, but be brought into a ſtate of ſalvation; leſt they be driven away in their wickedneſs at death. What would ye not do to prevent any of your friends dying an untimely and violent death? But, alas! do not you ſee them in hazard of being driven away in their wickedneſs? Is not death approaching them, even the youngeſt of them? And are they not ſtrangers to true Chriſtianity, remaining in that ſtate, in which they came into the world! O, make haſte to pluck the brand out of the fire, before it be burnt to aſhes. The death of relations often leaves a ſting in the hearts of theſe they leave behind them; for that they did not do for their ſouls, as they had opportunity: and that now the opportunity is for ever taken out of their hands.

DOCTRINE.

DOCTRINE II.

The ſtate of the godly in death, is a hopeful ſtate.

We have ſeen the dark ſide of the cloud looking towards ungodly men, paſſing out of the world: let us now take a view of the bright ſide of it, ſhining on the godly, as they are entering upon their eternal ſtate. In diſcourſing this ſubject, I ſhall confirm this doctrine, anſwer an objection againſt it, and then make ſome practical improvement of the whole.

For confirmation, let it be obſerved, that although the paſſage out of this world by death, has a frightful aſpect to poor mortals; and to miſcarry in it muſt needs be of fatal conſequence: yet the following circumſtances make the ſtate of the godly in their death, happy and hopeful.

Firſt, They have a truſty good friend before them in the other world. Jeſus Chriſt, their beſt friend, is Lord of that land, to whom death carries them. When Joſeph ſent for his father to come down to him to Egypt, telling him, "God had made him lord over "all Egypt," Gen. xlv. 9. and "Jacob ſaw the wag-"gons Joſeph had ſent to carry him, the ſpirit of Ja-"cob revived," ver. 27. He frankly reſolves to undertake the journey. I think, when the Lord calls a godly man out of this world, he ſends him ſuch glad tidings, and ſuch a kind invitation into the other world, that if he had faith to believe it, his ſpirit muſt revive, when he ſees the waggon of death, which comes to carry him thither. It is true indeed, he has a weighty trial to undergo; after death the judgment. But the caſe of the godly is altogether hopeful; for the Lord of the land is their huſband, and their huſband is the judge; "the Father hath com-"mitted all judgment unto the Son," John v. 22. And ſurely the caſe of the wife is hopeful, when her own huſband is her judge, even ſuch a huſband as

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hates putting away. No husband is so loving and so tender of his spouse, as the Lord Christ is of his. One would think, it would be a very bad land, which a wife would not willingly go to, where the husband is the ruler and judge. Moreover, their Judge is the advocate, 1 John ii. 1. "We have an advocate "with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And therefore they need not fear their being put back, and falling into condemnation. What can be more favourable? Can they think, that he who pleads their cause, will himself pass sentence against them? Yet further, their advocate is their Redeemer; they are "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. So when he pleads for them, he is pleading his own cause. Though an advocate may be careless of the interest of one who employs him; surely he will do his utmost to defend his own right, which he hath purchased with his money: and shall not their advocate defend the purchase of his own blood? But more than all that; their Redeemer is their head, and they are his members, Eph. v. 23, 30. Though one were so silly as to let his own purchase go without standing out to defend his right, yet surely he will not quit a limb of his own body. Is not their case then hopeful in death, who are so closely linked and allied to the Lord of the other world, who hath "the keys of hell and of death?"

Secondly, They shall have a safe passage to another world. They must indeed go through the valley of the shadow of death: but though it be in itself a dark and shady vale, it shall be a valley of hope to them: they shall not be driven through it, but walk through it; as men in perfect safety, who fear no evil, Psal. xxiii. 4. Why should they fear? They have the Lord of the land's safe conduct, his pass sealed with his own blood: namely, the blessed covenant, which is the saint's death-bed comfort, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although my house be not so with God, yet he "hath made with me an everlasting covenant, order-

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"ed in all things and ſure: for this is all my ſalva-
"tion and all my deſire, although he make it not to
"grow." Who then can harm them? It is ſafe rid-
ing in Chriſt's chariot, (Cant. iii. 9.), both through life and death. They have good and honourable attendants, a guard, even a guard of angels. Theſe encamp about them in the time of their life; and ſurely will not leave them in the day of their death. Theſe happy miniſtring ſpirits are attendants on their Lord's bride, and will doubtleſs convey her ſafe home to his houſe. When friends in mournful mood ſtand by the ſaint's bed-ſide, waiting to ſee him draw his laſt breath; his ſoul is waited for of holy angels, to be carried by them into Abraham's boſom, Luke xvi. 22. The captain of the ſaints ſalvation is the captain of his holy guard: he was their guide even unto death, and he will be their guide through it too, Pſal. xxiii. 4. "Yea, though I walk through the
"valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil;
"for thou art with me." They may, without fear, paſs that river, being confident it ſhall not overflow them; and may walk through that fire, being ſure they ſhall not be burnt by it.

Death can do them no harm. It cannot even hurt their bodies: for though it ſeparate the ſoul from the body; it cannot ſeparate the body from the Lord Chriſt. Even death to them is but ſleep in Jeſus, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. They continue members of Chriſt, though in a grave. Their duſt is precious duſt; laid up in the grave, as in their Lord's cabinet. They lie in a grave mellowing; as precious fruit laid up to be brought forth to him, at the reſurrection. The huſbandman has corn in his barn, and corns lying in the ground: the latter is more precious to him than the former; becauſe he looks to get it returned with increaſe. Even ſo the dead bodies of the ſaints are valued by their Saviour: they are ſown in corruption, ſown in diſhonour, to be raiſed in glory, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. It cannot hurt their ſouls. It is with the

ſouls of the ſaints at death, as with Paul and his company in their voyage, whereof we have the hiſtory, Acts xxvii. The ſhip was broke in pieces, but the paſſengers got all ſafe to land. When the dying ſaint's ſpeech is laid, his eyes ſet, and his laſt breath drawn: the ſoul gets ſafe away into the heavenly paradiſe, leaving the body to return to its earth, but in the joyful hope of re-union at its glorious reſurrection. How can death hurt the godly? It is a foiled enemy: if it caſt them down, it is only that they may riſe up more glorious. Our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt hath aboliſhed death, 2 Tim. i. 10. The ſoul and life of it is gone: it is but a walking ſhade that may fright, but cannot hurt ſaints: it is only the ſhadow of death to them; it is not the thing itſelf: their dying is but as dying, or ſomewhat like dying. The apoſtle tells us, "It is Chriſt that died," Rom. viii. 34. Stephen, the firſt Chriſtian martyr, though ſtoned to death, yet but "fell aſleep," Acts vii. 60. Certainly the nature of death is quite changed, with reſpect to the ſaints. It is not to them, what it was to Jeſus Chriſt their head: it is not the invenomed ruinating thing, wrapt up in the ſanction of the firſt covenant, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day that thou eat-eſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die." It comes to the godly without its ſting: they may meet it with that ſalutation, "O death, where is thy ſting?" Is this Mara? Is this bitter death? It went out full into the world, when the firſt Adam opened the door to it: but the ſecond Adam hath brought it again empty to his own people. I feel a ſting, may the dying ſaint ſay, yet it is but a bee-ſting, ſtinging only through the ſkin: but, O death, where is thy ſting, thine old ſting, the ſerpent's ſting, that ſtings to the heart and ſoul? The ſting of death is ſin: but that is taken away. If death arreſt the ſaint, and carry him before the Judge, to anſwer for the debt he contracted; the debt will be found paid by the glorious Cautioner; and he has the diſcharge to ſhow. The thorn

of

guilt is pulled out of the man's conſcience; and his name is blotted out of the black roll, and written among the living in Jeruſalem. It is true, it is a great journey to go through the valley of the ſhadow of death: but the ſaint's burden is taken away from off his back, his iniquity is pardoned, he may walk at eaſe; no lion ſhall be there, nor any ravenous beaſt: the redeemed may walk at leiſure there, free from all apprehenſions of danger.

Laſtly, They ſhall have a joyful entrance into the other world. Their arrival in the regions of bliſs, will be celebrated with rapturous hymns of praiſe to their glorious Redeemer. A dying day is a good day to a godly man. Yea, it is his beſt day; it is better to him than his birth-day, or than the moſt joyous day he ever had on earth. "A good name, "ſays the wiſe man, is better than precious ointment: "and the day of death, than the day of one's birth," Eccleſ. vii. 1. The notion of the immortality of the ſoul, and of future happineſs, which obtained among ſome Pagan nations, had wonderful effects on them. Some of them when they mourned for the dead, did it in woman's apparel; that being moved with the indecency of the garb, they might the ſooner lay aſide their mourning. Others buried them without any lamentation or mourning; but had a ſacrifice, and a feaſt for friends, upon that occaſion. Some were wont to mourn at births, and rejoice at burials. But the practice of ſome Indian nations is yet more ſtrange, of whom it is reported, that upon the huſband's deceaſe, his ſeveral wives were in uſe to contend before the judges, which of them was the beſt beloved wife; and ſhe, in whoſe favours it was determined, with a chearful countenance, threw herſelf into the flames prepared for her huſband's corpſe, was burned with it, and reckoned happy; while the reſt lived in grief, and were accounted miſerable. But howſoever lame notions of a future ſtate, aſſiſted by pride, affectation of applauſe, apprehenſions of diffi-

culties in this life, and such like principles proper to depraved human nature, may influence rude unculti. vated minds, when strengthened by the arts of hell: O what solid joy and consolation may they have, who are true Christians, being in Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel! 2 Tim. v. 10. Death is one of these, all things that work together for good to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28. When the body dies the soul is perfected: the body of death goes off, at the death of the body. What harm did the jailor to Pharaoh's butler, when he opened the prison door to him, and let him out? Is the bird in worse case, when at liberty, than when confined in a cage? Thus, and no worse, are the souls of the saints treated by death. It comes to the godly man, as Haman came to Mordecai, with the royal apparel and the horse, Esther iv. 11. with commission to do them honour, howsoever aukwardly it be performed: I question not but Haman performed the ceremony with a very ill mien, a pale face, a down look, and a cloudy countenance; and like one who came to hang him, rather than to honour him. But he, whom the king delighted to honour, behoved to be honoured; and Haman, Mordecai's grand enemy, must be the man employed to put this honour upon him. Glory, glory, glory, blessing and praise to our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Mediator, by whose death, grim devouring death is made to do such a good office to those, whom it might otherwise have hurried away in their wickedness, to utter and eternal destruction! A dying day is, in itself, a joyful day to the godly; it is their redemption-day; when the captives are delivered, when the prisoners are set free. It is the day of the pilgrims coming home from their pilgrimage; the day in which the heirs of glory return from their travels, to their own country, and their Father's house; and enter into actual possession of the glorious inheritance. It is their marriage-day: now is the time of espousals; but

then

then the marriage is conſummate, and a marriage-feaſt begun, which has no period. If ſo, is not the ſtate of the godly in death a hopeful ſtate?

Object. 'But if the ſtate of the godly in their death 'be ſo hopeful, how comes it to paſs that many of 'them, when dying, are full of fears, and have little 'hope?' Anſw. It muſt be owned, that ſaints do not all die in one and the ſame manner: there is a diverſity among them as well as among the wicked; yet the worſt caſe of a dying ſaint is indeed a hopeful one. Some die triumphantly, in a full aſſurance of faith. 2 Tim. iv. 6. "The time of my departure is at "hand." Ver. 7. "I have fought a good fight, I "have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith." Ver. 8. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a "crown of righteouſneſs." They get a taſte of the joys of heaven, while here on earth; and begin the ſongs of Zion, while yet in a ſtrange land. Others die in a ſolid fiducial dependance on their Lord and Saviour: though they cannot ſing triumphantly, yet they can and will ſay confidently, the Lord is their God. Though they cannot triumph over death, with old Simeon, having Chriſt in his arms, and ſaying, Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, Luke ii. 29, 30. yet they can ſay with dying Jacob, I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord, Gen. xlix. 18. His left hand is under their head to ſupport them; though his right hand doth not embrace them: they firmly believe, though they are not filled with joy in believing. They can plead the covenant, and hang by the promiſe, although their houſe is not ſo with God, as they could wiſh. But the dying day of ſome ſaints may be like that day mentioned, Zech. xiv. 7. Not day, nor night. They may die under great doubts and fears; ſetting as it were, in a cloud, and going to heaven in a miſt. They may go mourning without the ſun, and never put off their ſpirit of heavineſs, till death ſtrip them

of

of it. They may be carried to heaven through the confines of hell; and may be purſued by the devouring lion, even to the very gate of the New Jeruſalem; and may be compared to a ſhip almoſt wrecked in ſight of the harbour, which yet gets ſafe into her port, 1 Cor. iii. 15. If any man's work ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer loſs: but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire. There is ſafety amidſt their fears, but danger in the wicked's ſtrong confidence; and there is a bleſſed ſeed of gladneſs in their greateſt ſorrows. Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart, Pſal. xcvii. 11.

Now, ſaints are liable to ſuch perplexity in their death; becauſe though they be Chriſtians indeed, yet they are men of like paſſions with others; and death is a frightful object in itſelf, whatever dreſs it appears in: the ſtern countenance, with which it looks at mortals, can hardly miſs of cauſing them ſhrink. Moreover, the ſaints are of all men the moſt jealous of themſelves. They think of eternity, and of a tribunal, more deeply than others do: with them it is a more ſerious thing to die, than the reſt of mankind are aware of. They know the deceits of the heart, the ſubtilties of depraved human nature, better than others do. And therefore they may have much ado to keep up hope on a death-bed: while others paſs off quietly, like ſheep to the ſlaughter: the rather, that Satan, who uſeth all his art to ſupport the hopes of the hypocrite, will do his utmoſt to mar the peace, and increaſe the fears of the ſaint. Finally, The bad frame of ſpirit, and ill condition, in which death ſometimes ſeizeth a true Chriſtian, may cauſe this perplexity. By his being in the ſtate of grace, he is indeed always habitually prepared for death, and his dying ſafely is inſured; but there is more requiſite to his actual preparation, and dying comfortably; his ſpirit muſt be in good condition too.

Wherefore there are three caſes, in which death cannot but be very uncomfortable to a child of God.

(1.)

(1.) If it ſeize him at a time when the guilt of ſome particular ſin unrepented of, is lying on his conſcience; and death comes on that very account, to take him out of the land of the living; as was the caſe of many of the Corinthian believers, 1 Cor. xi. 30. For this cauſe (namely, of unworthy communicating) many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep. If a perſon is ſurpriſed with the approach of death, while lying under the guilt of ſome unpardoned ſin, it cannot but cauſe a mighty conſternation. (2.) When death catches him napping. The midnight cry muſt be frightful to ſleeping virgins. The man who lies in a ruinous houſe, and awakens not till the timber begins to crack, and the ſtones to drop down about his ears, may indeed get out of it ſafely, but not without fears of being cruſhed by its fall. When a Chriſtian has been going on in a courſe of ſecurity and bakſliding, and awakens not till death comes to his bed-ſide; it is no marvel if he get a fearful awakening. Laſtly, When he has loſt ſight of his ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, and cannot produce evidences of his title to heaven. It is hard to meet death without ſome evidence of a title to eternal life at hand: hard to go through the dark valley, without the candle of the Lord ſhining upon the head. It is a terrible adventure to launch out into eternity, when a man can make no better of it, than a leap in the dark, not knowing where he ſhall light, whether in heaven or hell.

Nevertheleſs the ſtate of the ſaints in their death, is always in itſelf hopeful. The preſumptuous hopes of the ungodly in their death, cannot make their ſtate hopeful; neither can the hopeleſſneſs of a ſaint make his ſtate hopeleſs: for God judgeth according to the truth of the thing, not according to mens opinions about it. Howbeit, the ſaints can no more be altogether without hope, than they can be altogether without faith. Their faith may be very weak, but it fails not; and their hope very low, yet they will, and do

hope

hope to the end. Even while the godly ſeem to be carried away with the ſtream of doubts and fears; there remains ſtill as much hope as determines them to lay hold on the tree of life, that grows on the bank of the river, Jonah ii. 4. "Then I ſaid, I am cut "out of thy ſight: yet I will look again toward thy "temple."

USE. This ſpeaks comfort to the godly againſt the fear of death. A godly man may be called a happy man before his death; becauſe, whatever befal him in life, he ſhall certainly be happy at death. You who are in Chriſt, who are true Chriſtians, have hope in your end; and ſuch a hope as may comfort you againſt all thoſe fears which ariſe from the conſideration of a dying hour. This I ſhall branch out in anſwering ſome caſes briefly.

CASE I. 'The proſpect of death (will ſome of the 'ſaints ſay) is uneaſy to me, not knowing what ſhall 'become of my family, when I am gone.' Anſw. The righteous hath hope in his death, as to his family, as well as himſelf. Although you have little, for the preſent, to live upon; which has been the cauſe of many of God's choſen ones, 1 Cor. iv. 11. We (namely the apoſtles, ver. 9.) both hunger and thirſt, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place: and though you have nothing to leave them, as was the caſe of that ſon of the prophets who did fear the Lord, and yet died in debt, which he was unable to pay, as his poor widow repreſents, 2 Kings iv. 1. yet you have a good friend to leave them to; a covenanted God, to whom you may confidently commit them, Jer. xlix. 11. "Leave thy fatherleſs "children, I will preſerve them alive; and let thy wi-"dows truſt in me." The world can bear witneſs of ſignal ſettlements made upon the children of providence, ſuch as by their pious parents have been caſt upon God's providential care. It has been often remarked, that they wanted neither proviſion nor education. Moſes is an eminent inſtance of this. He, albeit

albeit he was an outcaſt infant (Exod. ii. 3.) yet was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians, Acts vii. 22. and became king in Jeſhurun, Deut. xxxiii. 5. O! may we not be aſhamed, that we do not ſecurely truſt him with the concerns of our families, to whom, as our Saviour and Redeemer, we have committed our eternal intereſts?

CASE II. 'Death will take us away from our 'dear friends; yea, we ſhall not ſee the Lord in the 'land of the living, in the bleſſed ordinances.' Anſ. It will take you to your beſt friend, the Lord Chriſt. And the friends you leave behind you, if they be indeed perſons of worth, you will meet again, when they come to heaven: and you will never be ſeparated any more. If death take you away from the temple below, it will carry you to the temple above. It will indeed take you from the ſtreams, but it will ſet you down by the fountain. If it put out your candle, it will carry you where there is no night, where there is an eternal day.

CASE III. 'I have ſo much ado in time of 'health, to ſatisfy myſelf as to my intereſt in Chriſt, 'about my being a real Chriſtian, a regenerate man: 'that I judge it is almoſt impoſſible I ſhould die com-'fortably.' Anſw. If it is thus with you, then double your diligence, to make your calling and election ſure. Endeavour to grow in knowledge, and walk cloſely with God: be diligent in ſelf-examination; and pray earneſtly for the holy Spirit, whereby you may know the things freely given you of God. If you are enabled by the power and Spirit of Chriſt thus diligently to proſecute your ſpiritual concerns; though the time of your life be neither day nor night, yet at evening-time, it may be light. Many weak Chriſtians indulge doubts and fears about their ſpiritual ſtate, as if they placed at leaſt ſome part of religion in this imprudent practice: but towards the period of life, they are forced to think and act in another manner. The traveller, who reckons he has

time to ſpare, may ſtand ſtill debating with himſelf, whether this or the other be the right way: but when the ſun begins to ſet, he is forced to lay aſide his ſcruples, and reſolutely to go forward in the road he judges to be the right one, leſt he ly all night in the open fields. Thus ſome Chriſtians, who perplex themſelves much, throughout the courſe of their lives, with jealous doubts and fears, content themſelves when they come to die, with ſuch evidences of the ſafety of their ſtate, as they could not be ſatisfied with before; and by diſputing leſs againſt themſelves, and believing more, court the peace they formerly rejected, and gain it too.

CASE IV. 'I am under a ſad decay in reſpect of 'my ſpiritual condition.' Anſw. Bodily conſumptions may make death eaſy: but it is not ſo in ſpiritual decays. I will not ſay, that a godly man cannot be in ſuch a caſe when he dies, but I believe it is rarely ſo. Ordinarily (I ſuppoſe) a cry comes to awaken ſleeping virgins, before death come. Samſon is ſet to grind in the priſon, until his locks grow again. David and Solomon fell under great ſpiritual decays; but before they died, they recovered their ſpiritual ſtrength and vigour. However, beſtir ye yourſelves without delay, to ſtrengthen the things that remain: your fright will be the leſs, that ye awake from ſpiritual ſleep ere death come to your bed-ſide: and you ought to loſe no time, ſeeing you know not how ſoon death may ſeize you.

CASE V. 'It is terrible to think of the other 'world, that world of ſpirits, which I have ſo little 'acquaintance with.' Anſw. Thy beſt friend is Lord of that other world. Abraham's boſom is kindly, even to theſe who never ſaw his face. After death thy ſoul becomes capable of converſe with the bleſſed inhabitants of that other world. "The ſpirits "of juſt men made perfect" were once ſuch as thy ſpirit now is. And as for the angels, howſoever they be of a ſuperior nature in the rank of beings, yet

our

our nature is dignified above theirs, in the man Chriſt: and they are, all of them, thy Lord's ſervants, and ſo thy fellow-ſervants.

CASE VI. 'The pangs of death are terrible.' *Anſw.* Yet not ſo terrible as pangs of conſcience, cauſed by a piercing ſenſe of guilt, and apprehenſions of divine wrath, with which I ſuppoſe thee to be not altogether unacquainted. But who would not endure bodily ſickneſs, that the ſoul may become ſound, and every whit whole. Each pang of death will ſet a ſin a ſtep nearer the door: and with the laſt breath, the body of ſin will breathe out its laſt. The pains of death will not laſt long; and the Lord thy God will not leave, but ſupport thee under them.

CASE VII. 'But I am like to be cut off in the midſt of my days.' *Anſw.* Do not complain, you will be the ſooner at home: you thereby have the advantage of your fellow-labourers, who were at work before you, in the vineyard. God, in the courſe of his providence, hides ſome of his ſaints early in the grave, that they may be taken away from the evil to come. An early removal out of this world, prevents much ſin and miſery: and they have no ground of complaint, who get the reſidue of their years in Immanuel's land. Surely thou ſhalt live as long as thou haſt work cut out for thee, by thy great Maſter, to be done for him in this world: and when that is at an end, it is high time to be gone.

CASE VIII. I am afraid of ſudden death. *Anſw.* Thou mayeſt indeed die ſo. Good Eli died ſuddenly, 1 Sam. iv. 18. Yet death found him watching, ver. 13. "Watch therefore, for ye know not what "hour the Lord doth come," Matth. xxiv. 42. But be not afraid, it is an unexpreſſible comfort, that death, come when it will, can never catch thee out of Chriſt; and therefore can never ſeize thee, as a jailor, to hurry thee into the priſon of hell. Sudden death may haſten and facilitate thy paſſage to heaven, but can do thee no prejudice.

CASE IX. I am afraid it be my lot to die wanting the exercise of reason. *Answ.* I make no question but a child of God, a true Christian, may die in this case. But what harm? There is no hazard in it, as to his eternal state; a disease at death may divest him of his reason, but not of his religion. When a man going a long voyage, has put his affairs in order, and put all his goods aboard; he himself may be carried aboard the ship sleeping: all is safe with him, although he knows not where he is, till he awake in the ship. Even so the godly man, who dies in this case, may die uncomfortably, but not unsafely.

CASE last. I am naturally timorous, and the very thoughts of death are terrible to me. *Answ.* The less you think on death, the thoughts of it will be the more frightful: but make it familiar to you by frequent meditations upon it, and you may thereby allay your fears. Look at the white and bright side of the cloud: take faith's view of the city that hath foundation: so shall you see hope in your death. Be duly affected with the body of sin and death, the frequent interruptions of your communion with God, and the glory which dwells on the other side death: this will contribute much to remove slavish fear.

It is pity, saints should be so fond of life as they often are: they ought always to be in good terms with death. When matters are duly considered, it might be well expected every child of God, every regenerate man, should generously profess concerning this life, that Job did, chap. vii. 16. "I lothe it, "I would not live always." In order to gain their hearts to this desirable temper, I offer the following additional considerations.

First, Consider the sinfulness that attends life in this world. While ye live here, ye sin, and see others sinning. Ye breathe infectious air. Ye live in a pest house. Is it at all strange to lothe such a life? (1.) Your own plague sores are running on you. Doth not the sin of your nature make you groan daily?

ly? Are you not ſenſible, that though the cure be begun, it is yet far from being perfected? Has not the leproſy got into the walls of the houſe, which cannot be removed without pulling it down? Is not your nature ſo vitiate, that no leſs than the ſeparation of the ſoul from the body can root out the diſeaſe? Have you not your ſores without, as well as your ſickneſs within? Do ye not leave marks of your pollution on whatſoever paſſes through your hands? Are not all your actions tainted and blemiſhed with defects and imperfections? Who elſe then ſhould be much in love with life, but ſuch whoſe ſickneſs is their health and who glory in their ſhame? (2.) The loathſome ſores of others are always before your eyes, go where you will. The follies and wickedneſs of men are every where conſpicuous, and make but an unpleaſant ſcene. This ſinful world is but an unſightly company, a diſagreeable croud, in which the moſt loathſome are the moſt numerous. (3.) Are not your own ſores oft times breaking out again, after healing? Frequent relapſes may well cauſe us remit of our fondneſs for this life. To be ever ſtruggling, and anon falling into the mire again, makes weary work. Do ye never wiſh for cold death, thereby effectually to cool the heat of theſe luſts, which ſo often take fire again; even after a flood of godly ſorrow has gone over them? (4.) Do not ye ſometimes infect others, and others infect you? There is no ſociety in the world, in which every member of it doth not ſometimes lay a ſtumbling block before the reſt. The beſt carry about with them the tinder of a corrupt nature, which they cannot be rid of while they live, and which is liable to be kindled at all times, and in all places: yea, they are apt to inflame others, and become the occaſions of ſinning. Certainly theſe things are apt to imbitter this life to the ſaints.

Secondly, Conſider the miſery and troubles that attend it. Reſt is deſirable, but it is not to be found

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on this ſide of the grave. Worldly troubles attend all men in this life. This world is a ſea of trouble, where one wave rolls upon another. They who fancy themſelves beyond the reach of trouble, are miſtaken: no ſtate, no ſtage of life is exempted from it. The crowned head is ſurrounded with thorny cares. Honours many times pave the way to deep diſgrace: riches for the moſt part, are kept to the hurt of the owners. The faireſt roſe wants not prickles, and the heavieſt croſs is ſometimes found wrapt up in the greateſt earthly comfort. Spiritual troubles attend the ſaints in this life. They are like travellers travelling in a cloudy night, in which the moon ſometimes breaks out from under one cloud, but quickly hides her head again under another: no wonder they long to be at their journey's end. The ſudden alterations the beſt frame of ſpirit is liable to, the perplexing doubts, confounding fears, ſhort-lived joys, and long running ſorrows, which have a certain affinity with the preſent life, muſt needs create in the ſaints a deſire to be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all.

Laſtly, Conſider the great imperfections attending this life. While the ſoul is lodged in this cottage of clay, the neceſſities of the body are many; it is always craving. The mud-walls muſt be repaired and patched up daily, till the clay cottage fall down for good and all. Eating, drinking, ſleeping, and the like, are, in themſelves, but mean employments for a rational creature; and will be reputed ſuch by the heaven-born ſoul. They are badges of imperfection, and, as ſuch, unpleaſant to the mind, aſpiring unto that life and immortality, which is brought to light through the goſpel: and would be very grievous, if this ſtate of things were of long continuance. Doth not the gracious ſoul often find itſelf yoked with the body, as with a companion in travel, unable to keep pace with it? When the ſpirit is willing, the fleſh is weak. When the ſoul would mount upward, the body is as a clog upon it, and as a ſtone tied to the foot

of

of a bird attempting to fly. The truth is, O believer! thy ſoul in this body is, at beſt, but like a diamond in a ring, where much of it is obſcured: it is far ſunk in the vile clay, till relieved by death.

I conclude this ſubject with a few directions how to prepare for death, ſo as we may die comfortably. I ſpeak not here of habitual preparation for death, which a true Chriſtian, in virtue of his gracious ſtate, never wants, from the time he is born again and united to Chriſt: but of actual preparation or readineſs, in reſpect of his circumſtantiate caſe, frame, and diſpoſition of mind and ſpirit; the want of which makes even a ſaint very unfit to die.

Firſt, Let it be your conſtant care to keep a clean conſcience, a conſcience void of offence towards God, and towards man, Acts xxiv. 16. Beware of a ſtanding controverſy betwixt God and you, on the account of ſome iniquity regarded in the heart. When an honeſt man is about to leave his country, and not to return, he ſettles accounts with thoſe he had dealings with, and lays down methods for paying his debts timeouſly; leſt he be reckoned a bankrupt, and be attacked by an officer, when he is going off. Guilt lying on the conſcience is a fountain of fears; and will readily ſting ſeverely, when death ſtares the criminal in the face. Hence it is, that many, even of God's children, when a dying, are made to wiſh paſſionately, and deſire eagerly, that they may live to do what they ought to have done, before that time. Wherefore, walk cloſely with God, be diligent, ſtrict and exact in your courſe; beware of a looſe, careleſs, and irregular converſation: as ye would not lay up for yourſelves anguiſh and bitterneſs of ſpirit, in a dying hour. And becauſe, through the infirmity cleaving to us; in our preſent ſtate of imperfection, in many things we offend all, renew your repentance daily, and be ever waſhing in the Redeemer's blood. As long as ye are in the world, ye will need to waſh your feet, John xiii. 10. that is, to make application to the

blood

blood of Chriſt, anew, for the purging your conſcien-ces from the guilt of daily miſcarriages. Let death find you at the fountain; and if ſo, it will find you ready to anſwer its call.

Secondly, Be always watchful, waiting for your change. Like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately, Luke xii. 36. Beware of ſlumbering and ſleeping, while the bridegroom tarries. To be awakened out of ſpiritual ſlumber, by a ſurprizing call to paſs into another world, is a very frightful thing: but he who is daily waiting for the coming of his Lord, ſhall comfortably receive the grim meſſenger, while he beholds him uſhering in him, of whom he may confidently ſay, "This is my God: "and I have waited for him." The way to die comfortably, is to die daily. Be often eſſaying (as it were) to die. Bring yourſelves familiarly acquainted with death, by making many viſits to the grave, in ſerious meditations upon it. This was Job's practice, chap. xvii. 13, 14. "I have made my bed in the "darkneſs." Go thou, and do likewiſe; and when death comes, thou ſhalt have nothing ado but to ly down. "I have ſaid to corruption, thou art my fa-"ther; to the worm, thou art my mother and my ſiſ-"ter." Do thou ſay ſo too, and thou wilt be the fitter to go home to their houſe. Be frequently reflecting upon your conduct, and conſidering what courſe of life you wiſh to be found in when death arreſts you: and act accordingly. When you do the duties of your ſtation in life, or are employed in acts of worſhip, think with yourſelves, that, it may be, this is the laſt opportunity; and therefore act as if you was never to do more of that kind. When you lie down at night, compoſe your ſpirits, as if you was not to awake till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning, conſider that new day as your laſt; and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh, of which you will never ſee the morning; and

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that morning, of which you will never ſee the night. But which of your mornings or nights will be ſuch, you know not.

Thirdly, Employ yourſelves much in weaning your hearts from the world. The man who is making ready to go abroad, buſies himſelf in taking leave of his friends. Let the mantle of earthly enjoyments hang looſe about you, that it may be eaſily dropt, when death comes to carry you away into another world. Moderate your affections towards your lawful comforts of life: and let not your hearts be too much taken with them. The traveller acts unwiſely, who ſuffers himſelf to be ſo allured with the conveniencies of the inn where he lodgeth, as to make his neceſſary departure from it grievous. Feed with fear, and walk through the world as pilgrims and ſtrangers. Likeas, when the corn is forſaking the ground it is ready for the ſickle; when the fruit is ripe, it falls off the tree eaſily: ſo, when a Chriſtian's heart is truly weaned from the world, he is prepared for death, and it will be the more eaſy to him. A heart diſengaged from the world is an heavenly one: and then are we ready for heaven, when our heart is there before us, Matth. vi. 21.

Fourthly, Be diligent in gathering and laying up evidences of your title to heaven, for your ſupport and comfort at the hour of death. The neglect hereof mars the joy and conſolation which ſome Chriſtians might otherwiſe have at their death. Wherefore examine yourſelves frequently as to your ſpiritual ſtate; that evidences, which lie hid and unobſerved, may be brought to light, and taken notice of. And if ye would manage this work ſucceſsfully, make ſolemn ſerious work of it. Set apart ſome time for it. And after earneſt prayer to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, for the enlightning influences of his Holy Spirit, whereby ye may be enabled to underſtand his own word, and to diſcern his own work in your ſouls; ſift yourſelves before the tribunal of your con-

ſciences, that ye may judge yourſelves in this weighty matter.

And in the firſt place, Let the marks of a regenerate ſtate be fixed, from the Lord's word: and have recourſe to ſome particular text for that purpoſe: ſuch as Prov. viii. 17. "I love them that love me." Compare Luke xiv. 26. "If any man come to me, "and hate not his father and mother, and wife and "children, and brethren and ſiſters, yea, and his own "life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple." Pſal. cxix. 6. "Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect "unto all thy commandments." Pſal. xviii. 23. "I was alſo upright before him: and I kept myſelf "from mine iniquity." Compare Rom. vii. 22, 23. "For I delight in the law of God, after the inward "man; but I ſee another law in my members war-"ring againſt the law of my mind," &c. 1 John iii. 3. "And every man that hath this hope in him, pu-"rifieth himſelf, even as he is pure," Matth. v. 3. "Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the king-"dom of heaven." Phil. iii. 3. "For we are the "circumciſion which worſhip (or ſerve) God in the "ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no con-"fidence in the fleſh." The ſum of the evidence ariſing from theſe texts, lies here. A real Chriſtian is one who loves God for himſelf as well as for his benefits; and that with a ſupreme love above all perſons and all things; he has an awful and impartial regard to God's commands: he oppoſeth and wreſtleth againſt that ſin, which, of all others, moſt eaſily beſets him; he approveth and loveth the holy law, even in that very point, wherein it ſtrikes againſt his moſt beloved luſt: his hope of heaven engageth him in the ſtudy of univerſal holineſs; in the which he aims at perfection, though he cannot reach it in this life: he ſerves the Lord, not only in acts of worſhip, but in the whole of his converſation; and as to both, is ſpiritual in the principle, motives, aims, and ends of his ſervice: yet he ſees nothing in himſelf to truſt

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to, before the Lord: Chriſt and his fulneſs is the ſtay of his ſoul; and his confidence is cut off from all that is not Chriſt, or in Chriſt, in point of juſtification, or acceptance with God; and in point of ſanctification too. Every one in whom theſe characters are found, has a title to heaven, according to the word. It is convenient and profitable to mark ſuch texts for this ſpecial uſe, as they occur, while you read the ſcriptures, or hear ſermons. The marks of a regenerate ſtate thus fixed; in the next place, impartially ſearch and try your own hearts thereby, as in the ſight of God, with dependence on him for ſpiritual diſcerning, that ye may know whether they be in you or not. And when ye find them, form the concluſion deliberately and diſtinctly; namely, that therefore you are regenerate, and have a title to heaven. Thus you may gather evidences. But be ſure to have recourſe to God in Chriſt by earneſt prayer, for the teſtimony of the ſpirit, whoſe office is to "bear wit-"neſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of "God," Rom. viii. 16. Moreover, carefully obſerve the courſe and method of providence towards you: and likewiſe how your ſoul is affected under the ſame in the various ſteps thereof: compare both with ſcripture doctrines, promiſes, threatnings, and examples; ſo ſhall ye perceive, if the Lord deals with you as he uſeth to do unto thoſe that love his name; and if you be going forth by the footſteps of the flock, this may afford you comfortable evidence. Walk tenderly and circumſpectly; and the Lord will manifeſt himſelf to you, according to his promiſe, John xiv. 21. "He "that hath my commandments and keepeth them, "he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, "ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, "and will manifeſt myſelf to him." But it is in vain to think on ſucceſsful ſelf-examination, if ye be looſe and irregular in your converſation.

Laſtly, Diſpatch the work of your day and generation with ſpeed and diligence. "David, after he

"had

" had ſerved his own generation by the will of God,
" fell on ſleep." Acts xiii. 36. God has allotted us certain pieces of work for this kind, which ought to be diſpatched before the time of working be over. Eccleſ. ix. 10. " Whatſoever thy hand findeth to
" do, do it with thy might: for there is no work,
" nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave, whither
" thou goeſt." Gal. vi. 10. " As we have there-
" fore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, e-
" ſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of
" faith." If a paſſenger, after he has got on ſhip-board, and the ſhip is getting under ſail, remember that he has omitted to diſpatch a piece of neceſſary buſineſs when he was aſhore, it muſt needs be uneaſy to him; even ſo, reflection in a dying hour, upon neglected ſeaſons, and loſt opportunities, cannot fail to diſquiet a Chriſtian. Wherefore, whatever is incumbent upon thee to do for God's honour, and the good of others; either as the duty of thy ſtation, or by ſpecial opportunity put into thy hand, perform it ſeaſonably, if thou wouldſt die comfortably.

HEAD III.

The RESURRECTION.

JOHN v. 28, 29.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice; and ſhall come forth, they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.

THESE words are part of the defence our Lord Jeſus Chriſt makes for himſelf, when perſecuted by the Jews, for curing the impotent man, and ordering him to carry away his bed on the Sabbath; and for vindicating his conduct, when accuſed by them of having thereby profaned that day. On this occaſion he profeſſeth himſelf not only Lord of the Sabbath, but alſo Lord of life and death; declaring, in the words of the text, the reſurrection of the dead to be brought to paſs by his power. This he introduceth with theſe words, as with a ſolemn preface, "Marvel not at this," i. e. at this ſtrange diſcourſe of mine; do not wonder to hear me, whoſe appearance is ſo very mean in your eyes, talk at this rate; for the day is coming, in which the dead ſhall be raiſed by my power.

Obſerve in this text, (1.) The doctrine of the reſurrection aſſerted: "All that are in the graves ſhall "hear his voice, and ſhall come forth." The dead bodies, which are reduced to duſt, ſhall revive, and evidence life by hearing and moving. (2.) The author of it, Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of man, ver. 27. The dead ſhall hear his voice, and be raiſed thereby.

(3.)

(3.) The number that ſhall be raiſed, "All that "are in the graves," i. e. all the dead bodies of men, howſoever differently diſpoſed of, as it were in dif. ferent kinds of graves; or all the dead, and good bad. They are not all buried in graves, pro. perly ſo called: ſome are burnt to aſhes; ſome drowned, and buried in the bellies of fiſhes; yea, ſome devoured by man-eaters. called canibals: but, whereſoever the matter or ſubſtance of which the bo. dy was compoſed, is to be found, thence they ſhall come forth. (4.) The great diſtinction that ſhall be made betwixt the godly and the wicked. They ſhall indeed both riſe again in the reſurrection. None of the godly ſhall be miſſing; though, perhaps, they ei. ther had no burial, or a very obſcure one: and all the wicked ſhall come forth; their vaulted tombs ſhall hold them no longer than the voice is uttered. But the former ſhall have a joyful reſurrection to life, whilſt the latter have a dreadful reſurrection to dam. nation. Laſtly, The ſet time of this great event; there is an hour, or a certain fixed period of time, appointed of God for it. We are not told when that hour will be, but that it is "coming;" for this, among other reaſons, that we may always be ready.

DOCTRINE.

There ſhall be a Reſurrection of the dead.

In diſcourſing of this ſubject, I ſhall, firſt, ſhew the certainty of the reſurrection; next, I ſhall en. quire into the nature of it; and laſtly, make ſome practical improvement of the whole.

I. In ſhewing the certainty of the reſurrection, I ſhall evince (1.) That God can raiſe the dead. And, (2.) That he will do it; which are the two grounds or topics laid down by Chriſt himſelf, when diſput. ing with the Sadducees, Matth. xxii. 29. "Jeſus "anſwered

" anſwered and ſaid unto them, Ye do err, not " knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God."

Firſt, Seeing God is Almighty, ſurely he can raiſe the dead. We have inſtances of this powerful work of God both in the Old and New Teſtament. The ſon of the widow in Sarepta was raiſed from the dead, 1 Kings xvii. 22.; the Shunamite's ſon, 2 Kings iv. 35. and the man caſt into the ſepulchre of Eliſha, chap. xiii. 21. In which we may obſerve a gradation, the ſecond of theſe miraculous events being more illuſtrious than the firſt, and the third than the ſecond. The firſt of theſe perſons was raiſed when he was but newly dead; the prophet Elijah, who raiſed him, being preſent at his deceaſe. The ſecond, when he had lien dead a conſiderable time; namely, while his mother travelled from Shunem to mount Carmel, (reckoned about the diſtance of ſixteen miles), and returned from thence to her houſe, with Eliſha, who raiſed him. The laſt, not till they were burying him, and the corpſe was caſt into the prophet's grave. In like manner, in the New Teſtament, Jairus's daughter, (Mark v. 41.) and Dorcas, (Acts ix. 40.) were both raiſed to life, when lately dead; the widow's ſon in Nain, when they were carrying him out to bury him, Luke vii. 11, 15.; and Lazarus, when ſtinking in the grave, John xi. 39. 44.

Can men make curious glaſſes out of aſhes, reduce flowers into aſhes, and raiſe them again out of theſe aſhes, reſtoring them to their former beauty; and cannot the great Creator, who made all things of nothing, raiſe man's body, after it is reduced into duſt? If it be objected. 'How can mens bodies be raiſed up 'again, after they are reſolved into duſt, and the 'aſhes of many generations are mingled together?" Scripture and reaſon furniſh the anſwer; " With " men it is impoſſible, but not with God." It is abſurd for men to deny that God can do a thing, becauſe they ſee not how it may be done. How ſmall a portion do we know of his ways! How abſolutely

incapable

incapable are we of conceiving diſtinctly of the extent of almighty power, and much more of comprehending its actings, and the method of procedure! I queſtion not. but many illiterate men are as great infidels to many chymical experiments, as ſome learned men are to the doctrine of the reſurrection: and as theſe laſt are ready to deride the former, ſo the Lord will have them in deriſion. What a myſtery was it to the Indians, that the Europeans could, by a piece of paper, converſe together at the diſtance of ſome hundreds of miles? And how much were they aſtoniſhed to ſee them, with their guns, produce as it were thunder and lightening in a moment, and at pleaſure kill men afar off? Shall ſome men do ſuch things as are wonders in the eyes of others, becauſe they cannot comprehend them: and ſhall men confine the infinite power of God within the narrow boundaries of their own ſhallow capacities, in a matter noways contrary to reaſon? An inferior nature has but a very imperfect conception of the power of a ſuperior. Brutes do not conceive of the actings of reaſon in men; and men have but lame notions of the power of angels: how low and inadequate a conception then, muſt a finite nature have of the power of that which is infinite! Though we cannot conceive how God acts, yet we ought to believe he can do above what we can think or conceive of.

Wherefore let the bodies of men be laid in the grave; let them rot there, and be reſolved into the moſt minute particles: or let them be burnt, and the aſhes caſt into rivers, or thrown up into the air, to be ſcattered by the wind: let the duſt of a thouſand generations be mingled, and the ſtreams of dead bodies wander to and fro in the air: let birds or wild beaſts eat the dead bodies, or the fiſhes of the ſea devour them, ſo that the parts of human bodies, thus deſtroyed, paſs into ſubſtantial parts of birds, beaſts, or fiſhes: or, what is more than that, let man-eaters, who themſelves muſt die and riſe again, devour human

man bodies; and let others devour them again; and then let our modern Saducees propose the question in these cases, as the ancient Saducees did, in the case of the woman who had been married to seven husbands successively, Matth. xxii. 28. We answer, as our blessed Lord and Saviour did, ver 29. "Ye do "err, not knowing the scripture, nor the power of "God." We believe God to be omniscient and omnipotent; infinite in knowledge and in power: and hence, agreeable to the dictates of reason, we conclude the possibility of the resurrection, even in the cases supposed.

Material things may change their forms and shapes; may be resolved into the principles of which they are formed; but they are not annihilated or reduced to nothing; nor can they be so by any created power. God is omniscient, his understanding is infinite; therefore he knows all things whatsoever; what they were at any time, what they are, and where they are to be found. Though the country man who comes into the apothecary's shop, cannot find out the drug he wants; yet the apothecary himself knows what he has in his shop, and whence it came, and where it is to be found. And in a mingle of many different seeds, the expert gardener can distinguish betwixt seed and seed. Why then may not omniscience distinguish dust and dust? Can he who knows all things to perfection, be liable to any mistake about his own creatures? Whoso believes an infinite understanding, must needs own, that no mass of dust is so jumbled together, but God perfectly comprehends, and infallibly knows, how the most minute particle, and every one of them is to be matched. And therefore he knows where the particles of each dead body are; whether in the earth, sea, or air; how confused soever they lie. And particularly, he knows where to find the primitive substance of the man-eater; howsoever evaporate or reduced, as it were, into air or vapour, by sweat or perspiration: and how to

ſeparate the parts of the body that was eaten, from the body of the eater, howſoever incorporate or made one body with it: and ſo underſtands, not only how, but whence he is to bring back the primitive ſubſtance of the man-eater to its proper place; and alſo to ſeparate from the man-eater's body, that part of the devoured body which goes into its ſubſtance, and is indeed but a very ſmall part of it. It is certain the bodies of men, as of all other animals or living creatures, are in a continual flux: they grow and are ſuſtained by daily food; ſo ſmall a part whereof becomes nouriſhment, that the moſt part is evacuate. And it is reckoned that, at leaſt, as much of the food is evacuate inſenſibly by perſpiration, as is voided by other perceptible ways. Yea, the nouriſhing part of the food, when aſſimilate, and thereby become a part of the body, is evacuate by perſpiration through the pores of the ſkin, and again ſupplied by the uſe of the food; yet the body is ſtill reckoned one and the ſame body. Whence we may conclude, that it is not eſſential to the reſurrection of the body, that every particle of the matter, which at any time was part of a human body, ſhould be reſtored to it, when it is raiſed up from death to life. Were it ſo, the bodies of men would become of ſo huge a ſize that they would bear no reſemblance of the perſons. It is ſufficient to denominate it the ſame body that died, when it is riſen again, if the body that is raiſed be formed in its former proportions of the ſame particles of matter, which at any time were its conſtituent parts, howſoever it be refined: likeas, we reckon it is the ſame body that was pined away by long ſickneſs, which becomes fat and fair again after recovery.

Now, to this infinite underſtanding join infinite power, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf; and this glorioufly great work appears moſt reaſonable. If omniſcience diſcover every little particle of duſt, where it is, and how it is to be matched,

ed, cannot omnipotence bring them, and join them together in their order? Can the watchmaker take up the ſeveral pieces of a watch, lying in a confuſed heap before him, and ſet each in its proper place; and cannot God put the human body into order after its diſſolution? Did he ſpeak this world into being, out of nothing; and can he not form man's body out of its pre-exiſtent matter? If he calleth thoſe things which be not, as though they were, ſurely he can call things that are diſſolved, to be as they were, before the compound was reſolved into its parts and principles. Wherefore, God can raiſe the dead. And why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead? Acts xxvi. 8.

Secondly, God will do it. He not only can do it; but he certainly will do it, becauſe he has ſaid it. Our text is very full to this purpoſe, "All that are in "their graves ſhall hear his voice: and ſhall come "forth; they that have done good, unto the reſur- "rection of life, and they that have done evil, unto "the reſurrection of damnation." Theſe words relate to, and are an explanation of that part of Daniel's prophecy, Dan. xii. 2. "And many of them that "ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to "everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting "contempt." The which appears to have been calculate to confront the doctrine of the Sadducees; which the Holy Ghoſt knew was to be at a great height in the Jewiſh church, under the perſecution of Antiochus. There are many other texts in the old and new Teſtament, that might here be adduced; ſuch as Acts xxiv. 15. "And have hope to- "wards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that "there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of "the juſt and unjuſt." Job xix. 26, 27. "And "though after my ſkin worms deſtroy this body, yet "in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God: whom I ſhall ſee for "myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not ano-

" ther, though my reins be conſumed within me." But I need not multiply teſtimonies, in a matter ſo clearly and frequently taught in ſacred ſcripture. Our Lord and Saviour himſelf proves it againſt the Sadducees, in that remarkable text, Luke xx. 37, 38. " Now that the dead are raiſed, even Moſes ſhewed " at the buſh, when he calleth the Lord the God of " Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of " Jacob; for he is not a God of the dead but of the " living; for all live unto him." Theſe holy patriarchs were now dead: nevertheleſs, the Lord JEHOHOVAH is called their God, namely, in virtue of the covenant of grace; and in the ſenſe thereof; in which ſenſe the phraſe comprehends all bleſſedneſs, as that, which, by the covenant, is ſecured to them who are in it, Heb. xi. 16. " God is not aſhamed to " be called their God: for he hath prepared for them " a city." He is not called the God of their ſouls only; but their God, the God of their perſons, ſouls and bodies; the which, by virtue of his truth and faithfulneſs, muſt have its full effect: now it cannot have its full effect on the dead, who, in as far as they are dead, are far from all bleſſedneſs; but on the living, who alone are capable of it: therefore, ſince God is ſtill called their God, they are living in reſpect of God, although their bodies are yet in the grave; for in reſpect of him, who by his power can reſtore them to life, and in his covenant has declared his will and purpoſe ſo to do, and whoſe promiſe cannot fail, they all are to be reckoned to live; and, conſiſtent with the covenant, their death is but a ſleep, out of which, in virtue of the ſame covenant, ſecuring all bleſſedneſs to their perſons, their whole man, they muſt and ſhall certainly be awakened. The apoſtle Paul proves the reſurrection at large, 1 Cor. xv. and ſhews it to be a fundamental article; the denial whereof is ſubverſive of Chriſtianity, ver. 13, 14. " If there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is " Chriſt not riſen. And if Chriſt be not riſen,

" then

" then is our preaching vain, and your faith is alſo " vain."

To aſſiſt us in conceiving of it, the ſcripture gives us types of the reſurrection of the dead; as the dry bones living, Ezek. xxxvii. Jonah's coming out of the whale's belly, Mat. xii. 40. And nature affords us emblems and reſemblances of it, as the ſun's ſetting and riſing again; night and day, winter and ſummer, ſleeping and awaking; ſwallows in winter lying void of all appearance of life, in ruinous buildings and ſubterraneous caverns, and reviving again in the ſpring ſeaſon; the ſeeds dying under the clod, and thereafter ſpringing up again; all which, and the like, may juſtly be admitted, as deſigned by the God of nature, though not for proofs, yet for memorials of the reſurrection; whereof we have aſſurance from the ſcripture, 1 Cor. xv. 36. " Thou fool, " that which thou ſoweſt is not quickened, except " it die."

II. I ſhall enquire into the nature of the reſurrection, ſhewing, 1ſt, Who ſhall be raiſed. 2dly, What ſhall be raiſed. 3dly, How the dead ſhall be raiſed.

Firſt, Who ſhall be raiſed, Our text tells us who they are; namely, All that are in the graves, *i. e.* all mankind who are dead. As for thoſe perſons who ſhall be found alive at the ſecond coming of Chriſt, they ſhall not die, and ſoon thereafter be raiſed again: but ſuch a change ſhall ſuddenly paſs upon them, as ſhall be to them inſtead of dying and riſing again: ſo that their bodies ſhall become like to thoſe bodies which are raiſed out of the graves, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. " We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be chan- " ged; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Hence theſe who are to be judged at the great day, are diſtinguiſhed into quick and dead, Acts x. 42. All the dead ſhall ariſe, whether godly or wicked, juſt or unjuſt (Acts xxiv. 15.) old or young; the whole race of mankind, even theſe who never ſaw the

ſun,

ſun, but died in their mother's belly, Rev. xx. 12. "And I ſaw the dead ſmall and great ſtand before "God." The ſea and earth ſhall give up their dead without reſerve; none ſhall be kept back.

Secondly, What ſhall be raiſed? The bodies of mankind. A man is ſaid to die when the ſoul is ſeparated from the body, and returns unto God who gave it, Eccl. xii. 7. But it is the body only which is laid in the grave, and can be properly ſaid to be raiſed: wherefore the reſurrection is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, competent to the body only. Moreover, it is the ſame body that dies, which ſhall riſe again. At the reſurrection, men ſhall not appear with other bodies for ſubſtance, than theſe which they now have, and which are laid down in the grave: but with the ſelf-ſame bodies, endowed with other qualities. The very notion of a reſurrection implies this; ſince nothing can be ſaid to riſe again, but that which falls. But to illuſtrate it a little, Firſt, it is plain from ſcripture-teſtimony. The apoſtle tells, it is this mortal which muſt put on immortality, 1 Cor. xv. 53. and that Chriſt ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. Death in ſcripture-language is a ſleep, and the reſurrection an awaking out of that ſleep, Job xiv. 12. which ſhews the body riſing up, to be the ſelf ſame that died. Secondly, The equity of the divine procedure, both with reſpect to the godly and the wicked evinces this. It is not reckoned equal among men, that one do the work, and another get the reward. Though the glorifying of the bodies of the ſaints, is not properly ſpeaking, and in a ſtrict ſenſe, the reward of their ſervices or ſufferings on earth; yet this is evident, that it is not at all agreeable to the manner of the divine diſpenſation, that one body ſerve him, and another be glorified: that one fight, and another receive the crown. How can it be imagined that the temples of the Holy Ghoſt (as theſe bodies of believers are termed, 1 Cor. vi. 19.) ſhould al-

ways

ways ly in rubbiſh; and others be reared up in their ſtead; that theſe members of Chriſt (ver. 15) ſhall periſh utterly, and other bodies come in their room? Nay, ſurely, as theſe bodies of the ſaints now bear a part in glorifying God, and ſome of them ſuffer in his cauſe; ſo they ſhall partake of the glory that is to be revealed. And theſe bodies of the wicked which are laid in the duſt, ſhall be raiſed again; that the ſame body which ſinned may ſuffer. Shall one body ſin here, and another ſuffer in hell for that ſin? Shall that body, which was the ſoul's companion in ſin, ly for ever hid in the duſt; and another body, which did not act any part in ſinning, be its companion in torment? No, no; it is that body, which now takes up all their thoughts to provide for its back and belly, that ſhall be raiſed up to ſuffer in hell. It is that ſame ſwearing, lying tongue, which will need water to cool it in eternal flames. Theſe ſame feet that now ſtand in the way of ſinners, and carry men in their ungodly courſes, ſhall ſtand in the burning lake. And theſe now covetous and laſcivious eyes ſhall take part in the fire and ſmoke of the pit.

Thirdly, How the dead ſhall be raiſed. The ſame Jeſus, who was crucified without the gates of Jeruſalem, ſhall at the laſt day, to the conviction of all, be declared both Lord and Chriſt: appearing as Judge of the world attended with his mighty angels, 2 Theſſ. i. 7. he ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, 1 Theſſ. iv. 6. The trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed, and theſe who are alive changed; 1 Cor. xv. 52. Whether this ſhout, voice, and trumpet, do denote ſome audible voice, or only the workings of divine power, for the raiſing of the dead, and other awful purpoſes of that day, (though the former ſeems probable) I will not poſitively determine. There is no queſtion but this coming of the Judge of the world will be in greater majeſty and terror than we can conceive: yet that

awful

awful grandeur, majeſty and ſtate, which was diſplayed at the giving of the law, viz. thunders heard, lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount ſeen, the Lord deſcending in fire, the whole mount quaking greatly, and the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, (Exod. xix. 16, 18, 19.) may help forward a becoming thought of it. However, the ſound of this trumpet ſhall be heard all the world over; it ſhall reach to the depths of the ſea, and into the bowels of the earth. At this loud alarm, bones ſhall come together, bone to his bone: the ſcattered duſt of all the dead ſhall be gathered together, duſt to his duſt; neither ſhall one thruſt another, they ſhall walk every one in his path; and meeting together again, ſhall make up that very ſame body which crumbled into duſt in the grave. And at the ſame alarming voice, ſhall every ſoul come again into its own body never more to be ſeparated. The dead can ſtay no longer in their graves, but muſt bid an eternal farewell to their long homes: They hear his voice, and muſt come forth, and receive their final ſentence.

Now as there is a great difference betwixt the godly and the wicked in their life, and in their death; ſo will there be alſo in their reſurrection.

The godly ſhall be raiſed up out of their graves, by virtue of the Spirit of Chriſt, the bleſſed bond of their union with him, Rom. viii. 11. He that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit which dwelleth in you. Jeſus Chriſt aroſe from the dead, as the firſt fruits of them that ſlept, 1 Cor. xvi. 20. So they that are Chriſt's, ſhall follow at his coming, ver. 23. The myſtical Head having got above the waters of death, he cannot but bring forth the members after him in due time. They ſhall come forth with inexpreſſible joy; for then ſhall that paſſage of ſcripture, which, in its immediate ſcope, reſpected the Babyloniſh captivity, be fully accompliſhed in its extenſive ſpiritual

view,

view, Isa. xxvi. 19. "Awake and sing ye that dwell "in the dust." As a bride adorned for her husband goes forth of her bed-chamber unto the marriage; so shall the saints go forth of their graves to the marriage of the Lamb. Joseph had joyful out-going from the prison, Daniel from the lion's den, and Jonah from the whale's belly; yet those are but faint representations of the outgoing from the grave at the resurrection. Then shall they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb in highest strains; death being quite swallowed up in victory. They had while in this life, sometimes sung by faith, the triumphant song over death and the grave, "O death where is thy sting? "O grave where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv. 55. But then they sing the same from sight and sense; the black band of doubts and fears which frequently disturbed them and disquieted their minds, is for ever cashiered.

May we not suppose the soul and body of every saint, as in mutual embraces, to rejoice in each other, and triumph in their happy meeting again? And may not one imagine the body to address the soul thus? 'O my soul, have we got together again 'after so long a separation! art thou come back a-'gain to thy old habitation, never more to remove! 'O joyful meeting! how unlike is our present state 'to what our case was, when a separation was made 'betwixt us at death! Now is our mourning turned 'into joy; the light and gladness sometimes sown, 'are now sprung up; and there is a perpetual spring 'in Immanuel's land. Blessed be the day in which 'I was united unto thee; whose chief care was to 'get Christ in the hope of glory, and to make me a 'temple for his holy Spirit. O blessed soul, which, 'in the time of our pilgrimage, kept thine eye on the 'land then afar off, but now near at hand! thou 'tookest me in secret places, and there madest me 'to bow these knees before the Lord, that I might 'bear a part in our humiliations before him: and

'now is the due time, and I am lifted up. Thou 'didſt employ this tongue, in confeſſions, petitions, 'and thankſgivings; which henceforth ſhall be em-'ployed in praiſing for evermore. Thou madeſt 'theſe (ſometimes) weeping eyes, ſow that ſeed of 'tears, which is now ſprung up in joy that ſhall ne-'ver end. I was happily beat down by thee, and 'kept in ſubjection, while others pampered their 'fleſh, and made their bellies their gods to their own 'deſtruction: and now I glorioufly ariſe to take my 'place in the manſions of glory, whilſt they are drag-'ged out of their graves to be caſt into fiery flames. 'Now my ſoul, thou ſhalt complain no more of a 'ſick and pained body; thou ſhalt be no more clog-'ged with weak and weary fleſh: I ſhall now hold 'peace with thee in the praiſes of our God for ever-'more. And may not the ſoul ſay? O happy day 'in which I return to dwell in that bleſſed body, 'which was, and is, and will be for ever a member 'of Chriſt, a temple of the holy Spirit! Now ſhall I 'be eternally knit to thee: the ſilver cord ſhall never 'be looſed more: death ſhall never make another 'ſeparation betwixt us. Ariſe then, my body, and 'come away; and let theſe eyes which ſerved to weep 'over my ſins, behold now with joy the face of our 'glorious Redeemer; lo! this is our God, and we 'have waited for him. Let theſe ears which ſerved 'to hear the word of life in the temple below, come 'now and hear the hallelujahs in the temple above. 'Let theſe feet that carried me to the congregations of 'ſaints on earth, take their place now among thoſe 'who ſtand by. And let that tongue which confeſ-'ſed Chriſt before men, and uſed to be ſtill dropping 'ſomething to his commendation, join the quire of 'the upper houſe, in his praiſes for evermore. Thou 'ſhalt faſt no more, but keep an everlaſting feaſt; 'thou ſhalt weep no more, neither ſhall thy counte-'nance be overclouded; but thou ſhalt ſhine for e-'ver, as a ſtar in the firmament. We took part to-

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gether in the fight, come now, let us go together to receive and wear the crown.'

But on the other hand, the wicked ſhall be raiſed by the power of Chriſt, as a juſt judge, who is to render vengeance to his enemies. The ſame divine power, which ſhut up their ſouls in hell, and kept their bodies in a grave, as in a priſon, ſhall bring them forth, that ſoul and body together may receive the dreadful ſentence of eternal damnation, and be ſhut up together in the priſon of hell.

They ſhall come forth of their graves with unſpeakable horror and conſternation. They ſhall be dragged forth, as ſo many malefactors out of a dungeon, to be led to execution; crying to the mountains and to the rocks, to fall on them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb. Fearful was the cry in Egypt that night the deſtroying angel went through, and ſlew their firſt born. Dreadful were the ſhouts, at the earth's opening her mouth, and ſwallowing up Dathan and Abiram, and all that appertained to them. What hideous crying then muſt there be, when, at the ſound of the laſt trumpet, the earth and ſea ſhall open their mouths, and caſt forth all the wicked world, delivering them up to the dreadful judge? How will they cry, roar, and tear themſelves! How will the jovial companions weep and howl, and curſe one another! How will the earth be filled with their doleful ſhrieks and lamentations, while they are pulled out like ſheep for the ſlaughter? They, who while they lived in the world, were profane debauchees, covetous, worldlings, or formal hypocrites, ſhall then, in anguiſh of mind, wring their hands, beat their breaſts, and bitterly lament their caſe; roaring forth their complaints, calling themſelves beaſts, fools and madmen, for having acted ſo mad a part in this life, and not having believed what they then ſee. They were driven away in their wickedneſs at death: And now all their ſins are with them, and like ſo many ſerpents, twiſt themſelves about their wretched ſouls, and bo-

dies too, which now have a frightful meeting, after a long feparation.

Then we may fuppofe the miferable body thus to accoft the foul, 'Haft thou again found me, O mine 'enemy, my worft enemy, favage foul, more cruel 'than a thoufand tygers? Curfed be the day that e- 'ver we met. O that I had remained a lifelefs lump, 'rotten in the belly of my mother, and had never re- 'ceived fenfe, life nor motion! O that I had rather 'been the body of a toad or ferpent, than thy body; 'for then had I lien ftill, and had not feen this terri- 'ble day! If I behoved to be thine, O that I had 'been thy afs, or one of thy dogs, rather than thy 'body; for then wouldeft thou have taken more true 'care of me than thou didft! O cruel kindnefs! haft 'thou thus hugged me to death, thus nourifhed me 'to the flaughter? Is this the effect of thy tenderneis 'for me? Is this what I am to reap of thy pains and 'concern about me? What do riches and pleafures 'avail now, when this fearful reckoning is come, of 'which thou hadft fair warning? O cruel grave, why 'didft thou not clofe thy mouth upon me for ever! 'why didft thou not hold faft thy prifoner? why haft 'thou fhaken me out, while I lay ftill and was at 'reft? Curfed foul, wherefore didft thou not abide in 'thy place, wrapt up in flames of fire? Wherefore 'art thou come back to take me alfo down to the 'bars of the pit? Thou madeft me an inftrument of 'unrighteoufnefs; and now I muft be thrown into 'the fire. This tongue was by thee employed in 'mocking at religion, curfing, fwearing, lying, back- 'biting, and boafting; and with-held from glorify- 'ing God: and now it muft not have fo much as a 'drop of a water to cool it in the flames. Thou didft 'withdraw mine ears from hearing the fermons, 'which gave warning of this day. Thou foundeft 'ways and means to ftop them from attending to fea- 'fonable exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs; 'but why didft thou not ftop them from hearing the

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'found of this dreadful trumpet? Why doſt thou not
'now rove and fly away on the wings of imagination,
'thereby, as it were, tranſporting me during theſe
'frightful tranſactions; as thou was wont to do,
'when I was ſet down at ſermons, communions,
'prayers, and godly conferences: that I might now
'have as little ſenſe of the one, as I formerly had of
'the other? But ah! I muſt burn for ever, for thy
'love to thy luſts, thy profanity, thy ſenſuality, thy
'unbelief, and hypocriſy.' But may not the ſoul
anſwer? 'Wretched and vile carcaſe, I am now driv-
'en back into thee. O that thou hadſt lien rotting
'for ever in thy grave! Had I not torment enough
'before? Muſt I be knit to thee again, that being
'joined together as two dry ſticks for the fire, the
'wrath of God may the more keenly burn us up? It
'was by caring for you I loſt myſelf. It was your
'back and your belly; and the gratifying of your
'ſenſes, which ruined me. How often was I enſnar-
'ed by your ears? how often betrayed by your eyes?
'It was to ſpare you, that I neglected opportunities of
'making peace with God, loitered away ſabbaths,
'lived in the neglect of prayer; went to the houſe of
'mirth, rather than to the houſe of mourning; and that
'I choſed to deny Chriſt, and forſake his cauſe and
'intereſts in this world; and ſo I am fallen a ſacrifice
'to your curſed eaſe. When at any time, my con-
'ſcience began to awake, and I was ſetting myſelf to
'think of my ſins, and the miſery I have felt ſince we
'parted, and now feel; 'twas you that diverted me
'from theſe thoughts, and drew me off to make pro-
'viſion for thee, O wretched fleſh. By your ſilken
'cords of fleſhly luſts, I was drawn to deſtruction, o-
'ver the belly of my light and conſcience: But now
'they are turned into iron chains, with which I am to
'be held under wrath for evermore. Ah wretched
'profits! Ah curſed pleaſures! for which I muſt ly
'for ever in utter darkneſs! But no complaints will
'then avail.' "O that men were wiſe, that they under-

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"ſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!"

As to the qualities with which the bodies of the ſaints ſhall be endowed at the reſurrection, the apoſtle tells us, they ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, glorious, powerful and ſpiritual, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44. "It "is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption: "it is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory: it is "ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power: it is ſown "a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body."

Firſt, The bodies of the ſaints ſhall be raiſed incorruptible. They are now as the bodies of others, a very maſs of corruption, full of the ſeeds of diſeaſes, and death, and when dead, become ſo nauſeous, even to their deareſt friends, that they muſt be buried out of their ſight, in a grave, there to rot and be conſumed: yea loathſome ſores and diſeaſes make ſome of them very unſightly, even while alive. But at the reſurrection, they leave all the ſeeds of corruption behind them in the grave; and riſe incorruptible, incapable of the leaſt indiſpoſition, ſickneſs, or ſore, and much more of dying. External violences and inward cauſes of pain ſhall for ever ceaſe: they ſhall feel it no more: yea they ſhall have an everlaſting youth and vigour, being no more ſubject to the decays which age produced in this life.

Secondly, They ſhall be glorious bodies; not only beautiful, comely, and well proportioned, but full of ſplendour and brightneſs. The moſt beautiful face, and beſt proportioned body that now appears in the world, is not to be named in compariſon with the body of the meaneſt ſaint at the reſurrection; for then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun, Matth. xiii. 43. If there was a dazzling glory on Moſes' face, when he came down from the mount; and if Stephen's face was as it had been the face of an angel, when he ſtood before the council, how much more ſhall the faces of the ſaints be beautiful and glorious, full of ſweet agreeable majeſty, when they have put off all corruption, and ſhine as the ſun? But obſerve,

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this beauty of the ſaints is not reſtricted to their faces, but diffuſes itſelf through their whole bodies; for the whole body is raiſed in glory, and ſhall be faſhioned like unto their Lord and Saviour's glorious body: in whoſe transfiguration not only did his face ſhine as the ſun, but alſo his raiment was white as the light, Matth. xvii. 2. Whatever defects or deformities the bodies of the ſaints had, when laid in the grave, occaſioned by accidents in life, or ariſing from ſecret cauſes of their formation in the womb, they ſhall riſe out of the grave free of all theſe. But ſuppoſe the marks of the Lord Jeſus, the ſcars or prints of the wounds and bruiſes ſome of the ſaints received while on earth, for his ſake, ſhould remain in their bodies after the reſurrection; likeas the print of the nails remained in Chriſt's body, after his reſurrection; theſe marks will rather be badges of diſtinction, and add to their glory, than detract from their beauty. But howſoever that be, ſurely Iſaac's eyes ſhall not then be dim, nor will Jacob halt; Leah ſhall not be tender-eyed, nor Mephiboſheth lame of his legs. For as the goldſmith melts down the old crazy veſſel, and caſts it over again, in a new mould, bringing it forth with a new luſtre; ſo ſhall the vile body which lay diſſolved in the grave, come forth at the reſurrection, in perfect beauty, and comely proportion.

Thirdly, They ſhall be powerful and ſtrong bodies. The ſtrongeſt men on earth being frail and mortal, may juſtly be reckoned weak and feeble: in regard their ſtrength, howſoever great, is quickly worn out and conſumed. Many of the ſaints now have bodies weaker than others; but the feeble among them (to allude to Zech. xii. 8.) at that day ſhall be as David, and the houſe of David ſhall be as God. A grave divine ſays, that one ſhall be ſtronger at the reſurrection than a hundred, yea, than thouſands are now. Certainly great, and vaſtly great muſt the ſtrength of glorified bodies be; ſeeing they ſhall bear up under an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The mor-

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tal body is not at all adapted to ſuch a ſtate. Do tranſports of joy occaſion death, as well as exceſſive grief does? and can it bear up under a weight of glory? Can it ſubſiſt in union with a ſoul filled with heaven's raptures? Surely no. The mortal body would ſink under that load, and ſuch a fill would make the earthen pitcher to fly all in pieces. The ſcripture has plainly told us, that fleſh and blood (namely,) in their preſent frail ſtate, though it were the fleſh and blood of a giant cannot inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. xv. 50. How ſtrong muſt the bodily eyes be, which, to the ſoul's eternal comfort, ſhall behold the dazzling glory and ſplendor of the new Jeruſalem; and ſtedfaſtly look at the tranſcendent glory and brightneſs of the man Chriſt, the Lamb which is the light of that city, the inhabitants whereof ſhall ſhine as the ſun? The Lord of heaven doth now, in mercy, hold back the face of his throne, and ſpreadeth his cloud upon it; that mortals may not be confounded with the rays of glory, which ſhine forth from it, Job xxvi. 8. But then the vail ſhall be removed, and they made able to behold it, to their unſpeakable joy. How ſtrong muſt their bodies be, who ſhall not reſt night nor day; but be without intermiſſion for ever employed in the heavenly temple, to ſing and proclaim the praiſes of God without wearineſs, which is a weakneſs incident to the frail mortal, but incompetent to the glorified body!

Laſtly, They ſhall be ſpiritual bodies. Not that they ſhall be changed into ſpirits, but they ſhall be ſpiritual, in reſpect of their ſpirit-like qualities and endowments. The body ſhall be abſolutely ſubſervient to the ſoul, ſubject to it, and influenced by it; and therefore no more a clog to its activity, nor the animal appetites a ſnare to it. There will be no need to beat it down, nor to drag it to the ſervice of God. The ſoul, in this life, is ſo much influenced by the body, that in ſcripture-ſtile it is ſaid to be carnal: But then the body ſhall be ſpiritual, readily ſerving

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the ſoul in the buſineſs of heaven, and in that only, as if it had no more relation to earth, than a ſpirit. It will have no further need of the now neceſſary ſupports of life, namely, food and raiment, and the like. "They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any "more," Rev. vii. 16. "For in the reſurrection, "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but "are as the angels of God in heaven." Then ſhall the ſaints be ſtrong, without meat or drink, warm without clothes, ever in perfect health without medicine, and ever freſh and vigorous, though they ſhall never ſleep, but ſerve him night and day in his temple, Rev. vii. 15. They will need none of theſe things, more than ſpirits do. They will be nimble and active as ſpirits, and of a moſt refined conſtitution. The body, that is now lumpiſh and heavy, ſhall then be found moſt ſprightly. No ſuch thing as melancholy ſhall be found to make the heart heavy, and the ſpirits flag and ſink. Where the carcaſe is, there ſhall the ſaints, as ſo many eagles, be gathered together. I ſhall not further dip into this matter: The day will declare it.

As to the qualities of the bodies of the wicked, at the reſurrection, I find the ſcripture ſpeaks but little of them. Whatever they may need, they ſhall not get a drop of water to cool their tongue. Luke xvi. 24, 25. Whatever may be ſaid of their weakneſs, it is certain they will be continued for ever in life, that they may be ever dying: they ſhall bear up, howſoever unwillingly, under the load of God's wrath, and ſhall not faint away under it. "The ſmoke of "their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever. "And they have no reſt day nor night." Surely they ſhall not partake of the glory and beauty of the ſaints. All their glory dies with them, and ſhall never riſe again. Daniel tells us, they ſhall awake to ſhame, and everlaſting contempt, chap. xii. 2. Shame follows ſin, as the ſhadow followeth the body: but the wicked in this world walk in the dark, and often

under a disguise: nevertheless when the Judge comes in flaming fire, at the last day, they will be brought to the light; their mask will be taken off, and the shame of their nakedness will clearly appear to themselves and others, and fill their faces with confusion. Their shame will be too deep for blushes: but all faces shall gather blackness, at that day, when they shall go forth of their graves, as malefactors of their prisons to execution: for their resurrection is the resurrection of damnation. The greatest beauties, who now pride themselves in their comeliness of body, not regarding their deformed souls, will then appear with a ghastly countenance, a grim and death-like visage. Their looks will be frightful, and they will be horrible spectacles, coming forth of their graves, like infernal furies, out of the pit. They shall also rise to everlasting contempt. They shall then be the most contemptible creatures, filled with contempt from God, as vessels of dishonour, whatever honourable uses they have been employed to in this world; and filled also with contempt from men. They will be most despicable in the eyes of the saints, even of those saints who gave them honour here, either for their high station, the gifts of God in them, or because they were of the same human nature with themselves. But then shall their bodies be as so many loathsome carcases, which they shall go forth and look upon with abhorrence: yea, they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh, Is. lxvi. 24. The word here rendered an abhorring, is the same which in the other text is rendered contempt; and Isaiah and Daniel point at one and the same thing, namely, the loathsomeness of the wicked at the resurrection. They will be loathsome in the eyes of one another. The unclean wretches were never so lovely to each other, as then they will be loathsome: dear companions in sin will then be an abhorring, each one to his fellow; and the wicked, great, and honourable men, shall be no more

more regarded by their wicked ſubjects, their ſervants, their ſlaves, than the mire in the ſtreets.

Uſe I. Of comfort to the people of God The doctrine of the reſurrection is a ſpring of conſolation and joy unto you. Think on it, O believers, when ye are in the houſe of mourning, for the loſs of your godly relations or friends, That ye ſorrow not, even as others which have no hope; for ye will meet again, 1 Theſſ. iv. 13, 14. They are but lain down to reſt in their beds for a little while (Iſa. lvii. 2.); but in the morning of the reſurrection they will awake again, and come forth of their graves. The veſſel of honour was but coarſe, it had much alloy of baſe metal in it; it was too weak, too dim and inglorious, for the upper-houſe, whatever luſtre it had in the lower one. It was cracked, it was polluted, and therefore it behoved to be melted down, that it may be refined, and faſhioned more glorioufly. Do but wait a while, and you ſhall ſee it come forth out of the furnace of earth, vying with the ſtars in brightneſs; nay, as the ſun when he goeth forth in his might. Have you laid your infant children in the grave? You will ſee them again. Your God calls himſelf the God of your ſeed, which, according to our Saviour's expoſition, ſecures the glorious reſurrection of the body. Wherefore let the covenant you embraced, for yourſelf and your babes now in the duſt, comfort your heart in the joyful expectation, that, by virtue thereof, they ſhall be raiſed up in glory; and that as being no more infants of day, but brought to a full and perfect ſtature, as is generally ſuppoſed. Be not diſcouraged by reaſon of a weak and ſickly body; there is a day coming, when thou ſhalt be every whit whole. At the reſurrection, Timothy ſhall be no more liable to his often infirmities; his body, that was weak and ſickly, even in youth, ſhall be raiſed in power; Lazarus ſhall be heal and ſound, his body being raiſed incorruptible; and although, perhaps thy weakneſs will not allow thee now to go one furlong to meet

the Lord in public ordinances: yet the day cometh, when thy body ſhall no more be a clog to thee, but thou ſhalt "meet the Lord in the air," 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. It will be with the ſaints coming up from the grave, as with the Iſraelites when they came out of Egypt, Pſal. cv. 37. "There was not one feeble per-"ſon among the tribes." Haſt thou an uncomely or deformed body? There is a glory within, which will then ſet all right without, according to the deſire of thine heart. It ſhall riſe a glorious, beautiful, handſome, and well-proportioned body. Its uncomelineſs or deformities, may go with it to the grave, but they ſhall not come back with it. O that theſe, who are now ſo deſirous to be beautiful and handſome, would not be too haſty to affect it with their fooliſh and ſinful arts, but wait and ſtudy the heavenly art of beautifying the body, by endeavouring now to become all glorious within, with the graces of God's Spirit: This would at length make them admirable and everlaſting beauties. Thou muſt, indeed, O believer, grapple with death, and ſhalt get the firſt fall: but thou ſhalt riſe again, and come off victorious at laſt. Thou muſt go down to the grave; but though it be thy long home, it ſhall not be thine everlaſting home. Thou wilt not hear the voice of thy friends there: but thou ſhalt hear the voice of Chriſt there. Thou mayſt be carried thither with mourning, but ſhalt come up from it rejoicing. Thy friends indeed, will leave thee there, but thy God will not. What God ſaid to Jacob, concerning his going down to Egypt, (Gen. xlvi. 3, 4.) he ſays to thee, anent thy going down to the grave, "Fear not to go down—I will "go with thee, and I will alſo ſurely bring thee "up again." O ſolid comfort! O glorious hopes! Wherefore comfort yourſelves and one another with theſe words, 1 Theſſ. iv. 18.

Uſe II. Of terror to unregenerate men. Ye who are yet in your natural ſtate, look at this piece of the eternal ſtate;

ſtate; and conſider what will be your part in it if ye be not in timeb rought into the ſtate of grace. Think O ſinner on that day, when the trumpet ſhall ſound, at the voice of which, the bars of the pit ſhall be broken aſunder, the doors of the grave ſhall fly open, the devouring depths of the ſea ſhall throw up their dead, the earth caſt forth hers; and death every where, in the exceſs of aſtoniſhment, ſhall let go its priſoners; and thy wretched ſoul and body ſhall be reunited, to be ſiſted before the tribunal of God. Then if thou hadſt a thouſand worlds at thy diſpoſal, thou wouldſt gladly give them all away upon condition thou mightſt ly ſtill in the grave, with the hundredth part of that eaſe, wherewith thou haſt ſometimes lain at home on the Lord's day: or (if that cannot be obtained) that thou mightſt be but a ſpectator of the tranſactions of that day: as thou haſt been at ſome ſolemn occaſion, and rich goſpel feaſts: or (if even that is not to be purchaſed) that a mountain or a rock might fall on thee, and cover thee from the face of the Lamb. Ah! how are men bewitched, thus to trifle away the precious time of life in (almoſt) as little concern about death, as if they were like the beaſts that periſh! ſome will be telling where their corpſe muſt be laid; while yet they have not ſeriouſly conſidered, whether their graves ſhall be their beds, where they ſhall awake with joy in the morning of the reſurrection; or their priſons, out of which they ſhall be brought to receive the fearful ſentence. Remember now is our ſeed time; and as we ſow we ſhall reap. God's ſeed time begins at death; and at the reſurrection, the bodies of the wicked that were ſown full of ſins that ly down with them in the duſt (Job xx. 11.) ſhall ſpring up again, ſinful, wretched and vile. Your bodies, which are now inſtruments of ſin, the Lord will lay aſide for the fire, at death: and bring them forth for the fire, at the reſurrection. That body, which is not now employed in God's ſervice,

vice, but is abuſed by uncleanneſs and laſciviouſneſs, will then be brought forth in all its vileneſs, thence-forth to lodge with unclean ſpirits. The body of the drunkard ſhall then ſtagger by reaſon of the wine of the wrath of God, poured out to him, and poured into him, without mixture. Theſe who now pleaſe themſelves in their revellings, will reel to and fro at another rate; when inſtead of their ſongs and muſic, they ſhall hear the ſound of the laſt trumpet. Many toil their bodies for worldly gain, who will be loth to diſtreſs them for the benefit of their ſouls; by labour, unreaſonably hard, they will quite diſfit them for the ſervice of God: and when they have done, will reckon it a very good reaſon for ſhifting duty, that they are already tired out with other buſineſs: but the day cometh when they will be made to abide a yet greater ſtreſs. They will go ſeveral miles for back and belly, who will not go half the way for the good of their immortal ſouls! they will be ſickly and unable on the Lord's day, who will be tolerably well all the reſt of the week. But when that ſounds, the dead ſhall find their feet, and none ſhall be miſſing in that great congregation. When the bodies of the ſaints ſhine as the ſun, frightful will the looks of their perſecutors be. Fearful will their condition be, who ſometimes ſhut up the ſaints in naſty priſons ſtigmatized, burned them to aſhes, hanged them, and ſtuck up their heads and hands in public places, to fright others from the ways of righteouſneſs; which they ſuffered for. Many faces now fair, will then gather blackneſs. They ſhall be no more admired and careſſed for that beauty, which has a worm at the root, that will cauſe it to iſſue in loathſomeneſs and deformity. Ah! what is that beauty, under which there lurks a monſtrous, deformed, and graceleſs heart? What but a ſorry paint, a ſlight varniſh: which will leave the body ſo much the more ugly, before that flaming fire, in which the Judge ſhall be revealed from

from heaven, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel, 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8. They ſhall be ſtript of all their ornaments, and not have a rag to cover their nakedneſs: but their carcaſes ſhall be an abhorring to all fleſh, and ſerve as a foil to ſet off the beauty and glory of the righteous, and make it appear the brighter.

Now is the time to ſecure for yourſelves, a part in the reſurrection of the juſt. The which if ye would do, unite with Jeſus Chriſt by faith, riſing ſpiritually from ſin, and glorifying God with your bodies. He is the reſurrection and the life, John xi. 25. If your bodies be members of Chriſt, temples of the holy Ghoſt, they ſhall certainly ariſe in glory. Get into this ark now, and ye ſhall come forth with joy into the new world. Riſe from your ſins; caſt away theſe grave-clothes, putting off your former luſts. How can one imagine, that theſe, who continue dead while they live, ſhall come forth, at the laſt day, unto the reſurrection of life? But that will be the privilege of all thoſe, who having firſt conſecrated their ſouls and bodies, to the Lord by faith, do glorify him with their bodies, as well as their ſouls; living and acting to him, and for him; yea, and ſuffering for him too, when he calls them to it.

HEAD

HEAD IV.

The GENERAL JUDGMENT.

MATTH. XXV. 31, 32, 33, 34, 41, 46.

When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory.
And before him ſhall be gathered all nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another; as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats.
And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.
Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed, &c.
—— Unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, &c.
And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment: but the righteous into life eternal.

THE dead being raiſed, and theſe found alive at the coming of the Judge, changed, follows the general judgment, plainly and awfully deſcribed in this portion of ſcripture; in which we ſhall take notice of the following particulars. (1.) The coming of the Judge. When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, &c. The Judge is Jeſus Chriſt the Son of man: the ſame, by whoſe almighty power, as he is God, the dead will be raiſed. He is alſo called the King, ver. 34. The judging of the world being an act of the Royal Mediator's kingly office. He will come in glory; glorious in his own Perſon, and having a glorious retinue, even all the holy angels with him, to miniſter unto him at this great ſolemnity.

(2.) The Judge's mounting the tribunal. He is a king, and therefore it is a throne, a glorious throne, he ſhall ſit upon the throne of his glory, ver. 31. (3.) The compearance of the parties. Theſe are all nations; all and every one, ſmall and great, of whatſoever nation, who ever were, are, or ſhall be on the face of the earth; all ſhall be gathered before him; ſiſted before his tribunal. (4.) The ſorting of them. He ſhall ſeparate the elect ſheep and reprobate goats, ſetting each party by themſelves: as a ſhepherd who feeds his ſheep and goats together all the day, ſeparates them at night, ver. 32. The godly he will ſet on his right hand, as the moſt honourable place; the wicked on the left, ver. 33. Yet ſo as they ſhall be both before him, ver. 32. It ſeems to be an alluſion to a cuſtom in the Jewiſh courts, in which, one ſat at the right hand of the judges, who wrote the ſentence of abſolution; another at the left, who wrote the ſentence of condemnation. (5.) The ſentencing of the parties, and that according to their works; the righteous being abſolved, and the wicked condemned, ver. 34. 41. Laſtly, the execution of both ſentences, in the driving away of the wicked into hell, and carrying the godly to heaven, ver. 46.

DOCTRINE.

There ſhall be a general Judgment.

This doctrine I ſhall, (1.) confirm, (2.) explain, and (3.) apply.

I. For confirmation of this great truth, that there ſhall be a general judgment,

Firſt, It is evident from plain ſcripture teſtimonies, The world has in all ages been told of it. Enoch before the flood, taught it in his prophecy, related Jude ver. 14, 15. 'Behold the Lord cometh with ten 'thouſand of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon 'all,' &c. Daniel deſcribes it, chap. vii. 9, 10. 'I 'beheld

'beheld till the thrones were caſt down, and the an-
'cient of days did ſit, whoſe garment was white as
'ſnow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool:
'his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels
'as burning fire. A fiery ſtream iſſued and came
'from before him; thouſand thouſands miniſtred un-
'to him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood
'before him; the judgment was ſet, and the books
'were opened.' The Apoſtle is very expreſs, Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day in the which he "will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that man "whom he hath ordained." See Matth. xvi. 27. 2. Cor. v. 10. 2. Theſſ. i. 7, 8, 9, 10. Rev. xx. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. God has not only ſaid it, but he has ſworn it, Rom. xiv. 10, 11. "We muſt all ſtand be-"fore the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. For it is writ-"ten, As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow "to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God." So that the truth of God is moſt ſolemnly plighted for it.

Secondly, The rectoral juſtice and goodneſs of God, the ſovereign ruler of the world, do neceſſarily require it, in as much as they require its being well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked. Howbeit, we often now ſee wickedneſs exalted, while truth and righteouſneſs fall in the ſtreets: piety oppreſſed, while profanity and irreligion do triumph. 'This is ſo very ordinary, that every one, who ſincerely embraceth the way of holineſs, muſt, and doth lay his account with the loſs of all he has, which the world can take away from him, Luke xiv. 26. "If "any man come unto me, and hate not his father, "and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, "and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be "my diſciple." But it is inconſiſtent with the juſtice and goodneſs of God, that the affairs of men ſhould always continue in this ſtate, which they appear in, from one generation to another; but that every man be rewarded according to his works: and

ſince that is not done in this life, there muſt be a judgment to come; "Seeing it is a righteous thing "with God to recompenſe tribulation to them that "trouble you; and to you who are troubled, reſt "with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from "heaven." 2 Theſſ. i. 6. 7. There will be a day in which the tables will be turned; and the wicked ſhall be called to an account for all their ſins, and ſuffer the due puniſhment of them; and the pious ſhall be the proſperous; for, as the Apoſtle argues for the happy reſurrection of the ſaints, "If in this life only "we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt "miſerable." 1 Cor. xv. 19, It is true, God ſometimes puniſheth the wicked, in this life; that men may know, he is a God that judgeth in the earth: but yet much wickedneſs remains unpuniſhed, and undiſcovered; to be a pledge of the judgment to come. If none of the wicked were puniſhed here, they would conclude that God had utterly forſaken the earth: if all of them were puniſhed in this life, men would be apt to think, there is no after reckoning. Therefore in the wiſdom of God, ſome are puniſhed now and ſome not. Sometimes the Lord ſmites ſinners, in the very act of ſin: to ſhew unto the world that he is a witneſs to all their wickedneſs, and will call them to an account for it. Sometimes he delays long, ere he ſtrike; that he may diſcover to the world, that he forgets not mens ill deeds, though he does not preſently puniſh them. Beſides all this, the ſins of many do outlive them; and the impure fountain, by them opened, runs long after they are dead and gone. As in the caſe of Jeroboam the firſt king of the ten tribes, whoſe ſin did run on all along unto the end of that unhappy kingdom, 2 Kings xvii. 22. "The children of Iſrael walked in "all the ſins of Jeroboam, which he did; they de-"parted not from them, ver. 23. until the Lord re-"moved Iſrael out of his ſight."

Thirdly, The reſurrection of Chriſt is a certain

proof, that there ſhall be a day of judgment. This argument Paul uſeth to convince the Athenians, that Jeſus Chriſt will be the Judge of the world; Whereof, ſays he, he hath given aſſurance to all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead, Acts xvii. 31. The Judge is already named, his patent written and ſealed, yea, and read before all men, in his riſing again from the dead. Hereby God has given aſſurance of it, (or offered faith, Marg.) He hath, by raiſing Chriſt from the dead, exhibited his credentials as the Judge of the world. When, in the days of his humiliation, he was ſiſted before a tribunal, arraigned, accuſed, and condemned of men; he plainly told them of this judgment, and that he himſelf would be the Judge, Matth. xxvi. 64. "Hereafter "ſhall ye ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right "hand of power, and coming in the clouds of hea-"ven." And now that he was raiſed from the dead, though condemned as a blaſphemer on this very head; is it not an undeniable proof from heaven, of the truth of what he aſſerted? Moreover this was one of the great ends of Chriſt's death and reſurrection. For to this end Chriſt died and roſe, and revived, that he might be the Lord (i. e. The Lord Judge, as is evident from the context) both of the dead and of the living, Rom. xiv. 9.

Laſtly, Every man bears about with him a witneſs to this, within his open breaſt. Rom. ii. 15. "Which "ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, "their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and their "thoughts the mean while accuſing, or elſe excu-"ſing one another." There is a tribunal erected within every man, where conſcience is accuſer, witneſs, and judge, binding over the ſinner to the judgment of God. This fills the moſt profligate wretches with horror, and inwardly ſtings them, on the commiſſion of ſome attrocious crime: in effect ſummoning them to anſwer for it, before the Judge of the quick and dead. And this it doth, even when the

the crime is ſecret, and hid from the eyes of the world. It reacheth thoſe, whom the laws of men cannot reach, becauſe of their power or craft. When men have fled from the judgment of their fellow-creatures; yet, go where they will, conſcience, as the ſupreme Judge's officer, ſtill keeps hold of them, reſerving them in its chains to the judgment of the great day. And whether they eſcape puniſhment from men, or fall by the hand of public juſtice, when they perceive death's approach, they hear, from within, of this after-reckoning; being conſtrained to hearken thereto, in theſe the moſt ſerious minutes of their life. If there be ſome, in whom nothing of this doth appear, we have no more ground thence to conclude againſt it, than we have to conclude, that becauſe ſome men do not groan, therefore they have no pain; or that dying is a mere jeſt, becauſe there have been, who ſeemed to make little elſe of it. A good face may be put upon an ill conſcience: and the more hopeleſs men's caſe is, they reckon it the more their intereſt, to make no reflections on their ſtate and caſe. But every one, who will conſult himſelf ſeriouſly, ſhall find in himſelf the witneſs to the judgment to come. Even the heathens wanted not a notion of it, though mixed with fictions of their own. Hence, though ſome of the Athenians, when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead, mocked, Acts xvii. 32. yet there's no account of their mocking, when they heard of the general judgment, ver. 31.

II. For explication, the following particulars may ſerve to give ſome view of the nature and tranſactions of that great day.

I. God ſhall judge the world by Jeſus Chriſt. "He will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that "man, whom he hath ordained," Acts xvii. 31. The Pſalmiſt tells us, that God is judge himſelf, Pſal. l. 6. The holy bleſſed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt is judge, in reſpect of judiciary authority, dominion, and power: But the Son incarnate is the judge,

judge, in reſpect of diſpenſation and ſpecial exerciſe of that power. The judgment ſhall be exerciſed or performed by him, as the Royal Mediator: for he has a delegated power of judgment from the Father as his ſervant, the King, whom he hath ſet upon the holy hill of Zion, (Pſal. ii. and 6.) and to whom he hath committed all judgment, John v. 22. This is a part of the Mediator's exaltation, given him in conſequence of his voluntary humiliation, Philip. ii. 8, 9, 10. "He humbled himſelf, and became obedient "unto death, even the death of the croſs. Where-"fore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given "him a name which is above every name," (i. e. power and authority over all, to wit,) That at (or in) the name of Jeſus (not the name Jeſus; that is not the name above every name, being common to others, as to Juſtus, Col. iv. 11. and Joſhua, Heb. iv. 8.), every knee ſhould bow. The which is explained by the apoſtle himſelf, of ſtanding before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, Rom. xiv. 10, 11. So he who was judged and condemned of men, ſhall be the judge of men and angels.

II. Jeſus Chriſt the Judge, deſcending from heaven into the air, (1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17.) "ſhall come "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glo-"ry," Matth. xxiv. 30. This his coming will be a mighty ſurpriſe to the world, which will be found in deep ſecurity; fooliſh virgins ſleeping, and the wiſe ſlumbering. There will then be much luxury and debauchery in the world, little ſobriety and watchfulneſs; a great throng of buſineſs, but a great ſcarcity of faith and holineſs, "As it was in the days of No-"ah, ſo alſo ſhall it be in the days of the Son of "man. They did eat, they drank, they married "wives, they were given in marriage, until the day "that Noah entered into the ark: and the flood "came, and deſtroyed them all. Likewiſe alſo as it "was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, "they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded.

"Even

" Even thus ſhall it be in the day when the Son of " man is revealed," Luke xvii. 26, 27, 28, 30. The coming of the Judge will ſurpriſe ſome at markets, buying and ſelling; others at table, eating and drinking, and making merry; others buſy with their new plantings; ſome building new houſes; nay, ſome's wedding-day will be their own and the world's judgment day. But the Judge cometh! the markets are marred; the buyer throws away what he has bought; the ſeller caſts down his money; they are raiſed from the table, and their mirth is extinguiſhed in a moment; though the tree be ſet in the earth, the gardener may not ſtay to caſt the earth about it; the workmen throw away their tools, when the houſe is half built, and the owner regards it no more; the bridegroom, bride, and gueſts, muſt leave the wedding-feaſt, and appear before the tribunal: for, " Be- " hold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall " ſee him," Rev. i. 7. " He ſhall come moſt glori- " ouſly; for he will come in the glory of his Father, " with the holy angels," Mark viii. 38. When he came in the fleſh, to die for ſinners, he laid aſide the robes of his glory, and was deſpiſed and rejected of men: but when he comes again, to judge the world, ſuch ſhall be his viſible glory and majeſty, that it ſhall caſt an eternal vail over all earthly glory, and fill his greateſt enemies with fear and dread. Never had prince or potentate in the world ſuch a glorious train, as will accompany this Judge: all the holy angels ſhall come with him, for his honour and ſervice. Then he, who was led to the croſs with a band of ſoldiers, will be glorioufly attended to the place of judgment, by (not a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, but) the whole hoſt of angels; all his holy angels, ſays the text.

III. At the coming of the Judge, the ſummons are given to the parties by the ſound of the laſt trumpet; at which the dead are raiſed, and theſe found alive changed; of which before, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17.

O loud trumpet, that ſhall be heard at once, in all corners of the earth, and of the ſea! O wonderful voice, that will not only diſturb thoſe who ſleep in the duſt; but effectually awaken, rouſe them out of their ſleep, and raiſe them from death! Were trumpets ſounding now, drums beating, furious ſoldiers crying and killing, men, women and children running and ſhrieking, the wounded groaning and dying; thoſe who are in the graves, would have no more diſturbance, than if the world were in moſt profound peace. Yea, were ſtormy winds caſting down the lofty oaks, the ſeas roaring and ſwallowing up the ſhips, the moſt dreadful thunders going along the heavens, lightnings every where flaſhing, the earth quaking, trembling, opening, and ſwallowing up whole cities, and burying multitudes at once; the dead would ſtill enjoy a perfect repoſe, and ſleep ſoundly in the duſt; though their own duſt ſhould be thrown out of its place. But at the ſound of this trumpet, they ſhall all awake. The morning is come, they can ſleep no longer; the time of the dead, that they muſt be judged: they muſt get out of their graves, and appear before the Judge.

IV. The Judge ſhall ſit down on the tribunal; he ſhall ſit on the throne of his glory. Sometime he ſtood before a tribunal on earth, and was condemned as a malefactor: then he ſhall ſit on his own tribunal, and judge the world. Sometime he hung upon the croſs covered with ſhame: then he ſhall ſit on a throne of glory. What this throne ſhall be, whether a bright cloud, or what elſe, I ſhall not enquire. Our eyes will give an anſwer to that queſtion at length. "John ſaw a great white throne," Rev. xx. 11. "His throne (ſays Daniel) was like the "fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire," chap. vii. 9. Whatever it be, doubtleſs it ſhall be a throne glorious beyond expreſſion; and, in compariſon with which, the moſt glorious throne on earth is but a ſeat on a dunghil; and the ſight of it will equally ſurpriſe kings,

kings, who ſat on thrones in this life, and beggars who ſat on dunghils. It will be a throne, for ſtatelineſs and glory, ſuited to the quality of him, who ſhall ſit on it. Never had a judge ſuch a throne, and never had a throne ſuch a judge upon it.

Leaving the diſcovery of the nature of the throne, until that day, it concerns us more nearly to conſider what a Judge will ſit upon it; a point in which we are not left to uncertain conjectures. The Judge on the throne will be, (1.) "A viſible Judge," viſible to our bodily eyes, Rev. i. 7. Every eye ſhall ſee him. When God gave the law on mount Sinai, the people ſaw no ſimilitude, only they heard a voice: but when he calls the world to an account how they have obſerved his law; the man Chriſt being Judge, we ſhall ſee our Judge with our eyes, either to our eternal comfort or confuſion: according to the entertainment we give him now. That very body which was crucified without the gates of Jeruſalem, betwixt two thieves, ſhall then be ſeen on the throne, ſhining in glory. We now ſee him ſymbolically in the ſacrament of his ſupper; the ſaints ſee him by the eye of faith: then, all ſhall ſee him with theſe eyes now in their heads. (2.) "A Judge have full authority "and power," to render unto every one according to his works. Chriſt, as God, hath authority of himſelf; and as Mediator, he hath a judicial power and authority, which his Father has inveſted him with, according to the covenant betwixt the Father and the Son, for the redemption of ſinners. And his divine glory will be a light, by which all men ſhall ſee clearly to read his commiſſion for this great and honourable employment. "All power is given unto him in "heaven and on earth," Matth. xxviii. 18. "He "hath the keys of hell and of death," Rev. i. 18. There can be no appeal from his tribunal: ſentence once paſt there, muſt ſtand for ever; there is no reverſing of it. All appeals are from an inferior court to a ſuperior one; but when God gives ſentence a-

gainſt a man, where can he find a higher court to bring his proceſs to? This judgment is the Mediator's judgment; and therefore the laſt judgment. If the Interceſſor be againſt us, who can be for us? If Chriſt condemn us, who will abſolve us? (3.) A Judge of infinite wiſdom. His eyes will pierce into, and clearly diſcern the moſt intricate caſes. His omniſcience qualifies him for judging of the moſt retired thoughts, as well of words and works. The moſt ſubtile ſinner, ſhall not be able to outwit him, nor by any artful management, to palliate the crime. He is the ſearcher of hearts, to whom nothing can be hid or perplexed; but all things are naked and open unto his eyes, Heb. iv. 13. (4.) A moſt juſt Judge: a Judge of perfect integrity. He is the righteous Judge, (2 Tim. iv. 8.) and his throne a great white throne, (Rev. xx. 11.) from whence no judgment ſhall proceed, but what is moſt pure and ſpotleſs. The Thebans painted juſtice blind, and without hands; for Judges ought not to reſpect perſons, nor take bribes. The Areopagites judged in the dark; that they might not regard who ſpoke, but what was ſpoken. With the Judge on his throne, there will be no reſpect of perſons he will neither regard the perſons of the rich, nor of the poor; but juſt judgment ſhall go forth, in every one's cauſe. Laſtly, An omnipotent Judge, able to put his ſentence in execution. The united force of devils and wicked men will be altogether unable to withſtand him. They cannot retard the execution of the ſentence againſt them one moment; far leſs can they ſtop it altogether. Thouſand thouſands (of angels) miniſter unto him, Dan. vii. 10. And by the breath of his mouth he can drive the curſed herd whither he pleaſeth.

V. The parties ſhall compear. Theſe are men and devils. Although thoſe laſt, the fallen angels were, from the firſt moment of their ſinning, ſubjected to the wrath of God, and were caſt down to hell; and whereſoever they go they carry their hell about with them:

them: yet it is evident, that they are "reserved un-"to judgment," (2 Pet. ii. 4.) namely, "unto the "judgment of the great day," Jude 6. And then they ſhall be ſolemnly and publicly judged, 1 Cor. vi. 3. Know ye not that we ſhall judge angels? At that day they ſhall anſwer for their trade of ſinning, and tempting to ſin, which they have been carrying on from the beginning. Then many a helliſh brat, which Satan has laid down at the ſaints door, but not adopted by them, ſhall be laid at the door of the true father of it, that is. the devil. And he ſhall receive the due reward of all the diſhonour he has done to God, and of all the miſchief he has done to men. Thoſe wicked ſpirits now in chains, (though not in ſuch ſtrait cuſtody, but that they can go about, like roaring lions, ſeeking whom they may devour,) ſhall then receive their final ſentence, and be ſhut up in their den, namely, in the priſon of hell; where they ſhall be held in extreme and unſpeakable torment, through all eternity, Rev. xx. 10. "And the devil "that deceived them was caſt into the lake of fire and "brimſtone, where the beaſt and the falſe prophet "are, and ſhall be tormented day and night for ever "and ever." In proſpect of which, the devils ſaid to Chriſt, "Art thou come hither to torment us be-"fore the time?" Mat. viii. 29.

But what we are chiefly concerned to take notice of, is the caſe of men at that day. All men muſt compear before this tribunal. All of each ſex, of every age, quality, and condition; the great and ſmall, noble and ignoble: none are excepted. Adam and Eve, with all their ſons and daughters, (every one who has had, or, to the end of the world, ſhall have a living ſoul united to a body,) will make up this great congregation. Even thoſe, who refuſed to come to the throne of grace, ſhall be forced to the bar of juſtice: for there can be no hiding from the all-ſeeing Judge, no flying from him who is preſent every

where, no reſiſting of him who is armed with Almighty power. We muſt all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, 2 Cor. v. 10. "Before him ſhall be gather-"ed all nations," ſays the text. This is to be done by the miniſtry of angels. By them ſhall the elect be gathered, Mark xiii. 27. Then ſhall he ſend his angels, and ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds. And they ſhall alſo gather the repro-bate. Matth. xiii. 40, 41. So ſhall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. From all corners of the world ſhall the inhabitants thereof be gathered unto the place, where he ſhall ſet his throne for judgment.

VI. There ſhall be a ſeparation made betwixt the righteous and the wicked; the fair company of the elect ſheep being ſet on Chriſt's right hand, and the reprobate goats on his left. There is no neceſſity to wait for this ſeparation, till the trial be over; ſince the parties do riſe out of their graves, with plain out-ward marks of diſtinction, as was cleared before. The ſeparation ſeems to be affected by that double ga-thering, before mentioned; the one of the elect, Mark xiii. 27. the other of them that do iniquity, Matth. xiii. 41. "The elect, being caught up toge-"ther in the clouds, meet the Lord in the air," 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. and ſo are ſet on his right hand; and the reprobate left on the earth, (Matth. xxiv. 40.) upon the Judge's left hand. Here is now a total ſe-paration of two parties, who were always oppoſite to each other, in their principles, aims, and manner of life, who, when together, were a burden the one to the other, under which the one groaned, and the o-ther raged: but now they are freely parted; never to come together any more. The iron and clay (allude to Dan. ii. 41, 43.) which could never mix, are quite ſeparated; the one being drawn up into the air by the attractive virtue of the ſtone cut out of the mountain,

namely

namely Jesus Christ; the other left upon its earth, to be trod under foot.

Now let us look to the right hand, and there we will see a glorious company of saints shining, as so many stars in their orbs; and with a chearful countenance beholding him who sitteth upon the throne. Here will be two wonderful sights, which the world used not to see. (1.) A great congregation of saints, in which not so much as one hypocrite. There was not so much as one hypocrite. There was a bloody Cain in Adam's family; a cursed Ham in Noah's family in the ark: a treacherous Judas in Christ's own family; but in that company shall be none but sealed ones, members of Christ, having all one Father. And this is a sight reserved for that day. (2.) All the godly upon one side. Seldom or never do the saints on earth make such a harmony, but there are some jarring strings among them. It is not to be expected, that men who see but in part, though they be all going to one city, will agree as to every step in the way: no, we need not look for it, in this state of imperfection. But at that day, Paul and Barnabas shall meet in peace and unity, though once the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder, the one from the other, Acts xv. 39. There shall be no more divisions, no more separate standing amongst those who belong to Christ. All the godly, of the different parties, shall then be upon one side; seeing, whatever were their differences in lesser things while in the world, yet even then they met and concentred all in one Lord Jesus Christ, by a true and lively faith, and in the one way of holiness, or practical godliness. And the naughty hypocrites, of whatsoever party, shall be led forth the workers of iniquity.

Look to the left hand, and there you will see the cursed goats (all the wicked ones, from Cain to the last ungodly person, who shall be in the world,) gathered together into one most miserable congregation. There are many assemblies of the wicked now; then there

there ſhall be but one. But all of them ſhall be preſent there, brought together as one herd for the ſlaughter, bellowing and roaring, weeping and howling for the miſeries come, and that are coming on them (And remember, thou ſhalt not be a mere ſpectator, to look at theſe ſo different companies; but muſt thyſelf take thy place in one of the two, and ſhalt ſhare with the company, whatever hand it be upon.) Theſe who now abhor no ſociety ſo much as that of the ſaints, would then be glad to be allowed to get in among them; though it were but to ly among their feet. But then not one tare ſhall be found with the wheat; "he will thoroughly purge his floor." Many of the right hand men of this world, will be left hand men in that day. Many, who muſt have the door on the right hand of theſe, who are better than they (if the righteous be more excellent than his neighbour) ſhall then be turned to the left hand, as moſt deſpicable wretches. O how terrible will this ſeparation be to the ungodly! How dreadful will this gathering of them together into one company be! What they will not believe, they will then ſee, namely, that but few are ſaved. They think it enough now to be neighbour like, and can ſecurely follow the multitude: but the multitude on the left hand will yield them no comfort. How will it ſting the ungodly Chriſtian, to ſee himſelf ſet on the ſame hand with Turks and Pagans? How will it gall men to find themſelves ſtanding, profane proteſtants, with idolatrous Papiſts; praying people, with their profane neighbours, who mocked at religious exerciſes; formal profeſſors, ſtrangers to the new birth and the power of godlineſs, with perſecutors! Now there are many oppoſite ſocieties in the world: but then all the ungodly ſhall be in one ſociety. And how dreadful will the faces of companions in ſin be to one another there! What doleful ſhrieks, when the whoremonger and his whore ſhall meet: when the drunkards, who have had many a jovial day together, ſhall

ſee

ſee one another in the face; when the huſband and wife, the parents and children, maſters and ſervants, and neighbours, who have been ſnares and ſtumbling blocks to one another to the ruin of their own ſouls, and theſe of their relatives, ſhall meet again in that miſerable ſociety? Then there will be curſes inſtead of ſalutations; and tearing of themſelves, and raging againſt one another, inſtead of the wonted embraces.

VII. The parties ſhall be tried. The trial cannot be difficult, in regard the Judge is omniſcient, and nothing can be hid from him. But, that his righteous judgment may be made evident to all, he will ſet the hidden things of darkneſs in the cleareſt light at that trial, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Men ſhall be tried, Firſt, Upon their works; for God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Eccleſ. xii. 14. The Judge will try every man's converſation, and ſet his deeds done in the body, with all the circumſtances thereof, in a true light. Then will many actions, commended and applauded of men, as good and juſt, be diſcovered to have been evil and abominable, in the ſight of God: and many works, now condemned by the world, will be approven and commended by the great Judge, as good and juſt. Secret things will be brought to light; and what was hid from the view of the world, ſhall be laid open. Wickedneſs, which hath kept its lurking place in ſpite of all human ſearch, will then be brought forth to the glory of God, and the confuſion of impenitent ſinners who hide it. The world appears now very vile in the eyes of thoſe, who are exercifed to godlineſs: but it will then appear a thouſand times more vile, when that which is done to men in ſecret, comes to be diſcovered. Every good action ſhall then be remembered; and the hidden religion and good works, moſt induſtriouſly concealed by the ſaints, from the eyes of men, ſhall no more ly hid;

hid: for though the Lord will not allow men to pro- "claim every man his own goodneſs;" yet he himſelf will do it in due time. Secondly, Their words ſhall be judged, Matth. xii. 37. "For by thy words thou ſhalt "be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be con- "demned." Not a word ſpoken for God and his cauſe in the world, from love to himſelf, ſhall be for- gotten. They are all kept in remembrance, and ſhall be brought forth as evidences of faith, and of an intereſt in Chriſt, Mal. iii. 16. "Then they that "feared the Lord ſpake often one to another, and "the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of "remembrance was written before him.—ver. 17. "And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, "in that day when I make up my jewels." And the tongue which did run at random, ſhall then confeſs to God; and the ſpeaker ſhall find it to have been followed, and every word noted, that dropped from his unſanctified lips. "Every idle word that men "ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the "day of judgment," Matth. xii. 36. And if they ſhall give account of idle words, that is, words ſpok- en to no good purpoſe, neither for God's glory, one's own, nor one's neighbour's good; how much more ſhall men's wicked words, their ſinful oaths, curſes, lies, filthy communications, and bitter words, be cal- led over again, that day? The tongues of many ſhall then fall upon themſelves, and ruin them. Thirdly, Men's thoughts ſhall be brought into judgment: the Judge will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Thoughts go free from man's judg- ment, but not from the judgment of the heart-ſearch- ing God, who knows men's thoughts, without the help of ſigns to diſcern them by. The ſecret ſprings of men's actions will then be brought to light; and the ſins, that never came further than the heart, will then be laid open. O what a figure will man's cor- rupt nature make, when his inſide is turned out, and all his ſpeculative impurities are expoſed! The rotten-

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nefs that is within many a whited ſepulchre, the ſpeculative filthineſs and wantonneſs, murder and malignity, now lurking in the hearts of men, as in the chambers of imagery, will then be diſcovered, and what good was in the hearts of any, ſhall no more lie concealed. If it was in their hearts to build a houſe to the Lord, they ſhall hear, that they did well that it was in their heart.

This trial will be righteous and impartial, accurate and ſearching, clear and evident. The Judge is the righteous Judge, and he will do right to every one. He has a juſt balance for good and evil actions, and for honeſt and falſe hearts. The fig leaf cover of hypocriſy will then be blown aſide, and the hypocrite's nakedneſs will appear; as when the Lord came to judge Adam and Eve in the cool (or, as the word is, in the wind) of the day, Gen. iii. 8. "The fire "(which tries things moſt exquiſitely) ſhall try every "man's work, of what ſort it is," 1 Cor. iii. 13. Man's judgment is oft-times perplexed and confuſed: but here the whole proceſs ſhall be clear and evident, as written with a ſun-beam. It ſhall be clear to the Judge, to whom no caſe can be intricate; to the parties who ſhall be convinced, Jude 15. And the multitudes on both ſides ſhall ſee, the Judge is clear when he judgeth; for then the heavens ſhall declare his righteouſneſs in the audience of all the world; and ſo it ſhall be univerſally known, Pſal. l. 6.

On theſe accounts it is, that this trial is held out in the ſcripture; under the notion of opening of books; and men are ſaid to be judged out of thoſe things written in the books, Rev. xx. 12. The Judge of the world, who infallibly knoweth all things, hath no need of books to be laid before him, to prevent miſtake in any point of law or fact: but the expreſſion points at his proceeding, as moſt nice, accurate, juſt, and well grounded in every ſtep of it. Now there are four books, that ſhall be opened in that day.

First, The book of God's remembrance or omniſcience, Mal. iii. 16. This is an exact record of every man's ſtate, thoughts, words, and deeds, good or evil: it is, as it were, a day-book, in which the Lord puts down all that paſſeth in men's hearts, lips, and lives; and it is a filling up every day that one lives. In it are recorded men's ſins and good works, ſecret and open, with all their circumſtances. Here are regiſtrated all their privileges, mercies, temporal and ſpiritual, ſometime laid to their hand; the checks, admonitions, and rebukes given by teachers, neighbour's afflictions and men's own conſciences; every thing in its due order. This book will ſerve only as a libel, in reſpect of the ungodly: but it will be for another uſe in reſpect of the godly, namely, for a memorial of their good. The opening of it is the Judge's bringing to light what is written in it; the reading as it were, of the libel and memorial, reſpectively, in their hearing.

Secondly, The book of conſcience will be opened, and ſhall be as a thouſand witneſſes to prove the fact, Rom. ii. 15. 'Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs.' Conſcience is a cenſor going with every man whitherſoever he goes, taking an account of his deeds done in the body, and, as it were, noting them in a book: the which being opened, will be found a double of the former, ſo far as it relates to one's own ſtate and caſe. Much is written in it, which cannot be read now; the writing of conſcience being, in many caſes, like to that which is made with the juice of lemons, not to be read, till it be held before the fire: but then men ſhall read it clearly and diſtinctly: the fire which is to try every man's work, will make the book of conſcience legible in every point.

Though the book be ſealed now, (the conſcience blind, dumb, and deaf), the ſeals will then be broken, and the book opened. There ſhall be no more a weak or miſinformed conſcience, among theſe on the right

right hand, or theſe on the left. There ſhall not be a ſilent conſcience, and far leſs a feared conſcience, amongſt all the ungodly crew; but their conſciences ſhall be moſt quick-ſighted, and moſt lively, in that day. None ſhall then call good evil, or evil good. Ignorance of what ſin is, and what things are ſins, will have no place among them; and the ſubtile reaſonings of men in favour of their luſts, will then be for ever baffled by their own conſciences. None ſhall have the favour (if I may ſo ſpeak) of lying under the ſoft cover of deluſion; but they ſhall all be convicted by their conſcience. Will they, will they, they ſhall look on this book, read and be confounded, and ſtand ſpeechleſs; knowing that nothing is charged upon them by miſtake; ſince this is a book, which was always in their own cuſtody. Thus ſhall the Judge make every man ſee himſelf, in the glaſs of his own conſcience, which will make quick work.

Thirdly, The book of the law ſhall be opened. This book is the ſtandard and rule, by which is known what is right, and what is wrong; as alſo, what ſentence is to be paſſed accordingly, on theſe who are under it. As to the opening of this book, in its ſtatutory part, which ſhews what is ſin, and what is duty: it falls in with the opening of the book of conſcience. For conſcience is ſet by the ſovereign lawgiver, in every man's breaſt to be his private teacher, to ſhew him the law, and his private paſtor, to make application of the ſame; and at that day, it will be perfectly fit for its office: ſo that the conſcience, which is moſt ſtupid now, ſhall then read to the man, moſt accurate, but dreadful, lectures on the law. But what ſeems (mainly at leaſt) pointed at, by the opening of this book, is the opening of that part of it, which determines the reward of men's works. Now the law promiſeth life, upon perfect obedience: but none can be found on the right hand, or on the left, who will pretend to that, when once the book of conſcience is opened, it threateneth death upon diſobe-

dience, and will effectually bring it upon all under its dominion. And this part of the book of the law, determining the reward of men's works, is opened, only to ſhew what muſt be the portion of the ungodly, and that there they may read their ſentence before it be pronounced. But it is not opened for the ſentence of the ſaints; for no ſentence abſolving a ſinner, could ever be drawn out of it. The law promiſeth life, not as it is a rule of actions, but as a covenant of works: And therefore innocent man could not have demanded life upon his obedience, till the law was reduced into the form of a covenant; as was ſhewn before. But the ſaints having been, in this life, brought under a new covenant, namely, the covenant of grace, were dead to the law, as a covenant of works, and it was dead to them. Wherefore, as they ſhall not now have any fears of death from it, ſo they can have no hopes of life from it, ſince they are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. vi. 14. But, for their ſentence, another book is opened: of which in the next place.

Thus the book of the law is opened, for the ſentence againſt all thoſe on the left hand: and by it they will clearly ſee the juſtice of the judgment againſt them, and how the Judge proceeds therein according to law. Nevertheleſs, there will be this difference, namely, that theſe who had only the natural law, and lived not under any ſpecial revelation, ſhall be judged by that law of nature they had in their hearts; which law bears, that they which commit ſuch things (as they will ſtand convicted of) are worthy of death, Rom. i. 32. But theſe who had the written law, to whom the word of God came, as it has founded in the viſible church, ſhall be judged by that written law. So ſays the apoſtle, Rom. ii. 12. "For as many as have ſinned without (the written) "law, ſhall alſo periſh without (the written) law: "and as many as have ſinned in the law i. e. under

"the

" the written law) ſhall be judged by the (written) " law."

Laſtly, Another book ſhall be opened, which is the book of life, Rev. xx. 12. In this, the names of all the elect are written, as Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, Luke x. 20. Your names are written in heaven. This book contains God's gracious and unchangeable purpoſe, to bring all the elect to eternal life; and that, in order thereto, they be redeemed by the blood of his Son, effectually called, juſtified, adopted, ſanctified, and raiſed up by him at the laſt day without ſin. It is now lodged in the Mediator's hand, as the book of the manner of the kingdom, and having perfected the work, the Father gave him to do; he ſhall on the great day produce, and open the book, and preſent the perſons therein named, faultleſs before the preſence of his glory. Jude 24. Not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, Eph. v. 27. None of them all who are named in the book ſhall be miſſing. They ſhall all be found qualified, according to the order of the book, redeemed, called, juſtified, ſanctified, raiſed up without ſpot: what remains then, but that, according to the ſame book, they obtain the great end, namely, everlaſting life. This may be gathered from that precious promiſe, Rev. iii. 6. " He " that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be cloathed in white " raiment (being raiſed in glory) and I will not blot " out his name out of the book of life, but I will con- " feſs his name (it ſhall be, as it were, read out a- " mong the reſt of God's elect) before my Father, " and before his angels." Here is now the ground of the ſaints abſolviture, the ground of the bleſſed ſentence they ſhall receive. The book of life being opened, it will be known to all, who are elected, and who are not. Thus far of the trial of the parties.

Eightly, Then ſhall the Judge pronounce that ſentence on the ſaints, " Come ye bleſſed of my Fa- " ther, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from " the foundation of the world," Matth. xxv. 34. It

is moſt probable, the man Chriſt will pronounce it with an audible voice; which not only all the ſaints, but all the wicked likewiſe ſhall hear and underſtand. Who can conceive the inexpreſſible joy, with which theſe happy ones ſhall hear theſe words? Who can imagine the fulneſs of joy, which will be poured into their hearts, with theſe words reaching their ears? And who can conceive how much of hell ſhall break into the hearts of all the ungodly crew, by theſe words of heaven? It is certain this ſentence ſhall be pronounced, before the ſentence of damnation, Matth. xxv. 34. "Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his "right hand, Come ye bleſſed," &c. Ver. 41. "Then ſhall he ſay alſo to them on the left hand, De- "part from me, ye curſed," &c. There is no need of this order, that the ſaints may, without fear or affrightment, hear the other ſentence on the reprobate: they who are raiſed in glory, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, preſented without ſpot, and whoſe ſouls (for the far greater part of them) have been ſo long in heaven before, ſhall not be capable of any ſuch fear. But hereby they will be orderly brought in, to ſit in judgment, as Chriſt's aſſeſſors, againſt the the ungodly; whoſe torment will be aggravated by it. It will be a hell to them, to be kept out of hell, till they ſee the doors of heaven opened to receive the ſaints, who once dwelt in the ſame world with them; and perhaps in the ſame country, pariſh, or town, and ſat under the ſame miniſtry with themſelves. Thus will they ſee heaven afar off, to make their hell the hotter. Like that unbelieving lord. 2 Kings vii. 19, 20. They ſhall ſee the plenty with their eyes, but ſhall not eat thereof. Every word of the bleſſed ſentence ſhall be like an envenomed arrow ſhot into their hearts, while they ſee what they have loſt, and from thence gather what they are to expect.

This ſentence paſſeth on the ſaints according to their works, Rev. xx. 12. but not for their works, nor for their faith neither, as if eternal life were merited

rited by them. The ſentence itſelf overthrows this abſurd conceit. The kingdom they are called to, was prepared for them, from the foundation of the world; not left to be merited by themſelves, who were but of yeſterday. They inherit it as ſons, but procure it not to themſelves, as ſervants do the reward of their work. They were redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, and cloathed with his ſpotleſs righteouſneſs, which is the proper cauſe of the ſentence. They were alſo qualified for heaven by the ſanctification of his Spirit; and hence it is according to their works: ſo that the ungodly world ſhall ſee now, that the Judge of the quick and dead does good to them, who were good. Therefore it is added to the ſentence, For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, &c. ver. 35, 36. which doth not denote the ground, but the evidence of their right to heaven; as if a judge ſhould ſay, he abſolves a man purſued for debt; for the witneſſes depone that it is paid already. So the apoſtle ſays, 1 Cor. x. 5. "But with many of "them God was not well pleaſed, for they were o-"verthrown in the wilderneſs." Their overthrow in the wilderneſs was not the ground of God's diſpleaſure with them, but it was an evidence of it. And thus our Lord teacheth us the neceſſary connection betwixt glory and good works, namely, works evangelically good: works having a reſpect to Jeſus Chriſt, and done out of faith in him, and love to him, without which they will not be regarded in that day. And the ſaints will ſo far be judged according to ſuch works, that the degrees of glory among them ſhall be according to theſe works. For it is an eternal truth, "He that ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap ſparing-"ly," 2 Cor. ix. 6.

Thus ſhall the good works of the godly have a glorious, but a gratuitous reward; a reward of grace, not of debt, which will fill them with wonder at the riches of free grace, and the Lord's condeſcending to take any notice, eſpecially ſuch public notice, of their

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poor worthleſs works. The which ſeems to be the import of what they are ſaid to anſwer, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungered, &c. ver. 37, 38, 39. And may they not juſtly wonder to ſee themſelves ſet down to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb, in conſequence of a dinner or ſupper, a little meat or drink, (ſuch as they had), which they gave to a hungry or thirſty member of Chriſt, for his ſake? O plentiful harveſt, following upon the ſeed of good works! Rivers of pleaſure ſpringing up from (perhaps) a cup of cold water given to a diſciple, in the name of a diſciple! Eternal manſions of glory riſing out of a night's lodging given to a ſaint, who was a ſtranger! Everlaſting robes of glory given in exchange of a new coat, or (it may be) an old one beſtowed on ſome ſaint who had not neceſſary cloathing! A viſit to a ſick ſaint repayed by Chriſt himſelf, coming in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels! A viſit made to a poor priſoner for the cauſe of Chriſt, repayed with a viſit from the Judge of all, taking away the viſitant with him to the palace of heaven, there to be ever with himſelf! Theſe things will be matter of everlaſting wonder; and ſhould ſtir up all, to ſow liberally in time, while the ſeed-time of good works doth laſt. But it is Chriſt's ſtamp on good works, that puts a value on them, in the eye of a gracious God; which ſeems to be the import of our Lord's reply, ver. 40, "Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto "one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done "it unto me."

IX. Now the ſaints having received their own ſentence, they ſhall judge the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2. This was not fulfilled, when the empire became Chriſtian, and Chriſtians were made magiſtrates. No, the Pſalmiſt tells us, This honour have all the ſaints, Pſalm cxlix. 9. And the apoſtle, in the forecited place, adds, and if the world ſhall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the ſmalleſt matters? verſe 3. Know ye not that we ſhall judge angels? Being called,

led, they come to receive their kingdom, in the view of angels and men: they go, as it were, from the bar to the throne, To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me on my throne, Rev. iii. 21. They ſhall not only judge the world, in Chriſt their head, by way of communion with him; by their works, compared with theſe of the ungodly; or by way of teſtimony againſt them: but they ſhall be aſſeſſors to Jeſus Chriſt the Judge, giving their voice againſt them, conſenting to his judgment as juſt, and ſaying Amen to the doom pronounced againſt all the ungodly: as is ſaid of the ſaints, upon the judgment of the great whore, Rev. xix. 1, 2. "Hallelujah— "for true and righteous are his judgments." Thus the upright ſhall have dominion over them, in the morning of the reſurrection, Pſal. xlix. 14. Then, and not till then, ſhall that be fully accompliſhed, which ye have read, Pſal. cxlix. 6, 7, 8, 9. "Let "the high praiſes of God be in their mouth, and a "two-edged ſword in their hand, to execute ven-"geance upon the heathen, and puniſhments upon "the people—this honour have all his ſaints." O what a ſtrange turn of affairs will appear here! What an aſtoniſhing ſight will it be, to ſee wicked churchmen and ſtateſmen, ſtanding as criminals before the ſaints, whom ſometimes they condemned as heretics, rebels, and traitors! To ſee men of riches and power ſtand pale faced, before theſe whom they oppreſſed! To ſee the mocker ſtand trembling before theſe he mocked! The worldly wiſe man, before theſe whom he accounted fools! Then ſhall the deſpiſed faces of the ſaints be dreadful faces to the wicked: and thoſe who ſometimes were the ſong of the drunkards, ſhall then be a terror to them. All wrongs muſt be righted at length, and every one ſet in his proper place.

X. The Judge ſhall pronounce the ſentence of damnation on all the ungodly multitude. "Then ſhall "he ſay unto them on the left hand, Depart from

" me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for " the devil and his angels," verſe 41. Fearful doom! and that from the ſame mouth from whence proceeded the ſentence of abſolution before. It was an aggravation of the miſery of the Jews, when their city was deſtroyed, that they were ruined by one who was accounted the darling of the world. O! what an aggravation of the miſery of the wicked will it be, that he ſhall pronounce this ſentence alſo! to hear the curſe from mount Zion, muſt needs be moſt terrible. To be damned by him who came to ſave ſinners, muſt be double damnation. But thus it ſhall be. The Lamb of God ſhall roar as a lion againſt them! he ſhall excommunicate them, and caſt them out of his preſence for ever, by a ſentence from the throne, ſaying, " Depart from me, ye curſed;" he ſhall adjudge them to everlaſting fire, and the ſociety of devils for evermore. And this ſentence alſo, we ſuppoſe, ſhall be pronounced with an audible voice by the man Chriſt. And all the ſaints ſhall ſay, " Hallelujah, true and righteous are his judgments." None were ſo compaſſionate as the ſaints when on earth, during the time of God's patience. But now that time is at an end; their compaſſion on the ungodly is ſwallowed up in joy, in the Mediator's glory, and his executing of juſt judgment, by which his enemies are made his footſtool. Though ſometimes the righteous man did weep in ſecret places for their pride, and becauſe they would not hear; yet then he " ſhall rejoice when he ſeeth the vengeance, he ſhall " waſh his feet in the blood of the wicked," Pſal. lviii. 10. No pity ſhall then be ſhewn to them from their neareſt relations. The godly wife ſhall applaud the juſtice of the Judge in the condemnation of her ungodly huſband: the godly huſband ſhall ſay, Amen to the damnation of her who lay in his boſom: the godly parents ſhall ſay, Hallelujah, at the paſſing of the ſentence againſt their ungodly child; and the godly child ſhall, from his heart, approve the damnation of his

his wicked parents, the father who begat him, and the mother who bore him. The ſentence is juſt: they are judged according to their works, Rev. xx. 12.

There is no wrong done them. "For I was an "hungry," ſaith our Lord, "and ye gave me no "meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: I "was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in: naked, "and ye clothed me not: ſick, and in priſon, and "ye viſited me not," verſe 42, 43. Theſe are not only evidences of their ungodly and curſed ſtate, but moſt proper cauſes and grounds of their condemnation; for though good works do not merit ſalvation, yet evil works merit damnation. Sins of one kind only, namely, of omiſſion, are here mentioned; not that theſe alone ſhall then be diſcovered, (for the opening of the books lays all open), but becauſe theſe, though there were no more, are ſufficient to damn unpardoned ſinners. And if men ſhall be condemned for ſins of omiſſion, much more for ſins of commiſſion. The omiſſion of works of charity and mercy is condeſcended on particularly, to ſtop the mouths of the wicked; for it is moſt juſt that he have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy, James ii. 13. The mentioning of the omiſſion of acts of charity and mercy towards the diſtreſſed members of Chriſt, intimates, that is the judgment of thoſe who have heard of Chriſt in the goſpel, that is principally intended here, in this portion of ſcripture; and that the ſlighting of Chriſt will be the great cauſe of the ruin of thoſe who hear the goſpel; but the enmity of the hearts of the wicked againſt Chriſt himſelf, is diſcovered by the entertainment they now give to his members.

In vain will they ſay, "When ſaw we thee an hun-"gred, or a-thirſt?" &c. ver. 44. For the Lord reckons, and will reckon the world's unkindneſs to his people, unkindneſs to himſelf; "In as much as "ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it

"not to me," ver. 45. O meat and drink unhappily ſpared, when a member of Chriſt was in need of it! it had been better for them, they had quitted their own room, and their own bed, than he had wanted lodging. O curſed cloathing, may the wicked ſay, that was in my houſe, locked up in my cheſt, or hanging in my wardrope, and was not brought out to clothe ſuch a one! O that I had ſtripped myſelf, rather than he had gone away without clothing? Curſed buſineſs, that diverted me from viſiting ſuch a ſick ſaint? O that I had rather watched whole nights with him. Wretch that I was? why did I ſit at eaſe in my houſe, when he was in priſon, and did not viſit him? But now the tables are turned: Chriſt's ſervants ſhall eat, but I ſhall be hungry; his ſervants ſhall drink, but I ſhall be thirſty: they rejoice, but I am aſhamed, Iſa. lxv. 13. They are taken in, but I am caſt out, and bid to depart: they are cloathed with robes of glory, but I walk naked, and they ſee my ſhame, Rev. xvi. 15. They are now raiſed up on high, beyond the reach of ſickneſs or pain; but I muſt now ly down in ſorrow, Iſa. l. 11. Now ſhall they go to the palace of heaven, but I muſt go to the priſon of hell.

But if our Lord do thus reſent men's neglecting to help his people under theſe, and the like diſtreſſes; what may they expect, who are the authors and inſtruments of them: if they ſhall be fed with wrath, who fed them not, when they were hungry; what ſhall become of thoſe, who robbed and ſpoiled them, and took their own bread away from them? What a full cup of wrath ſhall be the portion of thoſe who were ſo far from giving them meat or drink, when hungry or thirſty, that they made it a crime for others to entertain them, and made themſelves drunken with their blood? they muſt lodge with devils for evermore, who took not in the Lord's people, when ſtrangers; then, what a lodging ſhall thoſe have, who drave them out of their own houſes, out of their native land, and made

made them ſtrangers? Men will be condemned for not clothing them, when naked: then how heavy muſt the ſentence of thoſe be, who have ſtript them, and made them go without cloathing? Surely, if not viſiting of them in ſickneſs, or in a priſon, ſhall be ſo ſeverely puniſhed: they ſhall not eſcape a moſt heavy doom, who have caſt them into priſons, and have put them under ſuch hardſhips, as have impaired their health, brought ſickneſs on them, and cut their days in priſon, or out of priſon.

To put a face upon ſuch wicked practices, men will pretend to retain an honour for Chriſt and religion, while they thus treat his members, walking in his way, and keeping the truth. They are here repreſented to ſay, "When ſaw we thee an hungred, or a-"thirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in pri-"ſon, and did not miniſter unto thee?" ver. 44. As if they ſhould ſay, Our bread, drink, lodging, cloathing and viſits, were indeed refuſed, but not to Chriſt; but to a ſet of men, of a bad character, men who turned the world upſide down, (Acts xvii. 6.) who troubled Iſrael, (1 Kings xviii. 17.) an humorous and fantaſtic ſort of people, having laws diverſe from all people; fractious and rebellious (they did not keep the King's laws) and therefore a very dangerous ſet of men; it was not for the King's profit to ſuffer them, Eſther iii. 8. But although men caſt iniquity upon the godly, and give them ill names, that they may treat them as criminals; all theſe pretences will avail them nothing, in the great day, before the righteous Judge, nor before their own conſciences neither: but the real ground of their enmity againſt the ſaints, will be found (to their own conviction) to be their enmity againſt Chriſt himſelf. This ſeems to be the import of the objection of the damned, (ver. 44. and of the anſwer to it, ver 45.) "In as much as ye did it not "to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me."

Laſtly, Sentence being paſt on both parties, follows

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the full execution of the ſame, verſe 46. And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life eternal. The damned ſhall get no reprieve, but go to their place without delay; they ſhall be driven away from the judgment-ſeat into hell; and the ſaints ſhall enter into the King's palace, Pſal. xlv. 15. namely, into heaven, the ſeat of the bleſſed. But our Lord Chriſt and his glorious company, ſhall keep the field that day, and ſee the backs of all their enemies; for the damned go off firſt.

In this day of the Lord, the great day, ſhall be the general conflagration; by which thoſe viſible heavens, the earth, and ſea ſhall paſs away. Not that they ſhall be annihilated, (or reduced to nothing) that is not the operation of fire, but they ſhall be diſſolved and purged by that fire, from all the effects of ſin, or of the curſe, upon them; and then renewed, and made more glorious and ſtable. Of this conflagration, the apoſtle Peter ſpeaks, 2 Pet. iii. 10. "But "the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the "night: in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away "with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt "with fervent heat: the earth alſo, and the works "that are therein ſhall be burnt up." See alſo ver. 7, 12. And of the renewing of the world, he adds, ver. 13. "Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, "look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein "dwelleth righteouſneſs."

It ſeems moſt agreeable to the ſcriptures, and to the nature of the thing, to conceive this conflagration to follow after the general judgment; ſentence being paſſed on both parties before it. And I judge it probable, that it will fall in with the putting of the ſentence in execution againſt the damned; ſo as they ſhall (according to their ſentence) depart, and the heavens and the earth paſs away, together and at once, at that furious rebuke from the throne, driving away the damned, out of the world (in this fire) to the everlaſting fire prepared for the

devil

devil and his angels. Even as, in the deluge, with which the apoſtle Peter compares the conflagration, or burning of the world, (2 Pet. iii. 6, 7.) the world itſelf, and the wicked upon it, periſhed together; the ſame water which deſtroyed the earth, ſweeping away the inhabitants. For it is not likely that the wicked ſhall at all ſtand on the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs, (2 Pet. iii. 13.) And as for this earth, it ſhall flee away, (which ſeems to denote a very quick diſpatch), and it ſhall flee from his face, who ſits on the throne, Rev. xx. 11. "And I ſaw a great white "throne, and him that ſat on it, from whoſe face "the earth and the heavens fled away." The execution of the ſentence on the wicked is alſo thus expreſſed; they "ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting "deſtruction from the preſence, or from the face of "the Lord," 2 Theſſ. i. 9. The original word is the ſame in both texts, the which being compared, ſeem to ſay, that theſe creatures, abuſed by the wicked, being left to ſtand as witneſſes againſt them in the judgment, are, after ſentence paſſed on their abuſers, made to paſs away with them from the face of the Judge. It is true, the flying away of the earth and heaven is narrated (Rev. xx. 11.) before the judgement; but that will not prove its going before the judgment; more than the narrating of the judgment, ver. 12. before the reſurrection, ver. 13. will prove the judgment to be before it. Further, it is remarkable in the execution of the ſentence, Rev. xx. 14. 15. that not only the reprobate are caſt into the lake, but death and hell are caſt into it likewiſe: all effects of ſin and of the curſe, are removed out of the world, (for which very cauſe ſhall the conflagration be,) and they are confined to the place of the damned. Beſides all this, it is evident the end of the world is by the conflagration: and the apoſtle tells us, (1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.) that "then cometh the end, when he "ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even "the Father; when he ſhall have put down all rule,

"and

" and all authority, and power. For he muſt reign, " till he hath put all enemies under his feet." The which laſt, as it muſt be done before the end; ſo it ſeems not to be done, but by putting the ſentence in execution paſſed in the day of judgment, againſt the wicked.

Now, if the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, that are ſet forth for an example, (Jude 7.) was ſo dreadful; how terrible will that day be, when the whole world ſhall be at once in flames: How will wretched worldlings look, when their darling world ſhall be all on fire? Then ſhall ſtrong caſtles, and towering palaces, with all their rich furniture, go up together in one flame, with the loweſt cottages. What heart can fully conceive the terror of that day to the wicked, when the whole fabric of heaven and earth ſhall at once be diſſolved by that fire! When that miſerable company ſhall be driven from the tribunal to the pit, with fire within them, and fire without them, and fire behind them, and on every hand of them; and fire before them waiting them in the lake: whither this fire (for ought appears) may follow them!

As for the particular place of this judgment, though ſome point us to the valley of Jehoſhaphat for it; yet our Lord who infallibly knew it, being aſked the queſtion by his diſciples, Where, Lord? told them only, " Whereſoever the body is, thither will the " eagles be gathered together," Luke xvii. 37. After which anſwer, it is too much for men to renew the queſtion. As for the time when it ſhall be, in vain do men ſearch for what the Lord has purpoſedly kept ſecret, Acts i. 7. " It is not for you to know " the times or the ſeaſons, which the Father has put " in his own power." The apoſtle Paul, after having very plainly deſcribed the ſecond coming of Chriſt, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16, 17. adds, (chap. v. 1, 2.) " But of " the times and ſeaſons, brethren, ye have no need " that I write unto you: for yourſelves know perfect-

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"ly, that the day of the Lord ſo cometh, as a thief "in the night." Nevertheleſs, ſome, in ſeveral ages, have made very bold with the time; and ſeveral particular years, which are now paſt, have been given out to the world, for the time of the end, by men who have pried into the ſecrets of God. Time has proclaimed to the world their raſhneſs and folly; and it is likely they will be no more happy in their conjectures, whoſe determinate time is yet to come. Let us reſt in that he cometh. God hath kept that day hid from us, that we may be every day ready for it, Matth. xxv. 13. "Watch therefore: for ye know "neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of "man cometh." And let us remember, that the laſt day of our life, will determine our ſtate in the laſt day of the world: and as we die, ſo ſhall we be judged.

I ſhall now ſhut up this ſubject, with ſome application of what has been ſaid.

USE I. Of comfort to all the ſaints. Here is abundance of conſolation to all, who are in the ſtate of grace. Whatever be your afflictions in the world, this day will make up all your loſſes. "Though ye "have lien among the pots: yet ſhall ye be as the "wings of a dove covered with ſilver, and her fea-"thers with yellow gold." Pſal. lxviii. 13. Though the world reproach, judge, and condemn you; the Judge will, at that day, abſolve you, and bring forth your righteouſneſs as the light. The world's fools, will then appear to have been the only wiſe men who were in it. Though the croſs be heavy, you may well bear it, in expectation of the crown of righteouſneſs, which the righteous Judge will then give you. If the world do diſpiſe you, and treat you with the utmoſt contempt, regard it not: the day cometh wherein you ſhall ſit with Chriſt, in his throne. Be not diſcouraged by reaſon of manifold temptations. But reſiſt the devil, in confidence of a full and complete victory: for you ſhall judge the tempter at laſt.

Though you have hard wreſtling now, with the body of ſin and death; yet ye ſhall get all your enemies under your feet at length, and be preſented faultleſs before the preſence of his glory. Let not the terror of that day deſpirit you, when you think upon it: let theſe who have ſlighted the Judge, and continue enemies to him, and to the way of holineſs, droop and hang down their heads, when they think of his coming: but lift ye up your heads with joy, for the laſt day will be your beſt day. The Judge is your Head and Huſband, your Redeemer, and your Advocate. Ye muſt appear before the judgment-ſeat, but ye ſhall not come into condemnation, John v. 24. His coming will not be againſt you, but for you. He came in the fleſh, to remove the lawful impediments of the ſpiritual marriage, by his death: he came in the goſpel to you, to eſpouſe you to himſelf: he will come, at the laſt day, to ſolemnize the marriage, and take the bride home to his Father's houſe, "Even ſo, "come Lord Jeſus."

USE II. Of terror to all unbelievers. This may ſerve to awaken a ſecure generation, a world lying in wickedneſs as if they were never to be called to an account for it: and ſlighting the Mediator, as if he were not to judge them. Ah! how few have the lively impreſſions of the judgment to come! Moſt men live as if what is ſaid of it, from the word, were but idle tales. The profane lives of many, ſpeak the thoughts of it to be far from their hearts, and in every deed make a mock of it before the world, ſaying in effect, "Where is the promiſe of his coming?" The hypocriſy of others, who blind the eyes of the world with a ſplendid profeſſion, being in appearance Chriſt's ſheep, while they are indeed the devil's goats, is an evidence, that the great ſeparation of the ſheep from the goats, is very little laid to heart. How do many indulge themſelves in ſecret wickedneſs, of which they would be aſhamed before witneſſes; not conſidering, that their moſt ſecret thoughts and actions

tions will, at that day, be discovered before the great congregation! How eagerly are men's hearts set on the world, as if it were to be their everlasting habitation! The solemn assemblies, and public ordinances wherein the judge is upon a transaction of peace with the criminals, are undervalued men's hearts will swim like feathers, in the waters of the sanctuary; that will sink like stones, to the bottom, in cares of this life: they will be very serious in trifles of this world; and trifle in the most serious and weighty things of another world. But O consider the day, that is approaching, in which Christ shall come to judgment, the world shall be summoned, by the sound of the last trumpet, to compear before his tribunal, The Judge shall sit on his throne, and all nations shall be sifted before him; the separation shall be made betwixt the godly and the wicked; the books opened, and the dead judged out of them; one party shall be adjudged to everlasting life, and the other to everlasting fire, according to their works.

It would be a sight of admirable curiosity, if thou couldst wrap up thyself in some dark cloud, or hide thyself in the cleft of some high rock, from whence thou mightest espy wicked kings, princes, judges, and great ones of the earth, rising out of their marble tombs, and brought to the bar, to answer for all their cruelty, injustice, oppression, and profanity, without any marks of distinction, but what their wickedness puts upon them; profane, unholy, and unfaithful church-men, pursued with the curses of the ruined people, from their graves to the judgment-seat, and charged with the blood of souls, to whom they gave not faithful warning; mighty men standing trembling before the Judge, unable to recover their wonted boldness, to outwit him with their subtilities, or defend themselves by their strength; delicate women cast forth of their graves, as abominable branches, dragged to the tribunal, to answer for their ungodly lives; the ignorant suddenly taught in the law, to their cost; and

the learned declared, before the world, fools and laborious triflers; the Atheist convinced, the hypocrite unmasked; and the profane, at long run, turned serious about his eternal state: secret murders, adulteries, thefts, cheats, and other works of darkness, which scorned all human search, discovered and laid open before the world, with their most minute circumstances: no regard had to the rich, no pity shewn to the poor: the scales of the world turned; oppressed and despised piety set on high; and prosperous wickedness at last brought low: all, not found in Christ, arraigned, convicted, and condemned without respect of persons, and driven from the tribunal to the pit; while those found in him, at that day, being absolved before the world, go with him into heaven. Nay, but thou canst not so escape. Thyself whosoever thou art, not being in Christ, must hear a part in this tragical and frightful action.

Sinner, that same Lord Christ, whom thou now despisest, whom thou woundest through the sides of his messengers, and before whom thou dost prefer thy lusts, will be thy Judge. And a neglected Saviour will be a severe Judge. O! what mountain, what rock wilt thou get to fall on thee, and hide thee from the face of him who sitteth on the throne? thou hast now a rock within thee, a heart of adamant, so that thou canst count the darts of the word as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of the spear; but that rock will rent at the sight of the Judge; that hard heart will then break, and thou shalt weep and wail, when weeping and wailing will be to no purpose. Death's bands will fall off; the grave will vomit the out; and the mountains shall skip from thee, and the rocks refuse to grind thee to powder. How will these cursed eyes abide the sight of the Judge! behold he cometh! where is the profane swearer, who tore his wounds? the wretched worldling, now abandoned of his God? the formal hypocrite, who kissed him and betrayed him? The despiser of the gospel, who sent him away

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in his meſſengers groaning, profaned his ordinances, and trampled under foot his precious blood? O murderer, the ſlain man is thy Judge: there is he whom thou didſt ſo maltreat: behold the neglected Lamb of God appearing as a lion againſt thee. How will thine heart endure the darts of his fiery looks! that rocky heart now kept out againſt him, ſhall then be blown up: that face, which refuſeth to bluſh now, ſhall then gather blackneſs: arrows of wrath ſhall pierce, where arrows of conviction cannot enter now. What wilt thou anſwer him, when he riſeth up, and chargeth thee with thy unbelief and impenitency? Wilt thou ſay, thou waſt not warned? Conſcience within thee will give thee the lie: the ſecret groans and wearineſs of thoſe who warned thee will witneſs the contrary. If a child or a fool did tell you, that your houſe were on fire, you would immediately run to quench it; but on matters of eternal concern, men will firſt fill their hearts with prejudices againſt the meſſengers, and then caſt their meſſage behind their backs. But theſe ſilly ſhifts and pretences will not avail in the day of the Lord. How will theſe curſed ears, now deaf to the call of the goſpel, inviting ſinners to come to Chriſt, hear the fearful ſentence, "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, "prepared for the devil and his angels?" No ſleepy hearer ſhall be there: no man's heart will then wander: their hearts and eyes will then be fixed on their miſery, which they will not now believe. O that we knew, in this our day, the things that belong to our peace.

Laſtly, Be exhorted to believe this great truth; and believe it ſo as you may prepare for the judgment betimes. Set up a ſecret tribunal in your own breaſts, and often call yourſelves to an account there. Make the Judge your friend in time, by cloſing with him in the offer of the goſpel; and give all diligence, that ye may be found in Chriſt, at that day. Caſt off the works of darkneſs, and live, as believing you are

at all times, and in all places, under the eye of your Judge, who will bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing. Be fruitful in good works, knowing that as ye ſow, ye ſhall reap. Study piety towards God, righteouſneſs and charity towards men. Lay up in ſtore plenty of works of charity and mercy, towards them who are in diſtreſs, eſpecially ſuch as are of the houſhold of faith, that they may be produced that day as evidences, that ye belong to Chriſt. Shut not up your bowels of mercy, now, towards the needy; leſt ye then find no mercy. Take heed, that, in all your works, ye be ſingle and ſincere: aiming in them all, at the glory of our Lord, a teſtimony of your love to him, and obedience to his command. Leave it to hypocrites, who have their reward, to proclaim every man his own goodneſs, and to ſound a trumpet, when they do their alms. It is a baſe and unchriſtian ſpirit, which cannot have ſatisfaction in a good work, unleſs it be expoſed to the view of others: it is utterly unworthy of one, who believes that the laſt trumpet ſhall call together the whole world: before whom the Judge himſelf ſhall publiſh works truly good, how ſecretly ſoever they were done. Live in a believing expectation of the coming of the Lord. Let your lines be always girt, and your lamps burning; ſo when he comes, whether in the laſt day of your life, or in the laſt day of the world, ye ſhall be able to ſay with joy, Lo, this is our God, and we have waited for him.

HEAD V.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

MATTH. XXV. 34.

Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

HAVING from this portion of ſcripture, which the text is a part of, diſcourſed of the general judgment; and being to ſpeak of the everlaſting happineſs of the ſaints, and the everlaſting miſery of the wicked, from the reſpective ſentences to be pronounced upon them, in the great day; I ſhall take them in the order wherein they lie before us; the rather that, as ſentence is firſt paſſed upon the righteous, ſo the execution thereof is firſt begun, though poſſibly the other may be fully executed before it be compleated.

The words of the text contain the joyful ſentence itſelf, together with an hiſtorical introduction thereto, which gives us an account of the Judge pronouncing the ſentence, the King, Jeſus Chriſt; the parties on whom it is given, them on his right hand; and the time when, then, aſſoon as the trial is over. Of theſe I have ſpoken already. It is the ſentence itſelf we are now to conſider, "Come ye bleſſed of my Fa- "ther," &c. Stand back, O ye profane goats; have away all unregenerate ſouls, not united to Jeſus Chriſt: this is not for you. Come, O ye ſaints, brought out of your natural ſtate, into the ſtate of grace, behold here the ſtate of glory awaiting you. Here is glory let down to us in words and ſyllables;

a looking-glaſs, in which you may ſee your everlaſting happineſs; a ſcheme (or draught) of Chriſt's Father's houſe, wherein there are many manſions.

This glorious ſentence bears two things. (1.) The compleat happineſs, to which the ſaints are adjudged, the kingdom. (2.) Their ſolemn admiſſion to it, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit, &c. Firſt, Their compleat happineſs is a kingdom. A kingdom is the top of worldly felicity; there is nothing on earth greater than a kingdom; therefore the hidden weight of glory in heaven is held forth to us under that notion. But it is not an ordinary kingdom; it is the kingdom; the kingdom of heaven, ſurpaſſing all the kingdoms of the earth, in glory, honour, profit, and pleaſure, infinitely more than they do, in theſe excel the low and inglorious condition of a beggar, in rags and on a dunghill. Secondly, There is a ſolemn admiſſion of the ſaints into this their kingdom, Come ye, inherit the kingdom. In the view of angels, men, and devils, they are inveſted with royalty, and ſolemnly inaugurated before the whole world, by Jeſus Chriſt the heir of all things, who hath all power in heaven and in earth. Their right to the kingdom is ſolemnly recognized and owned. They are admitted to it, as undoubted heirs of the kingdom, to poſſeſs it by inheritance, or lot, as the word properly ſignifies, becauſe, of old, inheritances were deſigned by lot, as Canaan to Iſrael, God's firſt-born, as they are called, Exod. iv. 22. And becauſe this kingdom is the Father's kingdom, therefore they are openly acknowledged, in their admiſſion to it, to be the bleſſed of Chriſt's Father; the which bleſſing was given them, long before this ſentence, but is now ſolemnly recognized, and confirmed to them, by the Mediator, in his Father's name. It is obſervable, he ſays not, Ye bleſſed of the Father, but, Ye bleſſed of my Father: to ſhew us, that all bleſſings are derived upon us, from the Father, the Fountain of bleſſing, as he is the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, through

through whom we are bleſſed, Eph. i. 3. And finally, they are admitted to this kingdom, as that which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, in God's eternal purpoſe, before they, or any of them were: that all the world may ſee, eternal life to be the free gift of God.

DOCTRINE, The ſaints ſhall be made compleatly happy in the poſſeſſion of the kingdom of heaven.

Two things I ſhall here inquire into, (1.) The nature of this kingdom. (2.) The admiſſion of the ſaints thereto. And then I ſhall make ſome practical improvement of the whole.

FIRST, As to the nature of the kingdom of heaven, our knowledge of it is very imperfect; for "eye "hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered "into the heart of man, the things which God hath "prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9. As by familiar reſemblances, parents inſtruct their little children, concerning things, of which otherwiſe they can have no tolerable notion: ſo our gracious God, in conſideration of our weakneſs, is pleaſed to repreſent to us heaven's happineſs, under ſimilitudes taken from earthly things, glorious in the eyes of men; ſince naked diſcoveries of the heavenly glory, diveſted of earthly reſemblances, would be too bright for our weak eyes, and in them we would but loſe ourſelves. Wherefore now, one can but ſpeak as a child, of theſe things, which the day will fully diſcover.

The ſtate of glory is repreſented under the notion of a kingdom; a kingdom among men, being that in which the greateſt number of earthly good things doth concentre. Now every ſaint ſhall, as a king, inherit a kingdom. All Chriſt's ſubjects ſhall be kings, each one with his crown upon his head: not that the great King ſhall diveſt himſelf of his royalty, but he will make all his children partakers of his kingdom.

I. The ſaints ſhall have kingly power and authori-

ty given them. Our Lord gives not empty titles to his favourites; he makes them kings indeed. The dominion of the saints will be a dominion far exceeding that of the greatest monarch ever was in earth. They will be absolute masters over sin, that sometime had the dominion over them. They will have a compleat rule over their own spirits; an entire management of all their affections and inclinations, which now create them so much molestation: the turbulent rout of corrupt affections shall be for ever expelled out of that kingdom, and never be able any more to give them the least disturbance. They shall have power over the nations, the ungodly of all nations, and shall rule them with a rod of iron, Rev. ii. 26, 27. The whole world of the wicked shall be broken before them: Satan shall be bruised under their feet, Rom. xvi. 20. He shall never be able to fasten a temptation on them any more: but he will be judged by them: and, in their sight, cast with the reprobate crew, into the lake of fire and brimstone. So shall they rule over their oppressors. Having fought the good fight, and got the victory, Christ will entertain them as Joshua did his captains, causing them come near, and put their feet on the necks of kings, Josh. x. 24.

II. They shall have the ensigns of royalty. For a throne, Christ will grant them to sit with him in his throne, Rev. iii. 21. They shall be advanced to the highest honour and dignity they are capable of; and in the enjoyment of it, they will have an eternal undisturbed repose, after all the tossings they met with in the world, in their way to the throne. For a crown, they shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. Not a crown of flowers, as subjects, being conquerors, or victors, sometimes have got: such a crown quickly fades, but their crown never fadeth. Nor a crown of gold, such as earthly kings do wear; even a crown of gold is often stained, and at best can never make them happy

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who wear it. But it ſhall be a crown of glory. A crown of glory is a crown of life, (Rev. ii. 10.) that life, which knows no end: a crown which death can never make to fall off one's head. It muſt be an abiding crown; for it is a crown of righteouſneſs, 2 Tim. iv. 8. It was purchaſed for them by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is imputed to them; they are qualified for it, by inherent righteouſneſs; God's righteouſneſs or faithfulneſs ſecures it to them. They ſhall have a ſceptre, a road of iron, (Rev. ii. 27.) terrible to all the wicked world. And a ſword too, "a two-edged ſword in their hand, to execute ven-" geance upon the heathen, and puniſhments upon " the people," Pſal. cxlix. 6, 7. They ſhall have royal apparel. The royal robes in this kingdom are white robes, Rev. iii. 4. They ſhall walk with me in white. And theſe laſt do, in a very particular manner, point at the unconceivable glory of the ſtate of the ſaints in heaven.

The Lord is pleaſed often to repreſent unto us the glorious ſtate of the ſaints, under the notion of their being clothed in " white garments." It is promiſed to the overcomer, that he ſhall be clothed in white raiment, Rev. iii. 5. The elders about the throne are clothed in white raiment, chap. iv. 4. The multitude before the throne are clothed with white robes, chap. vii. 9. arrayed in white robes, ver. 13. made white in the blood of the Lamb, ver. 14. I own, the laſt two teſtimonies adduced, do reſpect the ſtate of the ſaints on earth: but withal the terms are borrowed from the ſtate of the church in heaven. All garments, properly ſo called, being badges of ſin and ſhame, ſhall be laid aſide by the ſaints, when they come to their ſtate of glory. But if we conſider, on what occaſions white garments were wont to be put on, we ſhall find much of heaven under them.

Firſt, The Romans, when they manumitted their bond-ſervants, gave them a white garment, as a badge of their freedom. So ſhall the ſaints, that day, get

on their white robes; for it is the day of the glorious liberty of the children of God, (Rom. viii. 21.) the day of the redemption of their body, ver. 23. They ſhall no more ſee the houſe of bondage, nor lie any more among the pots. If we compare the ſtate of the ſaints on earth, with that of the wicked, it is indeed a ſtate of freedom, whereas the other is a ſtate of ſlavery: but in compariſon with their ſtate in heaven, it is but a ſervitude. A ſaint on earth is indeed a young prince, and heir to the crown; but his motto may be, 'I ſerve;' for he differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be lord of all, Gal. iv. 1. What are the groans of a ſaint, the ſordid and baſe work he is ſometimes found employed in, the black and tattered garments he walks in, but badges of this comparative ſervitude? But from the day the ſaints come to the crown, they receive their complete freedom, and ſerve no more. They ſhall be fully freed from ſin, which of all evils is the worſt, both in itſelf, and in their apprehenſion too: how great then muſt that freedom be, when theſe Egyptians whom they ſee to-day, they ſhall ſee them again no more for ever? They ſhall be free from all temptation to ſin: Satan can have no acceſs to tempt them any more, by himſelf, nor by his agents. A full anſwer will then be given to that petition, they have ſo often repeated, "Lead us not into temptation." No hiſſing ſerpent can come into the paradiſe above: no ſnare nor trap can be laid there, to catch the feet of the ſaints: they may walk there fearleſsly, for they can be in no hazard: there are no lions dens, no mountains of the leopards, in the promiſed land. Nay, they ſhall be ſet beyond the poſſibility of ſinning, for they ſhall be confirmed in goodneſs. It will be the conſummate freedom of their will, to be for ever unalterably determined to good. And they ſhall be freed from all the effects of ſin; "There "ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, "neither ſhall there be any more pain," Rev. xxi.

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4. What kingdom is like unto this? Death makes its way now into a palace, as eaſily as into a cottage: ſorrow fills the heart of one who wears a crown on his head: royal robes are no fence againſt pain, and crying by reaſon of pain. But in this kingdom no miſery can have place. All reproaches ſhall be wiped off; and never ſhall a tear drop any more from their eyes. They ſhall not complain of deſertions again; the Lord will never hide his face from them: but the Son of Righteouſneſs ſhining upon them, in his meridian brightneſs, will diſpel all clouds, and give them an everlaſting day, without the leaſt mixture of darkneſs. A deluge of wrath, after a fearful thunder-clap from the throne, will ſweep away the wicked from before the judgment-ſeat, into the lake of fire: but they are in the firſt place, like Noah, brought into the ark, and out of harm's way.

Secondly, White raiment hath been a token of purity; therefore the Lamb's wife is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, Rev. xix. 8. And theſe who ſtood before the throne waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, chap. vii. 14. The ſaints ſhall then put on the robes of perfect purity, and ſhine in ſpotleſs holineſs, like the ſun in his ſtrength without the leaſt cloud to intercept his light. Abſolute innocence ſhall then be reſtored, and every appearance of ſin baniſhed far from his kingdom. The guilt of ſin, and the reigning power of it, are now taken away in the ſaints; nevertheleſs ſin dwelleth in them, Rom. vii. 20. But then it ſhall be no more in them: the corrupt nature will be quite removed, that root of bitterneſs will be plucked up, and no veſtiges of it left in their ſouls; their nature ſhall be altogether pure and ſinleſs. There ſhall be no darkneſs in their minds: but the underſtanding of every ſaint, when he is come to his kingdom, will be as a globe of pure and unmixed light. There ſhall not be the leaſt averſion to good, or inclination to evil in their wills:

wills: but they will be brought to a perfect conformity to the will of God; bleſt with angelical purity, and fixed therein. Their affections ſhall not be liable to the leaſt diſorder or irregularity: it will coſt them no trouble to keep them right: they will get ſuch a ſet of purity, as they can never loſe. They will be ſo refined from all earthly droſs, as never to ſavour more of any thing but heaven. Were it poſſible they ſhould be ſet again amidſt the enſnaring objects of an evil world, they ſhould walk among them without the leaſt defilement; as the ſun ſhines on the dunghill, yet untainted; and as the angels preſerved their purity in the midſt of Sodom. Their graces ſhall then be perfected; and all the imperfection now cleaving to them, done away. There will be no more ground for complaints of weakneſs of grace: none in that kingdom ſhall complain of an ill heart, or a corrupt nature. "It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, "but—when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him," 1 John iii. 2.

Thirdly, Among the Jews, theſe who deſired to be admitted into the prieſtly office, being tried, and found to be of the prieſt's line, and without blemiſh, were clothed in white, and enrolled among the prieſts. This ſeem to be alluded to, Rev. iii. 5. "He "that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in white "raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the "book of life." So the ſaints ſhall not be kings only, but prieſts withal; for they are a royal prieſthood, 1 Pet. ii. 9. They will be prieſts upon their thrones. They are judicially found deſcended from the great High-Prieſt of their profeſſion, begotten of him by his Spirit, of the incorruptible ſeed of the word, and without blemiſh: ſo the trial being over, they are admitted to be prieſts in the temple above, that they may dwell in the houſe of the Lord for ever. There is nothing upon earth more glorious than a kingdom, nothing more venerable than the prieſthood: and both meet together in the glorified ſtate

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of the ſaints. The general aſſembly of the firſt-born, (Heb. xii. 23.) whoſe is the prieſthood and the double portion, appearing in their white robes of glory, will be a reverend and glorious company. That day will ſhew them to be the perſons, whom the Lord has choſen out of all the tribes of the earth, to be near into him, and to enter into his temple, even into his holy place. Their prieſthood begun on earth, ſhall be brought to its perfection, while they ſhall be employed in offering the ſacrifice of praiſe to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever. They got not their portion on the earth, with the reſt of the tribes: but the Lord himſelf was their portion, and will be their double portion, through the ages of eternity.

Fourthly, They were wont to wear white raiment, in a time of triumph; to the which alſo there ſeems to be an alluſion, Rev. iii. 5. "He that overcometh, "the ſame ſhall be clothed in white raiment." And what is heaven, but an everlaſting triumph? None get thither, but ſuch as fight, and overcome too. Though Canaan was given to the Iſraelites, as an inheritance; they behoved to conquer it, ere they could be poſſeſſors of it. The ſaints, in this world, are in the field of battle; often in red garments, garments rolled in blood: but the day approacheth, in which they ſhall "ſtand before the throne and be-"fore the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms "in their hands," Rev. vii. 9. having obtained a complete victory over all their enemies. The palm was uſed as a ſign of victory; becauſe that tree, oppreſſed with weights, yieldeth not, but rather ſhooteth upwards. And palm-trees were carved on the doors of the moſt holy place, 1 Kings vi. 32. which was a ſpecial type of heaven; for heaven is the place which the ſaints are received into, as conquerors.

Behold the joy and peace of the ſaints, in their white robes. The joys ariſing from the view of paſt dangers, and riches and honours gained at the very door of

of death, do moſt ſenſibly touch one's heart: and this will be an ingredient in the everlaſting happineſs of the ſaints, which could have had no place, in the heaven of innocent Adam, and his ſinleſs offspring, ſuppoſing him to have ſtood. Surely the glorified ſaints will not forget the entertainment they met with in the world: it will be for the glory of God to remember it, and alſo for the heightening of their joy. The Sicilian king, by birth the ſon of a potter, acted a wiſe part, in that he would be ſerved at his table with earthen veſſels; the which could not but put an additional ſweetneſs in his meals, not to be reliſhed by one born heir to the crown. Can ever meat be ſo ſweet to any as to the hungry man? Or can any have ſuch a reliſh of plenty, as he who has been under pinching ſtraits? The more difficulties the ſaints have paſſed through, in their way to heaven, the place will be the ſweeter to them, when they come at it. Every happy ſtroke, ſtruck in the ſpiritual warfare, will be a jewel in the crown of glory. Each victory obtained againſt ſin, Satan, and the world, will raiſe their triumphant joy the higher. The remembrance of the croſs will ſweeten the crown; and the memory of their travel through the wilderneſs will put an additional verdure on the fields of glory; while they walk through them, minding the day, when they went mourning without the ſun.

And now that they appear triumphing in white robes, it is a ſign they have obtained an honourable peace: ſuch a peace as their enemies can diſturb no more. So every thing peculiarly adapted to their militant condition is laid aſide. The ſword is laid down: and they betake themſelves to the pen of a ready writer, to commemorate the praiſes of him, by whom they overcame. Public ordinances, preaching, ſacraments, ſhall be honourably laid aſide; there is no temple there, Rev. xxi. 22. Sometime theſe were ſweet to them: but the travellers being all got home, the inns appointed for their entertainment by the way,

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are ſhut up; the candles are put out, when the ſun is riſen; and the tabernacle uſed in the wilderneſs is folded up, when the temple of glory is come in its room. Many of the ſaints duties will then be laid aſide; as one gives his ſtaff out of his hand, when he is come to the end of his journey. Praying ſhall then be turned to praiſing, and there being no ſin to confeſs, no wants to ſeek the ſupply of; confeſſion and petition ſhall be ſwallowed up in everlaſting thanksgiving. There will be no mourning in heaven, they have ſown in tears. The reaping time of joy is come, and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, Rev. xxi. 4. No need of mortification there; and ſelf-examination is then at an end. They will not need to watch any more; the danger is over. Patience has had its perfect work, and there is no uſe for it there. Faith is turned into ſight, and hope is ſwallowed up in the ocean of ſenſible and full enjoyment. All the rebels are ſubdued, the ſaints quietly ſet on their throne; and ſo the forces, needful in the time of the ſpiritual warfare, are diſbanded; and they carry on their triumph in profoundeſt peace.

Laſtly, White garments were worn on feſtival days, in token of joy. And ſo ſhall the ſaints be clothed in white raiment, for they ſhall keep an everlaſting Sabbath to the Lord, Heb. iv. 9. "There remaineth "therefore a reſt (or keeping of a Sabbath) to the "people of God." The Sabbath, in the eſteem of ſaints, is the queen of days: and they ſhall have an endleſs Sabbatiſm in the kingdom of heaven: ſo ſhall their garments be always white. They will have an eternal reſt, with an interrupted joy: for heaven is not a reſting place, where men may ſleep out an eternity: (there they reſt not day nor night) but their work is their reſt, and continual recreation; and toil and wearineſs have no place there. They reſt there in God, who is the centre of their ſouls. Here they find the compleatment, or ſatisfaction, of all their deſires; having the full enjoyment of God, and uninterrupted

terrupted communion with him. This is the point, unto the which till the ſoul come, it will always be reſtleſs: but that point reached, it reſts; for he is the laſt end, and the ſoul can go no further. It cannot underſtand, will, nor deſire more; but in him it has what is commenſurable to its boundleſs deſires. The Chaldeans meaſuring the natural day, put the day firſt, and the night laſt: but the Jews counted the night firſt, and the day laſt. Even ſo the wicked begin with a day of reſt and pleaſure, but end with a night of everlaſting toil and ſorrow: but God's people have their gloomy night firſt, and then comes their day of eternal reſt. The which, Abraham in the parable, obſerved to the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 25. "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime "receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus "evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art "tormented."

III. If one enquires where the kingdom of the ſaints lies? It is not in this world; it lies in a better country, that is an heavenly, Heb. xi. 16. a country better than the beſt of this world; namely the heavenly Canaan, Immanuel's land, where nothing is wanting to complete the happineſs of the inhabitants. This is the happy country, bleſſed with a perpetual ſpring, and which yieldeth all things, for neceſſity, conveniency, and delight. There men ſhall eat angels food; they ſhall be entertained with the hidden manna, Rev. ii. 17. without being ſet to the painful gathering of it: they will be fed to the full, with the product of the land falling into their mouths without the leaſt toil to them. That land enjoys an everlaſting day; "for there is no night there." Rev. xxi. 25. An eternal ſun-ſhine beautifies this better country; but there is no ſcorching heat there. No clouds ſhall be ſeen there for ever; yet it is not a land of drought: the trees of the Lord's planting are ſet by the rivers of water, and ſhall never want moiſture; for they will have an eternal ſupply of the Spirit, by Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt, from his Father. This is the country from whence our Lord came, and whither he is gone again; the country which all the holy patriarchs and prophets had their eye upon, while on earth; and which all the the ſaints, who have gone before us, have fought their way to; and unto which, the martyrs have joyfully ſwimmed through a ſea of blood. This earth is the place of the ſaints pilgrimage; that is their country, where they find their everlaſting reſt.

IV. The royal city is, that great city, tho holy Jeruſalem, deſcribed at large, Rev. xxi. 10. to the end of the chapter. (It is true, ſome learned divines place this city in the earth: but the particulars of the deſcription ſeem to me to favour thoſe moſt, who point us to the other world for it.) The ſaints ſhall reign in that city, whoſe wall is of jaſper, (verſe 16.) and "the foundations of the wall garniſhed with all "manner of precious ſtones," (verſe 19.) "and the "ſtreet of pure gold," (verſe 21.) So that their feet ſhall be ſet on that, which the men of this world ſet their hearts upon. This is the city God has prepared for them, (Heb. xi. 16.) "a city that hath founda-"tions," (verſe 10.) "a continuing city," (chap. xiii. 14.) which ſhall ſtand and flouriſh, when all the cities of the world are laid in aſhes; and which ſhall not be moved, when the foundations of the world are overturned. It is a city, that never changeth its inhabitants; none of them ſhall ever be removed out of it; for life and immortality reign there, and no death can enter into it. It is bleſſed with a perfect and perpetual peace, and can never be in the leaſt diſturbed. Nothing from without can annoy it; the gates therefore are not ſhut at all by day; and there is no night there, Rev. xxi. 25. There can nothing from within trouble it. No want of proviſion there, no ſcarcity; no diſcord amongſt the inhabitants. Whatever contentions are amongſt the ſaints now, no veſtige of their former jarrings ſhall remain there. Love to

God, and to one another, ſhall be perfected; and theſe of them, who ſtood at greateſt diſtance here, will joyfully embrace and delight in one another there.

V. The royal palace is Chriſt's Father's houſe, in which are many manſions, John xiv. 2. There ſhall the ſaints dwell for ever. That is the houſe prepared for all the heirs of glory, even theſe of them who dwell in the meaneſt cottage now, or have not where to lay their heads.

As our Lord calls his ſaints to a kingdom, he will provide them a houſe ſuitable to the dignity he puts upon them. Heaven will be a convenient, ſpacious, and glorious houſe, for thoſe whom the king delighteth to honour. Never was a houſe purchaſed at ſo great a rate as this, being the purchaſe of the Mediator's blood; and no leſs could it be afforded for to them: never was there ſo much ado, to fit inhabitants for a houſe. But the Father gives the deſigned inhabitants to the Son, to be by him redeemed: the Son pays the price of their redemption, even his own precious blood; that with the allowance of juſtice, they may have acceſs to the houſe: and the holy Spirit ſanctifies them by his grace, that they may meet to come in thither, where no unclean thing can enter. And no marvel, for it is the King's palace, they enter into. (Pſal. xlv. 15.) The houſe of the kingdom, where the great King keeps his court, where he has ſet his throne, and ſhews forth his glory, in a ſingular manner, beyond what mortals can conceive.

VI. Paradiſe is their Palace-garden. "This day "ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe," ſaid our Saviour to the penitent thief on the croſs, Luke xxiii. 43. Heaven is a paradiſe for pleaſure and delight, where there is both wood and water; "A pure river of wa-"ter and life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the "throne of God, and of the Lamb; and of either "ſide of the river, the tree of life, which bears twelve "manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month," Rev. xxii. 1, 2. How happy might innocent Adam have

have been in the earthly paradiſe, where there was nothing wanting for neceſſity, nor delight! Eden was the moſt pleaſant ſpot of the uncorrupted earth, and paradiſe the moſt pleaſant ſpot of Eden; but what is earth in compariſon of heaven? The glorified ſaints are advanced to the heavenly paradiſe. There they ſhall not only ſee, but eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God, Rev. ii. 7. They ſhall behold the Mediator's glory, and be ſatisfied with his goodneſs. No flaming ſword will be there, to keep the way of that tree of life; but they ſhall freely eat of it, and live for ever. And they ſhall drink of the river of pleaſures, (Pſal. xxxvi. 8.) theſe ſweeteſt and pureſt pleaſures, the which Immanuel's land doth afford; and ſhall ſwim in an ocean of unmixed delight for evermore.

VII. They ſhall have royal treaſures, ſufficient to ſupport the dignity they are advanced unto. Since the ſtreet of the royal city is pure gold, and the twelve gates thereof are twelve pearls; their treaſure muſt be of that which is better than gold or pearl. It is an eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. O precious treaſure! a treaſure not liable to inſenſible corruption, by moths or ruſt; a treaſure which none can ſteal from them, Mat. vi. 20. Never did any kingdom afford ſuch a precious treaſure, nor a treaſure of ſuch variety: for he that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7. No treaſures on earth are ſtored with all things; if they were all put together in one, there would be far more valuable things wanting in that one, than found in it. This then is the peculiar treaſure of theſe kings, who inherit the kingdom of heaven. They ſhall want nothing that may contribute to their full ſatisfaction. Now they are rich in hope: but then they will have their riches in hand. Now all things are theirs in poſſeſſion. They may go for ever through Immanuel's land, and behold the glory and riches thereof, with the ſatisfying thought, that all they ſee is their own. It is pity

theſe

theſe ſhould ever be uneaſy under the want of earthly good things, who may be ſure they ſhall inherit all things at length.

VIII. Albeit there is no (material) temple therein, no mediate ſerving of God in the uſe of ordinances, as here on earth; yet, as for this kingdom, "The Lord "God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of "it, Rev. xxi. 22. As the temple was the glory of Canaan, ſo will the celeſtial temple be the glory of heaven. The ſaints ſhall be brought in thither as a royal prieſthood, to dwell in the houſe of God forever: for Jeſus Chriſt will then make every ſaint a pillar in the temple of God, and he ſhall go no more out, Rev. iii. 12. as the prieſts and Levites did, in their courſes, go out of the material temple. There the ſaints ſhall have the cloud of glory, the divine preſence, with moſt intimate and uninterrupted communion with God: there they ſhall have Jeſus as Chriſt, the true ark, wherein the fiery law ſhall be for ever hid from their eyes: and the mercy-ſeat, from which nothing ſhall be breathed, but everlaſting peace and good will towards them: the cherubims, the ſociety of holy angels, who ſhall join with them in eternal admiration of the myſtery of Chriſt: the golden candleſtick, with its ſeven lamps, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, Rev. xxi. 23. the incenſe-altar, in the interceſſion of Chriſt, who ever liveth to make interceſſion for them, (Heb. vii. 25.), eternally exhibiting the merits of his death and ſufferings; efficaciouſly willing for ever, that theſe, whom the Father hath given him, be with him: and the ſhew-bread table, in the perpetual feaſt, they ſhall have together, in the enjoyment of God. This leads me more particularly to conſider,

IX. The ſociety in this kingdom. What would royal power and authority, enſigns of royalty, richeſt treaſures, and all other advantages of a kingdom, avail, without comfortable ſociety? Some crowned heads

heads have had but a ſorry life through the want of it: their palaces have been unto them as priſons, and their badges of honour as chains on a priſoner: while hated of all, they had none they could truſt in, or whom they could have comfortable fellowſhip with. But the chief part of heaven's happineſs lies in the bleſſed ſociety the ſaint ſhall have there. For clearing of which, conſider theſe few things;

Firſt, the ſociety of the ſaints, among themſelves, will be no ſmall part of heaven's happineſs. The communion of ſaints on earth is highly prized by all theſe who are travelling through the world unto Zion: and companions in ſin can never have ſuch true pleaſure and delight in one another, as ſometimes the Lord's people have in praying together, and converſing about theſe things which the world is a ſtranger to. Here the ſaints are but few in a company, at beſt: and ſome are ſo poſted as that they ſeem to themſelves to dwell alone; having no acceſs to ſuch, as they could freely unboſom themſelves to, in the matter of their ſpiritual caſe. They ſigh and ſay, "Wo is me! for I am as when they have gathered "the ſummer fruits—there is no cluſter to eat—the "good man is periſhed out of the earth," Micah vii. 1, 2. But in the general aſſembly of the firſt-born in heaven, none of all the ſaints, who ever were, or will be on the earth, ſhall be amiſſing. They will be all of them together in one place, all poſſeſs one kingdom, and all ſit down together to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb. Here the beſt of the ſaints want not their ſinful imperfections, making their ſociety leſs comfortable: but there they ſhall be perfect, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, Eph. v. 27. And all natural, as well as ſinful imperfections, are then done away: they ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, Dan. xii. 3.

There we will ſee Adam and Eve in the heavenly paradiſe freely eating of the tree of life; Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the holy patriarchs, no more wandering

wandering from land to land, but come to their ever-lasting rest; all the prophets feeding their eyes on the glory of him, of whose coming they prophesied; the twelve apostles of the Lamb sitting on their twelve thrones and the holy martyrs in their long white robes, with their crowns upon their heads: the godly kings advanced to a kingdom which cannot be moved; and them that turn many to righteousness, shining as the stars for ever and ever. There will we see our godly friends, relations, and acquaintances, pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out from us. And it is more than probable, that the saints will know one another in heaven; that, at least, they will know their friends, relatives, and these they were acquainted with on earth, and such as have been most eminent in the church: howbeit that knowledge will be purged from all earthly thoughts and affections. This seems to be included in that perfection of happiness to which the saints shall be advanced there. If Adam knew who and what Eve was, at first sight, when the Lord God brought her to him, (Gen. ii. 23, 34.), why should one question, but husbands and wives, parents and children, will know each other in glory? If the Thessalonians, converted by Paul's ministry, shall be his "crown of rejoicing "in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his com-"ing," (1 Thess. ii. 19.), why may not one conclude, that ministers will know their people, and people their ministers, in heaven? And if the disciples, on the mount of transfiguration, knew Moses and Elias, whom they had never seen before, (Matth. xvii. 4.), we have ground to think, we shall know them too, and such as they, when we come to heaven. The communion of saints shall be most intimate there: "they shall "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the "Kingdom of heaven," Matth. viii. 11. Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, (Luke xvi. 23.) which denotes most intimate and familiar society. And though diversity of tongues

shall

ſhall ceaſe, (1 Cor. xii. 8-) I make no queſtion, but there will be an uſe of ſpeech in heaven; and that the ſaints ſhall glorify God in their bodies there, as well as in their ſpirits, ſpeaking forth his praiſes with an audible voice, (As for the language, we ſhall underſtand what it is, when we come thither). When Paul was caught up to the third heavens, the ſeat of the bleſſed, he heard there "unſpeakable words, "which is not lawful for a man to utter. 2 Cor. xii. 4. Moſes and Elias, on the mount with Chriſt, talked with him, Matth. xvii. 3. and ſpake of his deceaſe which he ſhould accompliſh at Jeruſalem, Luke ix. 31.

Secondly, The ſaints will have the ſociety of all the holy angels there. An innumerable company of angels ſhall be companions to them in their glorified ſtate, Happy were the ſhepherds, who heard the ſong of the heavenly hoſt, when Chriſt was born! but thrice happy they, who ſhall join their voices with theirs, in the choir of ſaints and angels in heaven, when he ſhall be glorified in all who ſhall be about him there! Then ſhall we be brought acquainted with theſe bleſſed ſpirits who never ſinned. How bright will theſe morning ſtars ſhine in the holy place! they were miniſtering ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation, loved them for their Lord and Maſter's ſake; encamped round about them, to preſerve them from danger: how joyfully will they welcome them to their everlaſting habitations, and rejoice to ſee them come at length to their kingdom, as the tutor doth in the proſperity of his pupils? The ſaints ſhall be no more afraid of them, as ſometime they were wont to be: they ſhall then have put off mortality, and infirmities of the fleſh, and be themſelves, as the angels of God, fit to entertain communion and fellowſhip with theſe ſhining ones. And both being brought under one head, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they ſhall join in the praiſes of God, and of the Lamb, ſaying, with a loud voice, "worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, &c. Rev.

v. 11, 12. Whether the angels ſhall (as ſome think) aſſume airy bodies, that they may be ſeen by the bodily eyes of the ſaints, and be in nearer capacity to converſe with them, I know not: but as they want not ways of converſe amongſt themſelves, we have reaſon to think, that converſation betwixt them and the ſaints ſhall not be for ever blocked up.

Laſtly, They ſhall have ſociety with the Lord himſelf in heaven, glorious communion with God and Chriſt, which is the perfection of happineſs. I chuſe to ſpeak of communion with God and the man Chriſt together; becauſe as we derive our grace from the Lamb, ſo we will derive our glory from him too, the man Chriſt being (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) the centre of the divine glory in heaven, from whence it is diffuſed unto all the ſaints. This ſeems to be taught us by theſe ſcriptures, which expreſs heaven's happineſs by being with Chriſt, Luke xxiii. 43. "This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe." John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that theſe alſo whom thou "haſt given me, be with me," (and remarkable to this purpoſe is what follows), "that they may be-"hold my glory." 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. "So ſhall we "ever be with the Lord," to wit, the Lord Chriſt, whom we ſhall meet in the air. This alſo ſeems to be the import of theſe ſcriptures, wherein God and the Lamb, the ſlain Saviour, are jointly ſpoken of, in the point of the happineſs of the ſaints in heaven, Rev. vii. 17. For the Lamb, which is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, Chap. xxi. 3. Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, to wit, as in a tabernacle, (ſo the word ſignifies) that is, in the fleſh of Chriſt, (compare John i. 14. and ver. 22). The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. Here lies the chief happineſs of the ſaints in heaven, that without which they could never be happy, though lodged in that glorious

glorious place, and bleſſed with the ſociety of angels there. What I will venture to ſay of it, ſhall be compriſed in three things:

1ſt. The ſaints in heaven ſhall have the glorious preſence of God, and of the Lamb: God himſelf ſhall be with them, Rev. xxi. 3. And they ſhall ever be with the Lord. God is every where preſent, in reſpect of his eſſence; the ſaints militant have his ſpecial gracious preſence. But in heaven they have his glorious preſence. There they are brought near to the throne of the great King, and ſtand before him, where he ſhows his inconceivable glory. There they have the tabernacle of God, on which the cloud of glory reſts, the all glorious human nature of Chriſt, wherein the fullneſs of the Godhead dwells, not vailed as in the days of his humiliation, but ſhining through that bleſſed fleſh (that all the ſaints may behold his glory) and making that body more glorious than a thouſand ſons: ſo that the city has no need of the ſun, nor of the moon, but "the glory of God doth lighten it, "and the Lamb is the light thereof, (properly the "candle thereof)" Rev. xxi. 23. i. e. The Lamb is the luminary, or luminous body, which gives light to the city; as the ſun and moon now give light to the world, or as a candle lightens a dark room: and the light proceeding from that glorious luminary, for the city is the glory of God. Sometime that candle burnt very dim, it was hid under a buſhel, in the time of his humiliation; but that, now and then, it darted out ſome rays of this light, which dazzled the eyes of the ſpectators: but now it is ſet on high, in the city of God, where it ſhines, and ſhall ſhine for ever, in perfection of glory. It was ſometimes laid aſide, as a ſtone diſallowed of the builders: but now it is, and for ever will be, the light or luminary of that city; and that, "like unto a ſtone moſt pre-"cious, even like a jaſper ſtone clear as cryſtal," ver. 11.

Who can conceive the happineſs of the ſaints, in the preſence chamber of the great King, where he ſits in his chair of ſtate, making his glory eminently to appear in the man Chriſt? His gracious preſence makes a mighty change upon the ſaints in this world: his glorious preſence in heaven then muſt needs ſcrew up their graces to their perfection, and elevate their capacities. The ſaints do experience, that the preſence of God now with them in his grace, can make a little heaven of a ſort of hell: how great then muſt the glory of heaven be, by his preſence there in his glory! If a candle, in ſome ſort, beautifies a cottage or priſon, how will the ſhining ſun beautify a palace or paradiſe! The gracious preſence of God made a wilderneſs lightſome to Moſes, the valley of the ſhadow of death to David, a fiery furnace to the three children: what a raviſhing beauty ſhall then ariſe from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, ſhining in his meridian brightneſs on the ſtreet of the city laid with pure gold? This glorious preſence of God in heaven will put a glory on the ſaints themſelves. The pleaſanteſt garden hath no beauty, when the darkneſs of the night ſits down on it; but the ſhining ſun puts a glory on the blackeſt mountains; ſo theſe who are now as bottles in the ſmoke, when ſet in the glorious preſence of God, will be glorious both in ſoul and body.

2dly, The ſaints in heaven ſhall have the full enjoyment of God and of the Lamb. This is it that perfectly ſatisfies the rational creature; and here is the ſaints everlaſting reſt. This will make up all their wants, and fill the deſires of their ſouls, which after all here obtained, ſtill cry "Give, give," not without ſome anxiety; becauſe though they do enjoy God, yet they do not enjoy him fully. As to the way and manner of this enjoyment, our Lord tells us, John xvii. 3. "This is life eternal, that they "may know thee the only true God, and Jeſus "Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent." Now there are two ways

ways how a desirable object is known most perfectly and satisfyingly; the one is by sight, the other by experience: sight satisfies the understanding, and experience satisfies the will. Accordingly one may say, that the saints enjoy God and the Lamb in heaven. (1.) By an intuitive knowledge. (2.) By an experimental knowledge, both of them perfect, I mean in respect of the capacity of the creature; for otherwise a creature's perfect knowledge of infinite Being is impossible. The saints below enjoy God, in that knowledge they have of him by report, from his holy word, which they believe; they see him likewise darkly in the glass of ordinances, which do, as it were, represent the bridegroom's picture or shadow, while he is absent: they have also some experimental knowledge of him, they taste that God is good, and that the Lord is gracious. But the saints above shall not need a good report of the King, they shall see himself; therefore faith ceaseth; they will behold his own face; therefore ordinances are no more: there is no need of a glass: they shall drink, and drink abundantly of that whereof they have tasted; and so hope ceaseth, for they are at the utmost bounds of their desires.

1. The saints in heaven shall enjoy God and the Lamb by sight, and that in a most perfect manner, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face." Here our sight is but mediate, as by a glass, in which we see not things themselves, but the images of things; but there we shall have an immediate view of God and the Lamb, Here our knowledge is but obscure; there it shall be clear without the least mixture of darkness. The Lord doth now converse with his saints, through the lattices of ordinances: but then shall they be in the presence chamber with him. There is a vail now on the glorious face, as to us; but when we come to the upper house, that vail, through which some rays of beauty are now darted, will be found entirely taken off; and then shall glorious excellencies and perfections

fections, not ſeen in him by mortals, be clearly diſcovered; for we ſhall ſee his face, Rev. xxii. 4. The phraſe ſeems to be borrowed from the honour put on ſome in the courts of monarchs, to be attendants on the king's perſon. We read, Jer. lii. 52. "of ſeven men of them that were (Heb. Seers of the "king's face, *i. e.* as we read it) near the king's per-"ſon." O unſpeakable glory! the great King keeps his court in heaven; and the ſaints ſhall all be his courtiers, ever near the King's perſon, ſeeing his face. "The throne of God and of the Lamb ſhall be in it, "and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him, and ſhall ſee his "face," Rev. xxii. 3, 4.

(1.) They ſhall ſee Jeſus Chriſt with their bodily eyes, ſince he will never lay aſide the human nature. They will always behold that glorious bleſſed body, which is perſonally united to the divine nature, and exalted far above principalities and powers, and every name that is named. There will we ſee with our eyes, that very body which was born of Mary of Bethlehem, and crucified at Jeruſalem betwixt two thieves; the bleſſed head that was crowned with thorns; the face that was ſpit upon; the hands and feet that were nailed to the croſs; all ſhining with inconceivable glory. The glory of the man Chriſt will attract the eyes of all the ſaints, and he will be for ever admired in all them that believe, 2 Theſſ. i. 10. Were each ſtar, in the heavens, ſhining as the ſun in its meridian brightneſs, and the light of the ſun ſo increaſed, as the ſtars, in that caſe, ſhould bear the ſame proportion to the ſun, in point of light, that they do now; it might poſſibly be ſome faint reſemblance of the glory of the man Chriſt, in compariſon with that of the ſaints: for though the ſaints ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun; yet not they, but the Lamb ſhall be the light of the city. The wiſe men fell down, and worſhipped him, when they ſaw him a young child, with Mary his mother, in the houſe. But O what a raviſhing ſight will it be to ſee him in

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his kingdom, on his throne, at his Father's right hand! The word was made flesh, (John i. 14.) and the glory of God shall shine through that flesh, and the joys of heaven spring out from it, unto the saints, who shall see and enjoy God in Christ. For since the union betwixt Christ and the saints is never dissolved, but they continue his members for ever; and the members cannot draw their life but from their head; seeing that which is independent on the head, as to vital influence, is no member: therefore Jesus Christ will remain the everlasting bond of union betwixt God and the saints; from whence their eternal life shall spring, John xvii. 2, 3. "Thou hast given "him power over all flesh, that he should give eter- "nal life to as many as thou hast given him." And "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the "only true God, &c. ver. 22, 23. And the glory "thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may "be one, even as we are one: *I* in them, and thou "in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Wherefore the immediate enjoyment of God in heaven, is to be understood, in respect of the laying aside of word and sacraments, and such external means as we enjoy God by in this world; but not as if the saints should then cast off their dependence on their Head for vital influences; nay, "the Lamb "which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, "and lead them unto living fountains of water," Rev. vii. 17.

Now when we shall behold him, who died for us, that we might live for evermore, whose matchless love made him swim through the Red Sea of God's wrath to make a path in the midst of it for us, by which we might pass safely to Canaan's land; then we will see what a glorious one he is, who suffered all this for us; what entertainment he had in the upper house; what hallelujahs of angels could not hinder him to hear the groans of a perishing multitude on earth, and to come down for their help; and what a glory

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he laid aſide for us. Then will we be more able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 18, 19. When the ſaints ſhall remember, that the waters of wrath he was plunged into, are the wells of ſalvation, from whence they draw all their joy; that they have got the cup of ſalvation in exchange of the cup of wrath, his Father gave him to drink, which his ſinleſs human nature ſhivered at; how will their hearts leap within them, burn with ſeraphic love, like coals of juniper, and the arch of heaven ring with their ſongs of ſalvation! The Jews, celebrating the feaſt of tabernacles, (which was the moſt joyful of all their feaſts, and laſted ſeven days) went once every day about the altar, ſinging hoſanna, with their myrtle palms, and willow branches in their hands, (the two former ſigns of victory, the laſt of chaſtity) in the mean time bending their boughs towards the altar. When the ſaints are preſented, as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt; and as conquerors have got their palms in their hands, how joyfully will they compaſs the altar evermore, and ſing their hoſannas, or rather their hallelujahs about it, bending their palms towards it, acknowledging themſelves to owe all unto the Lamb that was ſlain, and redeemed them with his blood! And to this agrees what John ſaw, Rev. vii. 9, 10. "A great multi-
"tude—ſtood before the throne, and before the
"Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their
"hands; and cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Salva-
"tion to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and
"unto the Lamb."

(2.) They ſhall ſee God, Matth. v. 8. They will be happy in ſeeing the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, (not with their bodily eyes, in reſpect of which God is inviſible, 1 Tim. i. 17. but) with the eyes of their underſtanding; being bleſſed with the moſt perfect, full, and clear knowledge of God and divine things, which the creature is capable of. This is called the

beatific

beatific vision, and is the perfection of the understanding, the utmost term thereof. It is but an obscure delineation of the glory of God, that mortals can have on earth; a sight, as it were, of his back-parts, Exod. xxxiii. 23. But there they will see his face, Rev. xxii. 4. They shall see him in the fulness of his glory, and behold him fixedly: whereas it is but a passing view they can have of him here, Exod. xxxiv. 6. There is a vast difference betwixt the sight of a king in his night clothes, quickly passing by us; and a fixed leisure view of him sitting on his throne in his royal robes, his crown on his head, and his sceptre in his hand: such a difference will there be, betwixt the greatest manifestation of God that ever a saint had on earth, and the display of his glory that shall be seen in heaven. There the saints shall eternally, without interruption, feed their eyes upon him, and be ever viewing his glorious perfections. And as their bodily eyes shall be strengthened, and fitted to behold the glorious majesty of the man Christ; as eagles gaze on the sun, without being blinded thereby; so their minds shall have such an elevation, as will fit them to see God in his glory: their capacities shall be enlarged, according to the measure in which he shall be pleased to communicate himself unto them for their complete happiness.

This blissful sight of God, being quite above our present capacities, we must needs be much in the dark about it. But it seems to be something else, than the sight of that glory, which we will see with our bodily eyes, in the saints, and in the man Christ, or any other splendor or refulgence from the Godhead whatsoever; for no created thing can be our chief good and happiness, nor fully satisfy our souls; and it is plain, that these things are somewhat different from God himself. Therefore I conceive, that the souls of the saints shall see God himself: so the scriptures teach us, that we shall see face to face, and know even as we are known, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. and

that we ſhall ſee him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. Howbeit the ſaints can never have an adequate conception of God: they cannot comprehend that which is infinite. They may touch the mountain, but cannot graſp it in their arms. They cannot, with one glance of their eye, behold what grows on every ſide: but the divine perfections will be an unbounded field, in which the glorified ſhall walk eternally, ſeeing more and more of God; ſince they can never come to the end of that which is infinite. They may bring their veſſels to this ocean every moment, and fill them with new waters. What a raviſhing ſight would it be, to ſee all the imperfections, and lovely qualities, that are ſcattered here and there among the creatures, gathered together into one! But even ſuch a ſight would be infinitely below this bliſsful ſight the ſaints ſhall have in heaven. For they ſhall ſee God, in whom all the perfections ſhall eminently appear, with infinitely more; whereof there is no veſtige to be found in the creatures. In him ſhall they ſee every thing deſirable, and nothing but what is deſirable.

Then ſhall they be perfectly ſatisfied as to the love of God towards them, which they are now ready to queſtion on every turn. They will be no more ſet to perſuade themſelves of it, by marks, ſigns, and teſtimonies: they will have an intuitive knowledge of it. They ſhall (with the profoundeſt reverence be it ſpoken) look into the heart of God, and there ſee the love he bore to them from all eternity, and the love and good will he will bear to them for evermore. The glorified ſhall have a moſt clear and diſtinct underſtanding of divine truths, for in his light we ſhall ſee light, Pſal. xxxvi. 9. The light of glory will be a complete commentary on the Bible, and looſe all the hard and knotty queſtions in divinity. There is no joy on earth, comparable to that which ariſeth from the diſcovery of truth; no diſcovery of truth comparable to the diſcovery of ſcripture-truth, made by the Spirit of the Lord unto the ſoul. "I rejoice "at thy word," ſays the Pſalmiſt, "as one that finds

" eth great ſpoil, Pſal. cxix 162. Yet it is but an imperfect diſcovery we have of it while here. How raviſhing then will it be, to ſee the opening of the whole treaſure, hid in that field! They ſhall alſo be let into the underſtanding of the works of God. The beauty of the works of creation and providence will then be ſet in a due light. Natural knowledge will be brought to perfection by the light of glory. The web of providence, concerning the church, and all men whatſoever, will then be cut out, and laid before the eyes of the ſaints: and it will appear a moſt beautiful mixture; ſo as they ſhall all ſay together, on the view of it, " He hath done all things well." But, in a ſpecial manner, the work of redemption ſhall be the eternal wonder of the ſaints, and they will admire and praiſe the glorious contrivance for ever. Then ſhall they get a full view of its ſuitableneſs to the divine perfections, and to the caſe of ſinners; and clearly read the covenant, that paſſed betwixt the Father and the Son, from all eternity, touching their ſalvation. They ſhall for ever wonder and praiſe, and praiſe and wonder, at the myſteries of wiſdom and love, goodneſs and holineſs, mercy and juſtice, appearing in the glorious device. Their ſoul ſhall be eternally ſatisfied with the ſight of God himſelf, and of their election by the Father, their redemption by the Son, and application thereof to them by the Holy Spirit.

2. The ſaints in heaven ſhall enjoy God in Chriſt by experimental knowledge, which is, when the object itſelf is given and poſſeſſed. This is the participation of the divine goodneſs in full meaſure; which is the perfection of the will, and utmoſt term thereof. " The Lamb ſhall lead them unto living fountains of " waters," Rev. vii. 17. Theſe are no other but God himſelf " the fountain of living waters," who will fully and freely communicate himſelf unto them. He will pour out of his goodneſs eternally into their ſouls, and then ſhall they have a moſt lively ſenſation,

in the innermoſt part of their ſouls, of all that goodneſs they heard of, and believed to be in him; and of what they ſee in him by the light of glory. This will be an everlaſting practical expoſition of that word, which men and angels cannot ſufficiently unfold, to wit, God himſelf ſhall—be their God, Rev. xxi. 3. God will communicate himſelf unto them fully: they will no more be ſet to taſte of the ſtreams of divine goodneſs in ordinances, as they were wont, but ſhall drink at the fountain head. They will be no more entertained with ſips and drops, but filled with all the fulneſs of God. And this will be the entertainment of every ſaint: for though in created things, what is given to one is withheld from another, yet infinite good can fully communicate itſelf to all, and fill all. Theſe who are heirs of God, the great heritage, ſhall then enter into a full poſſeſſion of their inheritance: and the Lord will open his treaſures of goodneſs unto them, that their enjoyment may be full. They ſhall not be ſtinted to any meaſure: but the enjoyment ſhall go as far as their enlarged capacities can reach. As a narrow veſſel cannot contain the ocean, ſo neither can the infinite creature comprehend an infinite good; but no meaſure ſhall be ſet to the enjoyment, but what ariſeth from the capacity of the creature: ſo that, although there be degrees of glory, yet all ſhall be filled, and have what they can hold; though ſome will be capable to hold more than others, there will be no want to any of them; all ſhall be fully ſatisfied, and perfectly bleſſed in the full enjoyment of divine goodneſs, according to their enlarged capacities. As when bottles of different ſizes are filled, ſome contain more, others leſs; yet all of them have what they can contain. The glorified ſhall have all, in God, for the ſatisfaction of all their deſires. No created thing can afford ſatisfaction to all our deſires: clothes may warm us, but they cannot feed us; the light is comfortable, but cannot nouriſh us But in God we ſhall have all our deſires, and ſhall deſire nothing without

without him. They ſhall be happy ones, that deſire nothing but what is truly deſirable: and withal have all they deſire. God will be all in all to the ſaints: he will be their life, health, riches, honour, peace, and all good things. He will communicate himſelf freely to them; the door of acceſs to him ſhall never be ſhut again, for one moment. They may, when they will, taſte of the fruit of the tree of life, for they will find it on each ſide of the river, Rev. xxii. 2. There will be no vail betwixt God and them, to be drawn aſide; but his fulneſs ſhall ever ſtand open to them. No door to knock at, in heaven; no aſking to go before receiving; the Lord will allow his people an unreſtrained familiarity with himſelf there.

Now they are in part made partakers of the divine nature; but then they ſhall perfectly partake of it; that is to ſay, God will communicate to them his own image, make all his goodneſs not only paſs before them, but paſs into them, and ſtamp the image of all his own perfections upon them, ſo far as the creature is capable to receive the ſame; from whence ſhall reſult a perfect likeneſs to him, in all things in or about them, which completes the happineſs of the creature. And this is what the Pſalmiſt ſeems to have had in view, Pſalm xvii. 15. "I ſhall be ſatisfied, when I "awake, with thy likeneſs;" the perfection of God's image, following upon the beatifick viſion. And ſo ſays John, 1 John iii. 2. "We ſhall be like him, for we "ſhall ſee him as he is." Hence there ſhall be a moſt cloſe and intimate union betwixt God and the ſaints: God ſhall be in them, and they in God, in the way of a glorious and moſt perfect union; for then ſhall they dwell in love made perfect. "God is love, and "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God "in him," 1 John iv. 16. How will the ſaints knit with God, and he with them; when he ſhall ſee nothing in them but his own image, when their love ſhall arrive at its perfection, no nature, but the divine

nature

nature, being left in them, and all imperfection fwallowed up in that glorious transformation into the likeneſs of God! their love to the Lord being purged from the droſs of ſelf-love, ſhall be moſt pure; ſo as they will love nothing but God and in God. It ſhall be no more faint and languiſhing, but burn like coals of juniper. It will be a light without darkneſs, a flaming fire without ſmoke. As the live coal, when all the moiſture is gone out of it, is all fire; ſo will the ſaints be all love, when they come to the full enjoyment of God in heaven, by intuitive and experimental knowledge of him by ſight, and full participation of the divine goodneſs.

Laſtly, From this glorious preſence and enjoyment ſhall ariſe an unſpeakable joy, which the ſaints ſhall be filled with. "In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy," Pſal. xvi. 11. The ſaints ſometimes enjoy God in the world, when their eyes being held that they cannot perceive it, they have not the comfort of the enjoyment; but then, all miſtakes being removed, they ſhall not only enjoy God, but reſt in the enjoyment with inexpreſſible enjoy and ſatisfaction. The deſire of earthly things breeds torment, and the enjoyment of them often ends in loathing. But though the glorified ſaints ſhall ever deſire more and more of God, their deſires ſhall not be mixt with the leaſt anxiety, ſince the fulneſs of the God-head ſtands always open to them: therefore they ſhall hunger no more, they ſhall not have the leaſt uneaſineſs, in their eternal appetite after the hidden manna, neither ſhall continued enjoyment breed loathing; they ſhall never think they have too much; therefore, it is added, neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat, Rev. vii. 16. The enjoyment of God and the Lamb will be ever freſh and new to them, through the ages of eternity: for they ſhall drink of fountains of living waters, where new waters are continually ſpringing up in abundance, ver. 17. They ſhall eat of the tree of life, which, for variety, affords twelve manner of fruits,

fruits, and theſe always new and freſh, for it yields every month, Rev. xxii. 2. Their joy ſhall be pure and unmixed, without any dregs of ſorrow, not flight and momentary, but ſolid and everlaſting, without interruption. They will enter into joy, Mat. xxv. 21. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. The expreſſion is ſomewhat unuſual, and brings me in mind of that word of our ſuffering Redeemer, Mark xiv. 34. "My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful unto death." His ſoul was beſet with ſorrows, as the word there uſed will bear: the floods of ſorrow went round about him, encompaſſing him on every hand; whitherſoever he turned his eyes, ſorrow was before him, it ſprang in upon him from heaven, earth and hell, all at once: thus was he entered into ſorrow, and therefore ſaith, Pſal. lxix. 2. "I am come into the "deep waters where the floods overflow me." Now wherefore all this, but that his own might enter into joy? Joy ſometimes enters into us now, with much ado to get acceſs, while we are encompaſſed with ſorrows; but then joy ſhall not only enter into us, but we ſhall enter into it, and ſwim for ever in an ocean of joy; where we ſhall ſee nothing but joy, whitherſoever we turn our eyes. The preſence and enjoyment of God and the Lamb will ſatisfy us with pleaſures for evermore: and the glory of our ſouls and bodies, ariſing from thence, will afford us everlaſting delight. The ſpirit of heavineſs, how cloſely ſoever it cleaves to any of the ſaints now, ſhall drop off then: their weeping ſhall be turned into ſongs of joy, and bottles of tears ſhall iſſue in rivers of pleaſures. Happy they who now ſow in tears, which ſhall ſpring up in joy, in heaven, and bow their heads there with a weight of glory upon them.

Thus far of the ſociety in this kingdom of the ſaints.

X. In the laſt place. The kingdom ſhall endure for ever. As every thing in it is eternal, ſo the ſaints ſhall have an undoubted certainty and full aſſurance of

of the eternal duration of the ſame. This is a neceſſary ingredient in perfect happineſs; for the leaſt uncertainty, as to the continuance of any good with one, is not without ſome fear, anxiety and torment; and therefore is utterly inconſiſtent with perfect happineſs. But the glorified never ſhall have fear, nor cauſe of fear, of any loſs; they ſhall be "ever with the Lord," 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. They ſhall all attain the full perſuaſion, that nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate them from the love of God, nor from the full enjoyment of him for ever. The inheritance reſerved in heaven is incorruptible; it hath no principle of corruption in itſelf, to make it liable to decay; but endures for evermore: it is undefiled; nothing from without can mar its beauty, nor is there any thing in itſelf to offend thoſe who enjoy it. And therefore it fadeth not away, but ever remains in its native luſtre, and primitive beauty, 1 Pet. i. 4. Hitherto of the nature of the kingdom of heaven.

Secondly, Proceed we now to ſpeak of the admiſſion of the ſaints into this their kingdom; where I ſhall briefly touch upon two things; (1.) The formal admiſſion, in the call unto them from the Judge, to come to their kingdom. (2.) The quality in which they are admitted, and introduced to it.

I. Their admiſſion, the text ſhews to be, by a voice from the throne; the King calling to them, from the throne, before angels and men, to come to their kingdom. Come and go are but ſhort words: but they will be ſuch as will afford matter of thought to all mankind, through all the ages of eternity: ſince upon the one depends everlaſting happineſs, and upon the other everlaſting miſery.

Now our Lord bids the worſt of ſinners, who hear the goſpel, come; but the moſt part will not come unto him. Some few, whoſe hearts are touched by his Spirit, do embrace the call, and their ſouls within them ſay, "Behold, we come unto thee:" they give themſelves to the Lord, forſake the world and their

luſts

luſts for him; they bear his yoke, and caſt it not off, no not in the heat of the day, when the weight of it (perhaps) makes them ſweat the blood out of their bodies. Behold the fools! ſaith the carnal world, whither are they going? But ſtay a little, O fooliſh world! From the ſame mouth, whence they had the call they are now following, another call ſhall come which will make amends for all, 'Come ye bleſſed 'of my Father, inherit the heaven.'

The ſaints ſhall find an expreſſible ſweetneſs in this call, to come. (1.) Hereby Jeſus Chriſt ſhews his deſire of their ſociety in the upper houſe, that they may be ever with him there. Thus he will open his heart unto them, as ſometimes he did to his Father concerning them, ſaying, "Father, I will that they—be with "me, where I am." John xvii. 24. Now the travel of his ſoul ſtands before the throne, not only the ſouls, but the bodies he has redeemed: and they muſt come, for he muſt be completely ſatisfied. (2.) Hereby they are ſolemnly invited to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb. They were invited to the lower table, by the voice of the ſervants, and the ſecret workings of the Spirit within them; and they came, and did partake of the feaſt of divine communications in the lower houſe: but Jeſus Chriſt in perſon ſhall invite them, before all the world, to the higher table. (3.) By this he admits them into the manſions of glory. The keys of heaven hang at the girdle of our royal Mediator: All power in heaven is given to him, (Matt. xxvii. 18.) and none get in thither, but whom he admits. When they were living on earth, with the reſt of the world, he opened the everlaſting doors of their hearts, entered into them himſelf, and ſhut them again; ſo as ſin could never re-enter, to reign there as formerly: and now he opens heaven's doors to them, draws his doves into the ark, and ſhuts them in there; ſo as the law, death and hell, can never get them out again. The ſaints in this life were ſtill labouring to enter into that reſt: but ſatan was always

pulling them back, their corruption always drawing them down; in so much that they have sometimes been left to hang by a hair of a promise, (if I may be allowed the expression) not without fears of falling into the lake of fire: but now Christ gives the word for their admission; they are brought in, and put beyond all hazard. Lastly, thus he speaks to them, as the person introducing them into the kingdom, into the presence-chamber of the Great King, and unto the throne. JESUS CHRIST is the great secretary of Heaven, whose it is to bring the saints into the gracious presence of God: and to whom alone it belongs to bring them into the glorious presence of God in heaven. Truly heaven would be a strange place to them, if Jesus was not there: but the Son will introduce his brethren into his Father's kingdom; they shall go in with him to the marriage, Matth. xxv. 10.

II. Let us consider in what quality they are introduced by him.

First, He brings them in as the blessed of his Father; so runs the call from the throne, "Come, ye "blessed of my Father," &c. It is Christ's Father's house they are to come into: therefore he puts them in mind, that they are blessed of his Father; dear to the Father, as well as to himself. This is it that makes heaven home to them; namely, that it is Christ's Father's house, where we may be assured of welcome, being married to the Son, and being his Father's choice for that very end. He brings them in for his Father's sake, as well as for his own: they are the blessed of his Father; who, as he is the fountain of the Deity, is also the fountain of all blessings conferred on the children of men. They are these to whom God designed well from eternity. They were blessed in the eternal purpose of God, being elected to everlasting life. At the opening of the book of life, their names were found written therein: so that, bringing them to the kingdom, he doth but bring them to what the Father, from all eternity, designed

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for them: being ſaved by the Son, they are ſaved according to his (i. e. the Father's) purpoſe, 2 Tim. i. 9. They are theſe to whom the Father has ſpoken well. He ſpake well to them in his word, which muſt now receive its full accompliſhment. They had his promiſe of the kingdom, lived and died in the faith of it; and now they come to receive the thing promiſed. Unto them he has done well. A gift is often in ſcripture called a bleſſing; and God's bleſſing is ever real, like Iſaac's bleſſing, by which Jacob became his heir: they were all by his grace juſtified, ſanctified, and made to perſevere unto the end; now they are raiſed up in glory, and being tried, ſtand in the judgment: what remains then, but that God crown his own work of grace in them, in giving them their kingdom, in the full enjoyment of himſelf for ever? Finally, they are theſe whom God has conſecrated; the which alſo is a ſcripture-notion of bleſſing, 1 Cor. x. 16. God ſet them apart for himſelf, to be kings and prieſts unto him; and the Mediator introduceth them as ſuch to their kingdom and prieſthood.

Secondly, Chriſt introduceth them as heirs of the kingdom to the actual poſſeſſion of it. "Come, ye "bleſſed, inherit the kingdom." They are the children of God, by regeneration and adoption: "And "if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint "heirs with Chriſt," Rom. viii. 17. Now is the general aſſembly of the firſt-born before the throne: their minority is overpaſt, and the time appointed of the Father for receiving of their inheritance is come. The Mediator purchaſed the inheritance for them with his own blood; their rights and evidences were drawn long ago, and regiſtered in the Bible; nay, they had infeftment of their inheritance in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, as their proxy, when he aſcended into heaven, "whither the forerunner is, for us, entered," Heb. vi. 20. Nothing remaineth, but that they enter into perſonal poſſeſſion thereof, which begun at death,

is perfected at the laſt day; when the ſaints, in their bodies as well as their ſouls, go into their kingdom.

Laſtly they are introduced to it, as theſe it was prepared for, from the foundation of the world. The kingdom was prepared for them in the eternal purpoſe of God, before they, or any of them, had a being; which ſhews it to be a gift of free grace to them. It was from eternity the divine purpoſe, that there ſhould be ſuch a kingdom for the elect; and that all impediments which might mar their acceſs to it, ſhould be removed out of the way: and withal by the ſame eternal decree, every one's place in it was determined and ſet apart, to be reſerved for him, that each of the children coming home at length into their Father's houſe, might find his own place awaiting him, and ready for him: as at Saul's table, David's place was empty, when he was not there to occupy it himſelf, 1 Sam. xx. 25. And now that the appointed time is come, they are brought in to take their ſeveral places in glory, ſet apart and reſerved for them, till they ſhould come at them.

USE. I ſhall ſhut up my diſcourſe on this ſubject, with a word of application. (1.) To all who claim a right to this kingdom. (2.) To theſe who have indeed a right to it. (3.) To theſe who have not a right thereto.

Firſt, Since it is evident, there is no promiſcuous admiſſion into the kingdom of heaven, and none do obtain it, but theſe whoſe claim to it is ſolemnly tried by the great Judge, and, after trial, ſuſtained as good and valid; it is neceſſary that all of us impartially try and examine, whether according to the laws of the kingdom, contained in the holy ſcriptures, we can verify and make good our claim to this kingdom? The hopes of heaven, which moſt men have, are built on ſuch ſandy foundations, as can never abide the trial; having no ground in the world, but in their own deluded fancy: ſuch hopes will leave thoſe, who entertain them, miſerably diſappointed at laſt. Where-

fore

fore it is not only our duty, but our intereſt, to put the matter to a fair trial, in time. If we find we have no right to heaven indeed, we are yet in the way; and what we have not, we may obtain: but if we find we have a right to it, we will then have the comfort of a happy proſpect into eternity; which is the greateſt comfort one is capable of in the world. If ye enquire, How ye may know whether ye have a right to heaven, or not? I anſwer, ye muſt know that by the ſtate ye are now in. If ye are yet in your natural ſtate, ye are children of wrath, and no children of this kingdom; for that ſtate, to them who live and die in it, iſſues in eternal miſery. If you be brought into the ſtate of grace, you have a juſt claim to the ſtate of glory; for grace will certainly iſſue in glory at length. This kingdom is an inheritance which none but the children of God can juſtly claim. Now, we become the children of God, by regeneration, and union with Chriſt his Son; "And if chil-" dren, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with "Chriſt," Rom. viii. 17. Theſe then are the great points, upon which one's evidences for the ſtate of glory do depend. And therefore I refer you to what is ſaid on the ſtate of grace, for clearing you as to your right to glory.

If you be heirs of glory, the kingdom of God is within you, by virtue of your regeneration and union with Chriſt. (1.) The king of heaven has the throne in thy heart, if thou haſt a right to that kingdom: Chriſt is in thee, and God is in thee: and having choſen him for thy portion, thy ſoul has taken up its everlaſting reſt in him, and gets no kindly reſt but in him; as the dove, until ſhe came into the ark. To him the ſoul habitually inclines, by virtue of the new nature, the divine nature, which the heirs of glory are partakers of, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in "heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth "that I deſire beſide thee." (2.) The laws of heaven are in thy heart, if thou art an heir of heaven,

Heb.

Heb. viii. 10. "I will put my laws into their mind, and "write them in their hearts." Thy mind is enlightened in the knowledge of the laws of the kingdom, by the Spirit of the Lord, the inſtructor of all the heirs of glory: for whoſoever may want inſtruction, ſure an heir to a crown ſhall not want it. "It is written "in the prophets, And they ſhall all be taught of "God," John vi. 45. Therefore, though father and mother leave them early, or be in no concern about their Chriſtian education, and they be ſoon put to work for their daily bread; yet they ſhall not lack teaching. Withal thy heart is changed, and thou beareſt God's image, which conſiſts in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, Eph. iv. 24. Thy ſoul is reconciled to the whole law of God, and at war with all known ſin. In vain, do they pretend to the holy kingdom, who are not holy in heart and life; for without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. If heaven is a reſt, it is for ſpiritual labourers, and not for loiterers. If it be an eternal triumph, they are not in the way to it, who avoid the ſpiritual warfare, and are in no care to ſubdue corruption, reſiſt temptation, and to cut their way to it, through the oppoſition made by the devil, the world and the fleſh. (3.) The treaſure in heaven is the chief in thy eſteem and deſire; for it is your treaſure, and where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo, Matth. vi. 21. If it is not the things that are ſeen, but the things that are not ſeen, which thy heart is at the greateſt care and concern to obtain: if thou art driving a trade with heaven, and thy chief buſineſs lies there; it is a ſign thy treaſure is there, for thy heart is there. But if thou art of theſe, who wonder why ſo much ado about heaven and eternal life, as if leſs may ſerve the turn; thou art like to have nothing to do with it at all. Carnal men value themſelves moſt on their treaſures upon earth; with them, the things that are not ſeen, are weighed down by the things that are ſeen, and no loſſes do ſo much affect them as earthly

loſſes

loſſes; but the heirs of the crown of glory will value themſelves moſt on their treaſures in heaven, and will not put their private eſtate in the balance with their kingdom; nor will the loſs of the former go ſo near their hearts, as the thoughts of the loſs of the latter. Where theſe firſt fruits of heaven are to be found, the eternal weight of glory will ſurely follow after; while the want of them muſt be admitted, according to the word, to be an unconteſtible evidence of an heir of wrath.

Secondly, Let the heirs of the kingdom behave themſelves ſuitable to their character and dignity. Live as having the faith and hope of this glorious kingdom: let your converſation be in heaven, Philip. iii. 20. Let your ſouls delight in communion with God, while ye are on earth, ſince ye look for your happineſs in communion with him in heaven. Let your ſpeech and actions ſavour of heaven: and in your manner of life, look like the country to which ye are going; that it may be ſaid of you, as of Gideon's brethren, Judg. viii. 18. "Each one reſembled "the children of a king." Maintain a holy contempt of the world, and of the things of the world. Although others, whoſe earthly things are their beſt things, do ſet their hearts upon them; yet it becomes you to ſet your feet on them, ſince your beſt things are above. This world is but the country, through which lies your road to Immannuel's land: therefore paſs through it as pilgrims and ſtrangers; and dip not into the incumbrances of it, ſo as to retard you in your journey: it is unworthy of one born to a palace, to ſet his heart on a cottage to dwell there; and of one running for a prize of gold, to go off his way, to gather the ſtones of the brook: but much more is it unworthy of an heir of the kingdom of heaven, to be hid among the ſtuff of this world, when he ſhould be going on to receive his crown. The prize ſet before you challengeth your utmoſt zeal, activity, and diligence: and holy courage, reſolution, and magnanimity

mity, become thoſe who are to inherit the crown. Ye cannot come at it, without fighting your way to it, through difficulties from without, and from within; but the kingdom before you is ſufficient to balance them all, though ye ſhould be called to reſiſt even unto blood. Prefer Chriſt's croſs before the world's crown, and wants in the way of duty before eaſe and wealth in the way of ſin: "Chuſe rather to "ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to en-"joy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon," Heb. xi. 25. In a common inn, ſtrangers (perhaps) fare better than the children: but here lies the difference, the children are to pay nothing for what they have got; but the ſtrangers get their bill, and muſt pay compleatly for all they have had. Did we conſider the wicked's after-reckoning, for all the ſmiles of common providence they meet with in the world, we would not grudge them their good things here, nor take it amiſs that God keeps our beſt things laſt. Heaven will make up all the ſaints loſſes, and all tears will be wiped away from their eyes there.

It is worth obſerving, that there is ſuch a variety of ſcripture notions of heaven's happineſs, as may ſuit every afflicted caſe of the ſaints. Are they oppreſſed? The day cometh, in which they ſhall have the dominion. Is their honour laid in the duſt? A throne to ſit upon, a crown on their head, and a ſceptre in their hand, will raiſe it up again. Are they reduced to poverty? Heaven is a treaſure. If they be forced to quit their own habitations, yet Chriſt's Father's houſe is ready for them. Are they driven to the wilderneſs? There is a city prepared for them. Are they baniſhed from their native country? They ſhall inherit a better country. If they are deprived of public ordinances, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple there, whither they are going; a temple, the doors of which none can ſhut: if their life be full of bitterneſs, heaven is a paradiſe for pleaſure. If they groan under the remains of ſpiritual

bondage

bondage, there is a glorious liberty abiding them. Do their defiled garments make them aſhamed? the day cometh, in which their robes ſhall be white, pure and ſpotleſs. The battle againſt fleſh and blood, principalities and powers, is indeed ſore; but a glorious triumph is awaiting them. If the toil and labours of the Chriſtian life be great, there is an everlaſting reſt for them in heaven. Are they judged unworthy of ſociety in the world? They ſhall be admitted into the ſoeiety of angels in heaven. Do they complain of frequent interruptions of their communion with God? There they ſhall go no more out, but ſhall ſee his face for evermore. If they are in darkneſs here, eternal light is there. If they grapple with death, there they ſhall have everlaſting life. And to ſum up all in one word, 'He that overcometh ſhall inhe-'rit all things,' Rev. xxi. 7. He ſhall have peace and plenty, profit, and pleaſure, every thing deſirable; full ſatisfaction to his moſt enlarged deſires. Let the expectants of heaven, then, lift up their heads with joy, gird up their loins, and ſo run, as they may obtain; trampling on every thing that may hinder them in the way to the kingdom. Let them never account any duty too hard, nor any croſs too heavy, nor any pains too much, ſo as they may obtain the crown of glory.

Laſtly, Let thoſe who have no right to the kingdom of heaven be ſtirred up to ſeek it with all diligence. Now is the time, wherein the children of wrath may become heirs of glory: and when the way to everlaſting happineſs is opened, it is no time to ſit ſtill and loiter. Raiſe up your hearts towards the glory that is to be revealed; and do not always ly along on this periſhing earth. What can all your worldly enjoyments avail you, while you have no ſolid ground to expect heaven, after this life is gone? Theſe riches and honours, profits and pleaſures, that muſt be buried with us, and cannot accompany us into another world, are but a wretched portion, and

will leave men comfortleſs at long-run. Ah! why are men ſo fond, in their life-time, to receive their good things! why are they not rather in care, to ſecure an intereſt in the kingdom of heaven, which would never be taken from them, but afford them a portion, to make them happy through the ages of eternity! if you deſire honour, there you may have the higheſt honours, which will laſt when the world's honours are laid in the duſt; if riches, heaven will yield you a treaſure; even pleaſures for evermore. O be not deſpiſers of the pleaſant land, neither judge yourſelves unworthy of eternal life: but marry the heir, and heaven ſhall be your dowry; cloſe with Chriſt, as he is offered to you in the goſpel, and ye ſhall inherit all things. Walk in the way of holineſs, and it will lead you to the kingdom. Fight againſt ſin and Satan, and ye ſhall receive the crown. Forſake the world, and the doors of heaven will be open to receive you.

HEAD VI.

HELL.

MATTH. XXV. 14.

Then ſhall he alſo ſay unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.

WERE there no other place of eternal lodging but heaven, I ſhould here have cloſed my diſcourſe of man's eternal ſtate; but ſeeing, in the other world, there is a priſon for the wicked, as well as a palace for the ſaints, we muſt alſo enquire into that

that ſtate of everlaſting miſery; the which the worſt of men may well bear with, without crying, "Art "thou come to torment us before the time?" Since there is yet acceſs to fly from the wrath to come; and all that can be ſaid of it, comes ſhort of what the damned will feel; for who knoweth the power of God's anger!

The laſt thing our Lord did, before he left the earth, was, He lift up his hands, and bleſſed his diſciples, Luke xxiv. 50, 51. But the laſt thing he will do, before he leave the throne, is to curſe and condemn his enemies: as we learn from the text, which contains the dreadful ſentence, wherein the everlaſting miſery of the wicked is wrapt up. In which three things may be taken notice of. Firſt, the quality of the condemned, Ye curſed. The Judge finds the curſe of the law upon them, as tranſgreſſors, and ſends them away with it, from his preſence into hell, there to be fully execute upon them. 2dly, The puniſhment which they are adjudged to; and to which they were always bound over, by virtue of the curſe. And it is two fold, the puniſhment of loſs, in ſeparation from God and Chriſt. Depart from me: and the puniſhment of ſenſe, in moſt exquiſite and extreme torments, "Depart from me into fire." 3dly, The aggravations of their torments. (1.) They are ready for them, they are not to expect a moment's reſpite. The fire is prepared, and ready to catch hold of thoſe who are thrown into it. (2.) They will have the ſociety of devils in their torments, being ſhut up with them in hell. They muſt depart into the ſame fire prepared for Beelzebub the prince of devils, and his angels; namely other reprobate angels who fell with him, and became devils. It is ſaid to be prepared for them; becauſe they ſinned, and were condemned to hell, before man ſinned. This ſpeaks further terror to the damned, that they muſt go into the ſame torments, and place of torment, with the devil and his angels. They hearkened to

his temptations, and they muſt partake in his torments; his works they would do, and they muſt receive the wages, which is death. In this life they joined with devils, in enmity againſt God and Chriſt, and the way of holineſs; and in the other they muſt lodge with them. Thus all the goats ſhall be ſhut up together; for that name is common to devils and wicked men, in ſcripture, Lev. xvii. 7. Where the word rendered devils, properly ſignifies hairy ones, or goats, in the ſhape of which creatures, devils delighted much to appear to their worſhippers. (3.) The laſt aggravation of their torment is the eternal duration thereof, They muſt depart into everlaſting fire. This is it that puts the cape-ſtone upon their miſery, namely, that it ſhall never have an end.

DOCTRINE.

The wicked ſhall be ſhut up under the curſe of God, in everlaſting Miſery, with the Devils in hell.

After having evinced, that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the body, and a general judgment, I think it not needful to inſiſt to prove the truth of future puniſhments. The ſame conſcience there is in men of a future judgment, bears witneſs alſo of the truth of future puniſhments. (And that the puniſhment of the damned ſhall not be annihilation, or a reducing them to nothing, will be clear in the progreſs of our diſcourſe.) In treating of this awful ſubject, I ſhall enquire into theſe four things. (1.) The curſe under which the damned ſhall be ſhut up. (2.) Their miſery under that curſe. (3.) Their ſociety with devils in this miſerable ſtate. (4.) The eternity of the whole.

I. As to the curſe under which the damned ſhall be ſhut up in hell; it is the terrible ſentence of the law, by which they are bound over to the wrath of God, as tranſgreſſors. This curſe does not firſt ſeize them, when

when, ſtanding before the tribunal, they receive their ſentence: but they were borne under it, they led their life under it in this world, they died under it, roſe with it out of their graves; and the Judge finding it upon them, ſends them away with it, into the pit; where it ſhall ly on them through all the ages of eternity. By nature all men are under the curſe; but it is removed from the elect, by virtue of their union with Chriſt. It abides on the reſt of ſinful mankind, and by it they are devoted to deſtruction, ſeparated to evil, as one may deſcribe the curſe, from Deut. xxix. 21. 'And the Lord ſhall ſeparate him unto evil.' Thus ſhall the damned, for ever, be perſons devoted to deſtruction: ſeparate and ſet apart from the reſt of mankind, unto evil, as veſſels of wrath, ſet up for marks to the arrows of divine wrath; and made the common receptacle and ſhore of vengeance.

This curſe hath its firſt fruits on earth, which are a pledge of the whole lump that is to follow. And hence it is, that as temporal and eternal benefits are bound up together, under the ſame expreſſions in the promiſe to the Lord's people, as Iſa. xxxv. 10. "And the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return, and "come to Zion," &c. relating both to the return from Babylon, and to the ſaints going to their eternal reſt in heaven: even ſo temporal and eternal miſeries, on the enemies of God, are ſometimes wrapt up under one and the ſame expreſſion, in the threatning, as Iſa. xxx. 33. "For Tophet is ordained of "old; yea, for the king it is prepared, he hath made "it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much "wood, the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of "brimſtone, doth kindle it." Which relates both to the temporal and eternal deſtruction of the Aſſyrians, who fell by the hand of the angel before Jeruſalem. See alſo Iſa. lxvi. 24. What is that judicial blindneſs to which many are given up, in whom the God of this world hath blinded their eyes, 2 Cor. iv. 4. but the firſt fruits of hell and of the curſe; Their

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ſun is going down at noon day: their darkneſs is increaſing as if it would not ſtop, till it iſſue in utter darkneſs. Many a laſh, in the dark, doth conſcience give the wicked, which the world doth not hear of: and what is that, but that the never-dying worm is already begun to gnaw them? And there is not one of theſe, but they may call it Joſeph, for the Lord ſhall add another: or rather Gad, for a troop cometh. Theſe drops of wrath are terrible forebodings of the full ſhower which is to follow. Sometimes they are given up to their vile affections, that they have no more command over them, Rom. i. 26. So their luſts grow up more and more towards perfection, if I may ſo ſpeak. As in heaven grace comes to its perfection, ſo in hell ſin arrives at its higheſt pitch; and as ſin is thus advancing upon the man, he is the nearer and the liker to hell. There are three things that have a fearful aſpect here. Firſt, When every thing that might do good to men's ſouls, is blaſted to them! ſo that their bleſſings are curſed, (Mal. ii. 2.) ſermons, prayers, admonitions, and reproofs, which are powerful towards others, are quite inefficacious to them. 2dly, When men go on ſinning ſtill, in the face of plain rebukes from the Lord, in ordinances and providences: God meets them with rods in the way of their ſin, as it were ſtriking them back; yet they ruſh forward. What can be more like hell, where the Lord is always ſmiting, and the damned always ſinning againſt him? Laſtly, When every thing in one's lot is turned into fuel to one's luſts Thus adverſity and proſperity, poverty and wealth, the want of ordinances, and the enjoyment of them, do all but nouriſh the corruptions of many. Their vicious ſtomachs corrupt whatſoever they receive, and all does but increaſe noxious humours.

But the full harveſt follows in that miſery which they ſhall for ever lye under in hell; that wrath, which by virtue of the curſe, ſhall come upon them to the uttermoſt; the which is the curſe fully executed

ed. This black cloud opens upon them, and the terrible thunder-bolt ſtrikes them, by that dreadful voice from the throne, 'Depart from me, ye curſed,' &c. Which will give the whole wicked world a diſmal view of what is in the boſom of the curſe. It is, (1.) A voice of extreme indignation and wrath, a furious rebuke from the lion of the tribe of Judah. His looks will be moſt terrible to them; his eyes will caſt flames of fire on them; and his words will pierce their hearts, like envenomed arrows. When he will thus ſpeak them out of his preſence for ever, and by his word chaſe them away from before the throne, they will ſee how keenly wrath burns in his heart againſt them for their ſins. (2.) It is a voice of extreme diſdain and contempt from the Lord. Time was when they were pitied, beſought to pity themſelves, and to be the Lord's, but they deſpiſed him, they would have none of him: but now ſhall they be buried out of his ſight, under everlaſting contempt. (3.) It is a voice of extreme hatred. Hereby the Lord ſhuts them out of his bowels of love and mercy: 'Depart ye curſed,' q. d. I cannot endure to look at you: there is not one purpoſe of good to you in my heart; nor ſhall ye ever hear one word more of hope from me. Laſtly, it is a voice of eternal rejection from the Lord. He commands them to be gone, and ſo caſts them off for ever. Thus the doors of heaven are ſhut againſt them; the gulf is fixed between them and it, and they are driven to the pit. Now ſhould they cry with all poſſible earneſtneſs, 'Lord, Lord, open to us,' they will hear nothing, but, 'Depart, depart ye curſed.' Thus ſhall the damned be ſhut up under the curſe.

USE. Firſt, Let all theſe who, being yet in their natural ſtate, are under the curſe, conſider this, and flee to Jeſus Chriſt betimes, that they may be delivered from it. How can ye ſleep in that ſtate, being wrapt up in the curſe! Jeſus Chriſt is now ſaying unto you, 'Come, ye curſed,' I will take the curſe from

from off you, and give you the bleſſing. The waters of the ſanctuary are now running, to heal the curſed ground; take heed to improve them for that end to your own ſouls, and fear it as hell, to get no ſpiritual advantage thereby. Remember that the miry places, (which are neither ſea nor dry land, a fit emblem of hypocrites,) and the marſhes, (that neither breed fiſhes, nor bear trees, but the waters of the ſanctuary leave them, as they find them, in their barrenneſs,) ſhall not be healed; (ſeeing they ſpurn the only remedy,) they ſhall be given to ſalt, (left under eternal barrenneſs, ſet up for monuments of the wrath of God, and concluded for ever under the curſe,) Ezek. xlvii. 11. 2dly, Let all curſers conſider this, whoſe mouths are filled with curſing themſelves and others. He who 'clothes himſelf with curſing,' ſhall find the curſe, 'come into his bowels like water, and like oil 'into his bones,' (Pſal. cix. 18.) if repentance prevent it not. He ſhall get all his imprecations againſt himſelf fully anſwered, in that day wherein he ſtands before the tribunal of God; and ſhall find the killing weight of the curſe of God, which he makes light of now.

II. I proceed to ſpeak of the miſery of the damned, under that curſe; a miſery which the tongues of men and angels cannot ſufficiently expreſs. God always acts like himſelf: no favours can be equal to his, and his wrath and terrors are without a parallel. As the ſaints in heaven are advanced to the higheſt pitch of happineſs, ſo the damned in hell arrive at the height of miſery. Two things here I ſhall ſoberly enquire into, the puniſhment of loſs and the puniſhment of ſenſe, in hell. But ſince theſe alſo are ſuch things as eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, we muſt (as geographers do) leave a large void for the unknown land, which the day will diſcover.

Firſt, The puniſhment of loſs which the damned ſhall undergo, is ſeparation from the Lord, as we learn from the text, "Depart from me, ye curſed."

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This will be a ſtone upon their graves mouth, as the talent of lead, Zech. v. 7, 8. That will hold them down for ever. They ſhall be eternally ſeparated from God and Chriſt. Chriſt is the way to the Father: but the way as to them, ſhall be everlaſtingly blocked up, the bridge ſhall be drawn, and the great gulf fixed; ſo ſhall they be ſhut up in a ſtate of eternal ſeparation from God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt. They will be locally ſeparated from the man Chriſt, and ſhall never come into the ſeat of the bleſſed, where he appears in his glory, but be caſt out into utter darkneſs, Matth. xxii. 13. They cannot indeed be locally ſeparated from God; they cannot be in a place where he is not; ſince he is, and will be preſent every where: "If I make my bed in hell, ſays "the Pſalmiſt, behold thou art there," Pſal. cxxxix. 8. But they ſhall be miſerable beyond expreſſion, in a relative ſeparation from God. Though he will be preſent in the very centre of their ſouls, (if I may ſo expreſs it,) while they are wrapt up in fiery flames, in utter darkneſs; it ſhall only be to feed them with the vinegar of his wrath, to entertain them with the emanations of his revenging juſtice; but they ſhall never taſte more of his goodneſs and bounty, nor have the leaſt glimpſe of hope from him. They will ſee his heart to be abſolutely alienated from them, and that it cannot be towards them: but that they are the party againſt whom the Lord will have an indignation for ever. They ſhall be deprived of the glorious preſence and enjoyment of God: they ſhall have no part in the beatific viſion; nor ſee any thing in God towards them, but one wave of wrath rolling on the back of another. This will bring upon them overwhelming floods of ſorrow for evermore. They ſhall never taſte of the rivers of pleaſures the ſaints in heaven enjoy; but ſhall have an everlaſting winter, and a perpetual night, becauſe the Sun of righteouſneſs has departed from them, and ſo they are left in utter darkneſs. So great as heaven's happineſs is, ſo

great will their loſs be; for they can have none of it for ever.

This ſeparation of the wicked from God will be, (1.) An involuntary ſeparation. Now they depart from him they will not come to him, though they are called, intreated, and obteſted to come: but then they ſhall be driven away from him, when they would gladly abide with him. Although the queſtion, 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved?' is frequent now amongſt the deſpiſers of the goſpel, there will be no ſuch queſtion among all the damned crew; for then they will ſee that man's happineſs is only to be found in the enjoyment of God, and that the loſs of him is a loſs that can never be balanced. (2.) It will alſo be a total and utter ſeparation, Albeit the wicked are in this life ſeparated from God, yet there is a kind of intercourſe betwixt them: he gives them many good gifts; and they give him, at leaſt, ſome good words; ſo that the peace is not altogether hopeleſs. But then ſhall there be a total ſeparation, the damned being caſt into utter darkneſs, where there will not be the leaſt gleam of light or favour from the Lord: the which will put an end unto all their fair words to him. Laſtly, it ſhall be a final ſeparation; they will part with him, never more to meet, being ſhut up under everlaſting horror and deſpair. The match betwixt Jeſus Chriſt, and unbelievers, which has ſo often been carried forward, and put back again, ſhall then be broken up for ever: and never ſhall one meſſage of favour or good-will go betwixt the parties any more.

This puniſhment of loſs, is a total and final ſeparation from God, is a miſery beyond what mortals can conceive, and which the dreadful experience of the damned can only ſufficiently unfold. But that we may have ſome conception of the horror of it, let theſe following things be conſidered.

1ſt. God is the chief good, and therefore to be ſeparated from him muſt be the chief evil. Our native country,

country, our relations, and our life, are good; and therefore to be deprived of them we reckon a great evil: and the better any thing is, ſo much the greater evil is the loſs of it. Wherefore, God being the chief good, and no good comparable to him, there can be no loſs ſo great as the loſs of God. The full enjoyment of him is the higheſt pinnacle of happineſs the creature is capable of arriving at: to be fully and finally ſeparated from him, muſt then be the loweſt ſtep of miſery which the rational creature can be reduced to. To be caſt off by men, by good men, by the beſt of men, is heavy: what muſt it then be, to be rejected of God, of goodneſs itſelf!

2dly. God is the fountain of all goodneſs, from which all goodneſs flows unto the creatures, and by which it is continued in them, and to them. Whatſoever goodneſs or perfection, natural as well as moral, is in any creature, it is from God, and depends upon him, as the light is from, and depends on the ſun: for every created being as ſuch, is a dependent one. Wherefore a total ſeparation from God, wherein all comfortable communication betwixt God and a rational creature is abſolutely blocked up, muſt of neceſſity bring along with it a total eclipſe of all light of comfort and eaſe whatſoever. If there is but one window, or one open place, in a houſe, and that be quite ſhut up; it is evident there can be nothing but darkneſs in that houſe. Our Lord tells us, (Matth. xix. 17.) "There is none good but one, that is God." Nothing good or comfortable is originally from the creature: whatever good or comfortable thing one finds in one's ſelf, as health of body, peace of mind; whatever ſweetneſs, reſt, pleaſure, or delight, one finds in other creatures, as in meat, drink, arts, and ſciences; all theſe are but ſome faint rays of the divine perfections, communicate from God unto the creature, and depending on a conſtant influence from him, for their converſation, which failing, they would immediately be gone; for it is impoſſible that any

created thing can be to us more or better than what God makes it to be. All the rivulets of comfort we drink of, within or without ourſelves, come from God as their ſpring-head: the courſe of which toward us being ſtopt, of neceſſity they muſt all dry up. So that when God goes, all that is good and comfortable goes with him; all eaſe and quiet of body or mind, Hoſ. ix. 12. "Wo alſo to them, when I depart "from them." When the wicked are totally and finally ſeparated from him, all that is comfortable in them, or about them, returns to its fountain, as the light goes away with the ſun, and darkneſs ſucceeds in the room thereof. Thus, in their ſeparation from God, all peace is removed far away from them, and pain in body and anguiſh of ſoul ſucceed to it: all joy goes, and unmixed ſorrow ſettles in them: all quiet and reſt ſeparate from them, and they are filled with horror and rage: hope flees away, and deſpair ſeizeth them; common operations of the Spirit, which now reſtrain them, are withdrawn for ever, and ſin comes to its utmoſt height. And thus we have a diſmal view of the horrible ſpectacle of ſin and miſery, which a creature proves, when totally ſeparated from God, and left to itſelf; and one may ſee this ſeparation to be the very hell of hell.

Being ſeparated from God, they are deprived of all good. The good things, which they ſet their heart upon in this world, are beyond their reach there. The covetous man cannot enjoy his wealth there, nor the ambitious man his honours, nor the ſenſual man his pleaſures, no not a drop of water to cool his tongue, Luke xvi. 23, 25. No meat nor drink there to ſtrengthen the faint; no ſleep to refreſh the weary; and no muſic, nor pleaſant company to comfort and chear up the ſorrowful. And as for theſe good things they deſpiſed in the world, they ſhall never more hear of them, nor ſee them. No offers of Chriſt there, no pardons, no peace: no wells of ſalvation in the pit of deſtruction. In one word,

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they ſhall be deprived of whatſoever might comfort them, being totally and finally ſeparated from God the fountain of all goodneſs.

3dly, Man naturally deſires to be happy, being withal conſcious to himſelf that he is not ſelf-ſufficient; and therefore has ever a deſire of ſomething, without himſelf, to make him happy: and the ſoul being, by its natural make and conſtitution, capable of enjoying God; and nothing elſe being commenſurable to its deſires; it can never have true and ſolid reſt, till it reſt in the enjoyment of God. This deſire of happineſs the rational creature can never lay aſide, no not in hell. Now while the wicked are on earth, they ſeek their ſatisfaction in the creature; and when one fails, they go to another: thus they put off their time in the world, deceiving their own ſouls, and luring them on with vain hopes. But in the other world, all comfort in the creatures having failed together and at once: and the ſhadows they are now purſuing, having all of them evaniſhed in a moment; they ſhall be totally and finally ſeparated from God, and ſee they have thus loſt him. So the doors of earth and heaven both are ſhut againſt them at once. This will create them unſpeakable anguiſh, while they ſhall live under an eternal gnawing hunger after happineſs, which they certainly know ſhall never be in the leaſt meaſure ſatisfied, all doors being cloſed on them. Who then can imagine how this ſeparation from God ſhall cut the damned to the heart! How they will rore and rage under it, and how it will ſting them and gnaw them through the ages of eternity!

4thly, The damned ſhall know that ſome are perfectly happy in the enjoyment of that God, from whom they themſelves are ſeparate: and this will aggravate the ſenſe of their loſs, that they can never have any ſhare with theſe happy ones. Being ſeparated from God, they are ſeparated from the ſociety of the glorified ſaints and angels. They may "ſee

"Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom," (Luke xvi. 23.) but can never come into their company; being as unclean lepers, thrust out without the camp, and excommunicated from the presence of the Lord, and of all his holy ones. It is the opinion of some, that every person in heaven or hell, shall hear and see all that passeth in either state. Whatever is to be said of this, we have ground from the word to conclude, that the damned shall have a very exquisite knowledge of the happiness of the saints in heaven; for what else can be meant by the rich man in hell his seeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom? One thing is plain in this case, that their own torments will give them such notions of the happiness of the saints, as a sick man has of health, or a prisoner has of liberty. And as they cannot fail of reflecting on the happiness of those in heaven, more than they can attain to contentment with their own lot; so every thought of that happiness will aggravate their loss. It would be a mighty torment to a hungry man, to see others liberally feasting, while he is so chained up, as he cannot have one crumb to stay his gnawing appetite. To bring music and dancing before a man labouring under extreme pains, would but increase his anguish: how then will the songs of the blessed, in their enjoyment of God, make the damned rore under their separation from him!

5thly, They will remember that time was, when they might have been made partakers of the blessed state of the saints, in their enjoyment of God: and this will aggravate their sense of the loss. All may remember, there was once a possibility of it; that sometime they were in the world, in some corners of which the way of salvation was laid open to men's view; and may wish they had gone round the world, till they had found it out. Despisers of the gospel will remember with bitterness, that Jesus Christ with all his benefits was offered to them, that they were exhorted, intreated and pressed to accept, but would not;

not; and that they were warned of the misery they feel, and obtested to flee from the wrath to come, but they would not hearken. The gospel-offer slighted will make a hot hell, and the loss of an offered heaven will be a sinking weight on the spirits of unbelievers in the pit. Some will remember that there was a probability of their being eternally happy; that sometime they seemed to stand fair for it, and were "not far from the kingdom of God;" that they had once almost consented to the blessed bargain, the pen was in their hand (as it were) to sign the marriage contract betwixt Christ and their souls; but unhappily they dropped it, and turned back from the Lord to their lusts again. And others will remember that they thought themselves sure of heaven: but being blinded with pride and self-conceit, they were above ordinances, and beyond instruction, and would not examine their state, which was their ruin: but then they shall in vain wish, they had reputed themselves the worst of the congregation in which they lived, and curse the fond conceit they had of themselves, and that others had of them too. Thus it will sting the damned, that they might have escaped this loss.

Lastly, They will see the loss to be irrecoverable; that they must eternally lie under it, never, never, to be repaid. Might the damned, after millions of ages in hell, regain what they have lost, it would be some ground of hope; but the prize is gone, and can never be recovered. And there are two things here, which will pierce them to the heart. (1.) 'That 'they never knew the worth of it, till it was irrecoverably lost.' Should a man give away an earthen pot full of gold for a trifle, never knowing what was in it till it were quite gone from him, and past recovery; How would this foolish action gall him, upon the discovery of the riches in it! Such a one's case may be a faint resemblance of the case of despisers of

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the goſpel, when in hell they lift up their eyes, and behold that, to their torment, which they will not ſee now, to their ſalvation. (2.) 'That they have loſt 'it for loſs and dung;' ſold their part of heaven, and not enriched themſelves with the price. They have loſt heaven for earthly profits and pleaſures, and now both are gone together from them. The drunkards cup are gone, the covetous man's gain, the voluptuous man's carnal delights, and the ſluggard's eaſe: Nothing is left them to comfort them now. The happineſs they loſt remains indeed, but they can have no part in it for ever.

USE. Sinners, be perſuaded to come to God through Jeſus Chriſt, uniting with him through a Mediator; that ye may be preſerved from this fearful ſeparation from him. O be afraid to live in a ſtate of ſeparation from God, leſt that which ye now make your choice, become your eternal puniſhment hereafter. Do not reject communion with God, caſt not off the communion of ſaints: for it will be the miſery of the damned to be driven out from that communion. Ceaſe to build up the wall of ſeparation betwixt God and you, by continuing in your ſinful courſes: repent rather in time, and ſo pull it down; leſt the capeſtone be laid upon it, and it ſtand for ever between you and happineſs. Tremble at the thoughts of rejection and ſeparation from God. By whomſoever men are rejected upon earth, they ordinarily find ſome to pity them: but, if ye be thus ſeparated from God, ye will find all doors ſhut againſt you. Ye will find no pity from any in heaven: neither ſaints nor angels will pity them whom God has utterly caſt off, none will pity you in hell, where there is no love but loathing; all being loathed of God, loathing him, and loathing one another. This is a day of loſſes and fears. I ſhew you a loſs; ye would do well to fear in time; be afraid leaſt you loſe God: if ye do, a long eternity will be ſpent in roaring out lamentations for this loſs. O horrid ſtupidity! men

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are in a mighty care and concern to prevent worldly loſſes: but they are in hazard of loſing the enjoyment of God for ever and ever: in hazard of loſing heaven, the communion of the bleſſed, and all good things for ſoul and body in another world; yet as careleſs in that matter, as if they were incapable of thought. O! compare this day with the day our text aims at. This day heaven is opened to them, who hitherto have rejected Chriſt, and yet there is room, if they will come: but that day the doors ſhall be ſhut. Now Chriſt is ſaying unto you, 'Come:' then he will ſay, 'Depart;' ſeeing ye would not come when ye were bidden. Now pity is ſhown; the Lord pities you, his ſervants pity you, and tell you that the pit is before you, and cry to you, that ye do yourſelves no harm: but then ſhall ye have no pity from God nor man.

Secondly, The damned ſhall be puniſhed in hell with 'the puniſhment of ſenſe;' they muſt depart from God into everlaſting fire. I am not in a mind to diſpute, 'what kind of fire it is' which they ſhall depart into, and be tormented by for ever, 'whether 'a material fire, or not?' Experience will more than ſatisfy the curioſity of thoſe who are diſpoſed rather to diſpute about it, than to ſeek how to eſcape it. Neither will I meddle with that queſtion, 'Where it 'is?' It is enough, that 'the worm which never di-'eth,' and 'the fire that is never quenched,' will be found ſomewhere by impenitent ſinners. But, (1.) I ſhall evince that, whatever kind of fire it is, it is more vehement and terrible than any fire we on earth are acquainted with. (2.) I ſhall condeſcend in ſome properties of theſe fiery torments.

As to the firſt of theſe; burning is the moſt terrible puniſhment, and brings the moſt exquiſite pain and torment with it. By what reward could a man be induced to hold but his hand in the flame of a candle for one hour? All imaginable pleaſures on earth would never prevail with the moſt voluptuous

man, to venture to lodge but one half hour in a burning fiery furnace; nor would all the wealth in the world prevail with the moſt covetous to do it: yet, on much lower terms, do moſt men, in effect, expoſe themſelves to everlaſting fire in hell, which is more vehement and terrible than any fire we on earth are acquainted with; as will appear by the following conſiderations.

1. As, in heaven, grace being brought to its perfection, profit and pleaſure do alſo arrive at their height there; ſo ſin being come to its height in hell, the evil of puniſhment doth alſo arrive at its perfection there. Wherefore, as the joys in heaven are far greater than any joys which the ſaints obtain on earth, ſo the puniſhments of hell muſt be greater than any earthly torments whatſoever; not only in reſpect of the continuance of them, but alſo in reſpect of vehemency and exquiſiteneſs.

2. Why are the things of the other world repreſented to us, in an earthly dreſs, in the word; but that the weakneſs of our capacities in ſuch matters (which the Lord is pleaſed to condeſcend unto) does require it; it being always ſuppoſed, that theſe things of the other world are in their kind more perfect than that by which they are repreſented? When heaven is repreſented to us under the notion of a city, with gates of pearl, and the ſtreet of gold; we look not to find gold and pearls there, which are ſo mightily prized on earth, but ſomething more excellent than theſe fineſt and moſt precious things in the world: when therefore we hear of hell fire, it is neceſſary we underſtand by it ſomething more vehement, piercing, and tormenting, than any fire ever ſeen by our eyes. And here it is worth conſidering, that the torments of hell are held forth under ſeveral other notions than that of fire ſimply: and the reaſon of it is plain; namely, that hereby what of horror is wanting in one notion of hell, is ſupplied by another. Why is heaven's happineſs repreſented under

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the various notions of a treaſure, a paradiſe, a feaſt, a reſt, &c. but that there is not one of theſe things ſufficient to expreſs it? Even ſo hell torments are repreſented under the notion of fire, which the damned are caſt into. A dreadful repreſentation indeed! yet not ſufficient to expreſs the miſery of the ſtate of ſinners in them. Wherefore we hear alſo of the ſecond death, (Rev. xx. 6.) for the damned in hell ſhall be ever dying: of the wine preſs of the wrath of God, (chap. xiv. 19.) wherein they will be troden in anger, trampled in the Lord's fury, (Iſa. lxiii. 3.) preſſed, broken, and bruiſed, without end; the worm that dieth not, (Mark ix. 44.) which ſhall eternally gnaw them: a bottomleſs pit, where they will be ever ſinking, Rev. xx. 3. It is not ſimply called 'a fire' but "the lake of fire, and brimſtone," (ver. 19.) "a lake "of fire burning with brimſtone." (chap. xix. 20.) than which one can imagine nothing more dreadful. Yet, becauſe fire gives light, and light (as Solomon obſerves, Eccleſ. xi. 7.) is ſweet, there is no light there, but darkneſs, utter darkneſs, Matth. xxv. 30. For they muſt have an everlaſting night, ſince nothing can be there which is in any meaſure comfortable or refreſhing.

3. Our fire cannot affect a ſpirit, but by way of ſympathy with the body to which it is united: but hell-fire will not only pierce into the bodies, but directly into the ſouls of the damned: for it is prepared for the devil and his angels, theſe wicked ſpirits whom no fire on earth can hurt. Job complains heavily under the chaſtiſements of God's fatherly hand, ſaying, "The arrows of the Almighty are "within me, the poiſon whereof drinketh up my ſpi-"rit," Job vi. 4. But how will the ſpirits of the damned be pierced with the arrows of revenging juſtice; how will they be drunk up with the poiſon of the curſe on theſe arrows! how vehement muſt that fire be that pierceth directly into the ſoul, and makes an everlaſting burning in the ſpirit, the moſt lively

and tender part of a man wherein wounds or pain are moſt intolerable!

Laſtly, the preparation of this fire evinceth the unexpreſſible vehemency and dreadfulneſs of it. The text calls it 'prepared fire,' yea, the prepared fire by way of eminency. As the three children were not caſt into an ordinary fire, but a fire prepared on a particular deſign; which therefore was exceeding hot, the furnace being "heated ſeven times more than or-"dinary," Dan. ii. 19, 22. So the damned ſhall find in hell a prepared fire, the like to which was never prepared by human art; it is a fire of God's own preparing, the product of infinite wiſdom on a particular deſign, to demonſtrate the moſt ſtrict and ſevere divine juſtice againſt ſin; which may ſufficiently evidence to us the inconceivable exquiſiteneſs thereof, God always acts in a peculiar way becoming his own infinite greatneſs, whether for, or againſt the creature: and therefore as the things he hath prepared for them that love him, are great and good beyond expreſſion, or conception: ſo one may conclude, that the things he hath prepared againſt thoſe who hate him, are great and terrible beyond what men can either ſay, or think of them. The pile of 'Tophet is 'fire and much wood,' (the coals of that fire are 'coals of juniper,' a kind of wood which ſet on fire burns moſt fiercely, Pſal. cxx. 4.) "and the breath of "the Lord, like a ſtream of brimſtone, doth kindle it," Iſa. xxx. 33. Fire is more or leſs violent, according to the matter of it, and the breath by which it is blown; what heart can then fully conceive the horror of 'coals of juniper,' blown up with 'the breath 'of the Lord.' Nay, God himſelf will be 'a con-"ſuming fire," (Deut. iv. 24.) to the damned; intimately preſent, as a devouring fire, in their ſouls and bodies. It is a fearful thing to fall into a fire, or to be ſhut up into a fiery furnace on earth: but the terror of theſe evaniſheth, when one conſiders how "fearful it is to fall into the hands of the living God,"

God," which is the lot of the damned; for "who "shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who shall "dwell with everlasting burning?" Isa. xxxiii. 14.

As to the second point proposed, namely the properties of the fiery torments in hell.

1. They will be universal torments, every part of the creature being tormented in that flame. When one is cast into a burning fiery furnace, the fire makes its way into the very bowels, and leaves no member untouched: what part then can have ease, when the damned swim in a lake of fire burning with brimstone? There will their bodies be tormented, and scorched for ever. And as they sinned, so shall they be tormented, in all the parts thereof; that they shall have no sound side to turn them to; for what soundness or ease can be to any part of that body, which being separated from God, and all refreshment from him, is still in the pangs of the second death, ever dying, but never dead? But as the soul was chief in sinning, it will be chief in suffering too; being filled brimful of the wrath of a sin revenging God. The damned shall ever be under deepest impressions of God's vindictive justice against them; and his fire will melt their souls, within them, like wax. Who knows the power of that wrath which had such an effect on the Mediator, standing in the room of sinners, Psal. xxii. 14. "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst "of my bowels?" Their minds shall be filled with the terrible apprehensions of God's implacable wrath: and whatever they can think upon, past, present, or to come, will aggravate their torment and anguish. Their will shall be crossed in all things for evermore; as their will was ever contrary to the will of God's precepts; so God in his dealings with them, in the other world, shall have war with their will for ever. What they would have, they shall not in the least obtain; but what they would not, shall be bound upon them without remedy. Hence no pleasant affection shall ever spring up in their hearts any more: their

love

love of complacency, joy, and delight, in any object whatſoever, ſhall be pluckt up by the roots: and they will be filled with hatred, fury, and rage, againſt God, themſelves, and their fellow creatures, whether happy in heaven, or miſerable in hell, as they themſelves are. They will be ſunk in ſorrow, racked with anxiety, filled with horror, galled to the heart with fretting, and continually darted with deſpair; which will make them weep, gnaſh their teeth, and blaſpheme for ever. Matth. xxii. 13. "Bind him hand and "foot, and take him away, and caſt him into utter "darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of "teeth," Rev. xxi. 21. "And there fell upon men "a great hail out of heaven, every ſtone about the "weight of a talent: and men blaſphemed God be-"cauſe of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceed-"ing great." Conſcience will be a worm to gnaw and prey upon them; remorſe for their ſins ſhall ſeize them and torment them for ever, and they ſhall not be able to ſhake it off, as ſometimes they did; for in hell—their worm dieth not, Mark ix. 45, 46. Their memory will ſerve but to aggravate their torment, and every new reflection will bring another pang of anguiſh, Luke xvi. 25. "But Abraham ſaid, "(viz. to the rich man in hell,) Son, remember that "thou in thy life time receiveđſt thy good things."

2. The torments in hell are manifold. Put the caſe; that a man were, at one and the ſame time, under the violence of the gout, gravel, and whatſoever diſeaſes and pains have ever met together in one body; the torment of ſuch a one would be but light in compariſon with the torments of the damned. For as in hell there is an abſence of all that is good and deſirable, ſo there is the confluence of all evils there: ſince all the effects of ſin and of the curſe take their place in it, after the laſt judgment, Rev. xx. 14. "And "Death and hell were caſt into the lake of fire." There they will find a priſon they can never eſcape out of; a lake of fire, wherein they will be ever

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ſwimming and burning; a pit, whereof they will never find a bottom. The worm that dieth not ſhall feed on them, as on bodies which are interred: the fire that is not quenched, ſhall devour them, as dead bodies which are burned. Their eyes ſhall be kept in blackneſs of darkneſs, without the leaſt comfortable gleam of light: their ears filled with the frightful yellings of the infernal crew. They ſhall taſte nothing but the vinegar of God's wrath, the dregs of the cup of his fury. The ſtench of the burning lake of brimſtone will be the ſmell there; and they ſhall feel extreme pains for evermore.

3. They will be moſt exquiſite and vehement torments, cauſing "weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of "teeth, Matth xiii. 42. and xxii. 13. They are repreſented to us under the notion of pangs in travail, which are very ſharp and exquiſite. So ſays the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 24. "I am tormented, (to "wit, as one in the pangs of child-bearing) in this "flame." Ah! dreadful pangs; horrible travel, in which both ſoul and body are in pangs together; helpleſs travels, hopeleſs and endleſs! The word uſed for hell, Matth. v. 22. and in divers other places of the New Teſtament, properly denotes the valley of Hinnom; the name being taken from the valley of the children of Hinnom, in which was Tophet, (2 Kings xxiii. 10.) where idolaters offered their children to Moloch. This is ſaid to have been a great braſen idol with arms like a man's: the which being heated by fire within it, the child was ſet into the burning arms of the idol; and, that the parent might not hear the ſhrieks of the child burning to death, they beat drums in the time of the horrible ſacrifice: whence the place had the name of Tophet. Thus the exquiſiteneſs of the torments in hell are pointed out to us. Some have endured grievous tortures on earth, with a ſurpriſing obſtinacy and undaunted courage; but men's courage will fail them there when they find themſelves fallen into the hands of the living God;

God; and no out-gate to be expected for ever. It is true, there will be degrees of torment in hell. "It "shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, than "for Chorazin and Bethsaida," Matth. xi. 21, 22. But the least load of wrath there will be unsupportable; for how can the heart of the creature endure, or his hands be strong, when God himself is a consuming fire to him? When the tares are bound up in bundles for the fire, there will be the bundles of covetous persons, of drunkards, profane swearers, unclean persons, formal hypocrites, unbelievers, and despisers of the gospel, and the like: the several bundles being cast into hell fire, some will burn more keenly than others, according as their sins have been more heinous than these of others: a fiercer flame will seize the bundles of the profane than the bundles of the unsanctified moralists; the furnace will be hotter to those who sinned against light, than to those who lived in darkness, Luke xii. 47, 48. "That servant "which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not him-"self, neither did according to his will, shall be "beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, "and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be "beaten with few stripes." But the sentence common to them all, Matth. xiii. 30. "Bind them in bundles to burn them," speaks the great vehemency and exquisiteness of the lowest degree of the torment in hell.

4. They will be uninterrupted: there is no intermission there; no ease, no not for a moment. They "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Rev. xx. 10. Few are so tossed in this world, but sometimes they get rest; but the damned shall get none: they took their rest in the time appointed of God for labour. No storms are readily seen, but there is some space between showers: but no intermission in the storm that falls on the wicked in hell. There deep will be calling into deep, and the waves of wrath continually rolling over them. There the

heavens

heavens will be always black to them, and they shall have a perpetual night, but no rest, Rev. xiv. 11. "They shall have no rest day nor night."

5. They will be unpitied. The punishments inflicted on the greatest malefactors on earth, to draw forth some compassion from them who behold them in their torments: but the damned shall have none to pity them. God will not pity them, but "laugh at their "calamity," Prov. i. 26. The blessed company in heaven shall rejoice in the execution of God's righteous judgment, and sing while the smoke riseth up for ever, Rev. xix 3. "And again they said, Allelujah; "and her smoke rose up for ever and ever." No compassion can be expected from the devil and his angels, who delight in the ruin of the children of men, and are and will be for ever void of pity. Neither will one pity another there, where every one is weeping and gnashing his teeth, under his own insupportable anguish and pain. There, natural affection will be extinguished: the parents will not love their children, nor children their parents; the mother will not pity the daughter in these flames, nor will the daughter pity the mother: the son will shew no regard to his father there, nor the servant to his master, where every one will be roaring under his own torment.

Lastly, To complete their misery, their torments shall be eternal, Rev. xiv. 11. "And the smoke of "their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Ah! what a frightful case is this, to be tormented in the whole body and soul, and that not with one kind of torment, but many; all of these most exquisite, and all this without any intermission, and without pity from any! What heart can conceive those things without horror! Nevertheless, if this most miserable case were at length to have an end, that would afford some comfort: but the torments of the damned will have no end; of the which more afterwards.

USE. Learn from this. (1.) The evil of sin. It is a stream that will carry down the sinner, till he be

ſwallowed up in an ocean of wrath. The pleaſures of ſin are bought too dear at the rate of everlaſting burnings. What availed the rich man's purple clothing and ſumptuous fare, when in hell he was wrapt up in purple flames, and could not have a drop of water to cool his tongue? Alas! that men ſhould indulge themſelves in ſin, which will be ſuch bitterneſs in the end! that they ſhould drink ſo greedily of the poiſonous cup, and hug that ſerpent in their boſom, that will ſting them to the heart, and gnaw out their bowels at length? (2.) What a God he is with whom we have to do; what hatred he bears to ſin, and how ſeverely he puniſheth it. Know the Lord to be moſt juſt, as well as moſt merciful, and think not that he is ſuch an one as you are: away with that fatal miſtake ere it be too late, Pſal. l. 21, 22. "Thou thoughteſt that I "was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf; but I will re- "prove thee, and ſet them in order before thine "eyes. Now conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt "I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." The fire prepared for the devil and his angels, as dark as it is, will ſerve to diſcover God to be a ſevere revenger of ſin. Laſtly, The abſolute neceſſity of fleeing to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by faith; the ſame neceſſity of repentance, and holineſs of heart and life. The avenger of blood is purſuing thee, O ſinner! haſte and eſcape to the city of refuge. Waſh now in the fountain of the Mediator's blood, that you may not periſh in the lake of fire. O open thy heart to him, leſt the pit cloſe its mouth on thee. Leave thy ſins, elſe they will ruin thee: kill them, elſe they will be thy death for ever.

Let not the terror of hell fire put thee upon hardening thy heart more, as it may do, if thou entertain that wicked thought, viz. "There is no hope," Jer. ii. 25. Which perhaps is more rife among the hearers of the goſpel, than many are aware of. But there is hope for the worſt of ſinners, who will come into Jeſus Chriſt. If there are no good qualifications in thee,

thee, (as certainly, there can be none in a natural man, none in any man, but what are received from Chriſt in him,) know, that he has not ſuſpended thy welcome on any good qualifications; do thou take himſelf and his ſalvation, freely offered unto all to whom the goſpel comes. "Whoſoever will, let him "take of the water of life freely," Rev. xii. 17. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no ways caſt "out," John vi. 37. It is true, thou art a ſinful creature, and canſt not repent; thou art unholy, and canſt not make thyſelf holy; nay, thou haſt eſſayed to repent, to forſake ſin, and to be holy, but ſtill miſſed of repentance, reformation, and holineſs; and therefore, 'Thou ſaidſt, There is no hope. No, for 'I have loved ſtrangers, and after them I will go.' Truly, no marvel that the ſucceſs has not anſwered thy expectation, ſince thou haſt always begun thy work amiſs. But do thou, firſt of all, honour God, by believing the teſtimony he has given of his Son, namely, that eternal life is in him; and honour the Son of God, by believing on him, that is, embracing and falling in with the free offer of Chriſt, and of his ſalvation from ſin and from wrath, made to thee in the goſpel; truſting in him confidently for righteouſneſs to thy juſtification, and alſo for ſanctification; ſeeing of God he is made unto us both righteouſneſs and ſanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. Then, if thou haſt as much credit to give to the word of God, as 'thou wouldeſt allow to the word of an honeſt man, offering thee a gift, and ſaying, Take it, and it is thine; thou mayeſt believe, that God is thy God, Chriſt is thine, his ſalvation is thine, thy ſins are pardoned, thou haſt ſtrength in him for repentance and for holineſs? for all theſe are made over to thee in the free offer of the goſpel. Believing on the Son of God, thou art juſtified, the curſe is removed. And while it lies upon thee, how is it poſſible thou ſhouldeſt bring forth the fruits of holineſs? But, the curſe removed, that death which ſeized on thee with the firſt

Adam, (according to the threatning, Gen. ii. 17.) is taken away. In conſequence of which, thou ſhalt find the bands of wickedneſs (now holding thee faſt in impenitency) broken aſunder, as the bands of that death; ſo as thou wilt be able to repent indeed from the heart: thou ſhalt find the Spirit of life, on whoſe departure that death enſued, returned to thy ſoul, ſo as thenceforth thou ſhalt be enabled to live unto righteouſneſs. No man's caſe is ſo bad, but it may be mended this way, in time, to be perfectly right in eternity: and no man's caſe is ſo good, but, another way being taken, it will be marred for time and eternity too.

III. The damned ſhall have the ſociety of devils in their miſerable ſtate in hell: for they muſt depart into fire prepared for the devil and his angels. O horrible company! O frightful aſſociation! who would chuſe to dwell in a palace haunted by devils? To be confined to the moſt pleaſant ſpot of earth, with the devil, and his infernal furies, would be a moſt terrible confinement. How would men's hearts fail them, and their hair ſtand up, finding themſelves environed with the helliſh crew, in that caſe! But ah! how much more terrible muſt it be, to be caſt with the devils into one fire, locked up with them in one dungeon, ſhut up with them in one pit! To be cloſed up in a den of roaring lions, girded about with ſerpents, ſurrounded with venomous aſps, and to have the bowels eaten out by vipers, altogether, and at once, is a compariſon too low, to ſhew the miſery of the damned, ſhut up in hell with the devil and his angels. They go about now as roaring lions, ſeeking whom they may devour: but then ſhall they be confined in their den with their prey. They ſhall be filled to the brim with the wrath of God, and receive the full torment, (Matth. viii. 29.) which they tremble in expectation of, (James ii. 19.) being caſt into the fire prepared for them. How will theſe lions roar and tear! how will theſe ſerpents hiſs! theſe

dragons

dragons vomit out fire! what horrible anguiſh will ſeize the damned, finding themſelves in the lake of fire, with the devil who deceived them; drawn thither with the ſilken cords of temptation, by theſe wicked ſpirits; and bound with them in everlaſting chains under darkneſs! Rev. xx. 10. "And the "devil that deceived them was caſt into the lake of "fire and brimſtone, where the beaſt and the falſe "prophet are, and ſhall be tormented day and night "for ever and ever."

O! that men would conſider this in time, renounce the devil and his luſts, and join themſelves to the Lord in faith and holineſs. Why ſhould men chuſe that company in this world, and delight in that ſociety, they would not deſire to aſſociate with in the other world? and Thoſe who like not the company of the ſaints on earth, will get none of it in eternity: but as godleſs company is their delight now, they will afterwards get enough of it: when they have an eternity to paſs in the roaring and blaſpheming ſociety of devils and reprobates in hell. Let thoſe, who uſe to invocate the devil to take them, ſoberly conſider, that the company, ſo often invited, will be terrible at laſt, when come.

IV. And laſtly, Let us conſider the eternity of the whole, the everlaſting continuance of the miſerable ſtate of the damned in hell.

Firſt, If I could, I ſhould ſhew what eternity is, I mean the creature's eternity. But who can meaſure the waters of the ocean, or who can tell you the days, years, and ages of eternity, which are infinitely more than the drops of the ocean? None can comprehend eternity, but the eternal God. Eternity is an ocean, whereof we will never ſee the ſhore: it is a deep, where we can find no bottom; a labyrinth, from whence we cannot extricate ourſelves, and where we ſhall ever loſe the door. There are two things one may ſay of it. (1.) "It has a beginning." God's eternity has no beginning, but the creature's

eternity

eternity has. Sometime there was no lake of fire; and thoſe who have been there, for ſome thouſand years, were once in time, as we now are. But, (2.) "It ſhall "never have an end." The firſt who entered into the eternity of wo, is as far from the end of it, as the laſt, who ſhall go thither, will be at his entry. They who have launched out furtheſt into that ocean, are as far from land, as they were the firſt moment they went into it: and thouſands of ages after this, they will be as far from it as ever. Wherefore, eternity, which is before us, is a duration that hath a beginning, but no end. It is a beginning without a middle, a beginning without an end; after millions of years paſt in it, ſtill it is 'a beginning.' God's wrath, in hell, will ever be 'the wrath to come.' But there is no middle in eternity. When millions of ages are paſt in eternity, what is paſt bears no proportion to what is to come; no not ſo much as one drop of water falling from the tip of one's finger, bears to all the waters of the ocean. There is 'no end' of it: while God is, it ſhall be. It is an entry without an out-gate, a continual ſucceſſion of ages, a glaſs always running, which ſhall never run out.

Obſerve the continual ſucceſſion of hours, days, months, and years, how one ſtill follows upon another: and think of eternity, wherein there is a continual ſucceſſion without end. When you go out in the night, and behold the ſtars of heaven, how they cannot be numbered for multitude, think of the ages of eternity; conſidering withal, there is a certain definite number of the ſtars, but no number of the ages of eternity. When you ſee a running water, think how vain a thing it would be, to ſit down by it, and wait till it ſhould run out, that you may paſs over; look how new water ſtill ſucceeds to that which paſſeth by you: and therein you will have an image of eternity, which is a river that never dries up. They who wear rings have an image of eternity on their fingers; and they who handle the wheel have an emblem

blem of eternity before them: for to which part ſoever of the ring or wheel one looks, one will ſtill ſee another part beyond it: and on whatſoever moment of eternity you condeſcend, there is ſtill another beyond it. When you are abroad in the fields, and behold the piles of the graſs on the earth, which no man can reckon; think with yourſelves, that, were there as many thouſand years to come, as there are piles of graſs on the ground, even thoſe would have an end at length, but eternity will have none. When you look to a mountain, imagine in your hearts, how long it would be, ere that mountain ſhould be removed, by a little bird coming but once every thouſand years, and carrying away but one grain of the duſt thereof at once; the mountain would at length be removed that way, and brought to an end; but eternity will never end. Suppoſe this with reſpect to all the mountains of the earth! nay, with reſpect to the whole globe of the earth; the grains of duſt, whereof the whole earth is made up, are not infinite, and therefore the laſt grain would, at long-run, come to be carried away, in the way ſuppoſed: but when that ſloweſt work would be brought to an end, eternity would be, in effect, but beginning.

Theſe are ſome rude draughts of eternity: and now add miſery and woe to this eternity, what tongue can expreſs it? What heart can conceive it? In what balance can that miſery and that woe be weighed?

Secondly, Let us take a view of what is eternal in the ſtate of the damned in hell. Whatſoever is included in the fearful ſentence, determining their eternal ſtate, is everlaſting: therefore all the doleful ingredients of their miſerable ſtate will be everlaſting; they will never end. The text expreſsly declares the fire, into which they muſt depart, to be everlaſting fire. And our Lord elſewhere tells us, that in hell the fire ſhall never be quenched, (Mark ix. 43.) with an eye to the valley of Hinnom, in which, beſides the already mentioned fire, for burning of the chil-

dren

dren to Moloch, there was alſo another fire burning continually, to conſume the dead carcaſſes, and filth of Jeruſalem; ſo the ſcripture repreſenting hell-fire by the fire of that valley, ſpeaks it not only to be moſt exquiſite, but alſo everlaſting. Seeing then the damned muſt depart, as curſed ones, into everlaſting fire, it is evident, that

1ſt, The damned themſelves ſhall be eternal: they will have a being for ever, and will never be ſubſtantially deſtroyed, or annihilated. To what end is the fire eternal; if theſe who are caſt into it, be not eternally in it! It is plain, the everlaſting continuance of the fire, is an aggravation of the miſery of the damned: but ſurely, if they be annihilated, or ſubſtantially deſtroyed, it is all a caſe to them, whether the fire be everlaſting or not. Nay, but they depart into everlaſting fire, to be everlaſtingly puniſhed in it; Matth. xxv. 46. "They ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment." Thus the execution of the ſentence, is a certain diſcovery of the meaning of it. The worm that dieth not, muſt have a ſubject to live in; they, who ſhall have "no reſt day nor night," (Rev xiv. 11.) but ſhall be "tormented day and night for ever and ever," chap. xx. 10. will certainly have a being for ever and ever, and not be brought into a ſtate of eternal reſt in annihilation. Deſtroyed indeed they ſhall be: but their deſtruction will be an everlaſting deſtruction, (2 Theſſ. i. 9.) a deſtruction of their well-being. What is deſtroyed, is not therefore annihilated; "Art thou come to de-"ſtroy us?" ſaid the devil unto Jeſus Chriſt, Luke iv. 34. Howbeit the devils are afraid of torment, not of annihilation, Matth. viii. 29. "Art thou "come hither to torment us before the time?" The ſtate of the damned is indeed a ſtate of death: but ſuch a death it is, as is oppoſite only to an happy life; as is clear from other notions of their ſtate, which neceſſarily include an eternal exiſtence, of which before. As they who are dead in ſin, are dead to God

and

and holineſs, yet live to ſin: ſo dying in hell, they live, but ſeparated from God and his favour, in which life lies, Pſal. xxx. 5. They ſhall ever be under the pangs of death; ever dying but never dead, or abſolutely void of life. How deſirable would ſuch a death be to them! but it will fly from them for ever. Could each one kill another there, or could they with their own hands rend themſelves into lifeleſs pieces, their miſery would quickly be at an end; but there they muſt live, who chuſed death, and refuſed life; for there death lives, and the end ever begins.

2dly, The curſe ſhall ly upon them eternally, as the everlaſting chain, to hold them in the everlaſting fire; a chain that ſhall never be looſed, being fixed for ever about them, by the dreadful ſentence of the eternal judgment. This chain, which ſpurns the united force of devils held faſt by it, is too ſtrong to be broken by men, who being ſolemnly anathematized, and devoted to deſtruction, can never be recovered to any other uſe.

3dly, Their puniſhment ſhall be eternal; Matth. xxv. 46. "Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting pu-"niſhment." They will be for ever ſeparated from God and Chriſt, and from the ſociety of the holy angels and ſaints; between whom and them an impaſſable gulf will be fixed, Luke xvi. 26. "Between "us and you," (ſays Abraham in the parable, to the rich man in hell,) "there is a great gulf fixed; ſo "that they which would paſs from hence to you, "cannot; neither can they paſs to us, that would "come from thence." They ſhall for ever have the horrible ſociety of the devil and his angels. There will be no change of company for evermore, in that region of darkneſs. Their torment in the fire will be everlaſting: they muſt live for ever in it. Several authors, both ancient and modern, tell us of earth-flax, of ſalamander's hairs, that cloath made of it, being caſt into the fire, is ſo far from being burnt or conſumed, that 'tis only made clean thereby, as o-

ther things are by waſhing. But, however that is, it is certain, the damned ſhall be tormented for ever and ever in hell-fire, and not ſubſtantially deſtroyed, Rev. xx. 10. And indeed nothing is annihilated by fire, but only diſſolved. Of what nature ſoever hell-fire is, no queſtion, the ſame God, who kept the bodies of the three children from burning in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, can alſo keep the bodies of the damned from any ſuch diſſolution by hell-fire, as may infer privation of life.

Laſtly, Their knowledge and ſenſe of their miſery ſhall be eternal, and they ſhall aſſuredly know that it will be eternal. How deſirable would it be to them, to have their ſenſes for ever locked up, and to loſe the conſciouſneſs of their own miſery! as one may rationally ſuppoſe it to fare at length with ſome, in the puniſhment of death inflicted on them on earth; and as it is with ſome mad people in their miſerable caſe: but that agrees not with the notion of torment for ever and ever, nor the worm that died not. Nay, they will ever have a lively feeling of their miſery, and ſtrongeſt impreſſions of the wrath of God againſt them. And the dreadful intimation of the eternity of their puniſhment, made to them by the Judge, in their ſentence, will fix ſuch impreſſions of the eternity of their miſerable ſtate upon their minds, as they will never be able to lay aſide, but will continue with them for evermore, to complete their miſery. This will fill them with everlaſting deſpair; a moſt tormenting paſſion, which will continually rend their hearts, as it were, in a thouſand pieces. To ſee floods of wrath ever coming, and never to ceaſe; to be ever in torment, and withal to know there ſhall never, never be a releaſe, will be the capeſtone put on the miſery of the damned. If hope deferred maketh the heart ſick, (Prov. xiii. 12.) how killing will be, hope rooted up, ſlain outright, and buried for ever out of the creature's ſight! this will fill them with hatred and rage againſt God, their known irreconcileable

cileable enemy; and under it, they will roar for ever like wild bulls in a net, and fill the pit with blaſphemies for evermore.

Laſtly, I might here ſhew the reaſonableneſs of the eternity of the puniſhment of the damned; but having already ſpoke of it in vindicating the juſtice of God, in his ſubjecting men in their natural ſtate to eternal wrath, I only remind you of three things. (1.) The infinite dignity of the party offended by ſin, requires an infinite puniſhment to be inflicted for the vindication of his honour; ſince the demerit of ſin riſeth according to the dignity and excellency of the perſon againſt whom it is committed. The party offended is the great God, the chief good: the offender, a vile worm; in reſpect of perfection infinitely diſtant from God, to whom he is indebted for all that ever he had, implying any good, or perfection whatſoever. This then requires an infinite puniſhment to be inflicted on the ſinner: the which ſince it cannot, in him, be infinite in value, muſt needs be infinite in duration, that is to ſay, eternal. Sin is a kind of infinite evil, as it wrongs an infinite God; and the guilt and defilement thereof is never taken away, but endures for ever, unleſs the Lord himſelf in mercy do remove it. God, who is offended, is eternal, his being never comes to an end: the ſinful ſoul is immortal, and the man ſhall live for ever; the ſinner being without ſtrength, Rom. v. 6. to expiate his guilt, can never put away the offence; therefore it ever remains, unleſs the Lord do put it away himſelf, as in the elect, by his Son's blood. Wherefore the party offended, the offender, and the offence, ever remaining, the puniſhment cannot but be eternal. (2.) The ſinner would have continued the courſe of his provocations againſt God, for ever without end, if God had not put a check to it by death. As long as they were capable to act againſt him, in this world, they did it; and therefore juſtly

will he act againſt them, while he is; that is, for ever. God, who judgeth the will, intents, and inclinations of the heart, may juſtly do againſt ſinners, in puniſhing, as they would have done againſt him, in ſinning. Laſtly, (though I put not the ſtreſs of the matter here, yet) it is juſt and reaſonable the damned ſuffer eternally, ſince they will ſin eternally in hell, gnaſhing their teeth (Matth. viii. 12.) under their pain, in rage, envy and grudge, (compare Acts vii. 54. Pſal. cxii. 10. Luke xiii. 28.) and blaſpheming God there, (Rev. xvi. 21.) whither they are driven away in their wickedneſs. Prov. xiv. 32. That the wicked be puniſhed for their wickedneſs, is juſt; and it is no ways inconſiſtent with juſtice, that the being of the creature be continued for ever: wherefore, it is juſt, that the damned, continuing wicked eternally, do ſuffer eternally for their wickedneſs. The miſery, under which they ſin, can neither free them from the debt of obedience, nor excuſe their ſinning, and make it blameleſs. The creature, as a creature, is bound unto obedience to his Creator, and no puniſhment inflicted on him can free him from it, more than the malefactor's priſons, irons, whipping, and the like, do ſet him at liberty, to commit anew, the crimes for which he is impriſoned, or whipt. Neither can the torments of the damned excuſe or make blameleſs their horrible ſinning under them, more than exquiſite pains, inflicted upon men on earth, can excuſe their murmuring, fretting, and blaſpheming againſt God under them; for it is not the wrath of God, but their own wicked nature, that is the true cauſe of their ſinning under it; and ſo the holy Jeſus bore the wrath of God, without ſo much as one unbecoming thought of God, and far leſs any one unbecoming word.

USE I. Here is a meaſuring reed: O! that men would apply it. 1ſt, Apply it to your time in this world, and you will find your time to be very ſhort. A proſpect of much time to come proves the ruin of many

many ſouls. Men will be reckoning their time by years, (like that rich man, Luke xii. 19, 20.) when, it may be, there are not many hours of it to run. But reckon as you will, laying your time to the meaſuring reed of eternity, you will ſee your age is as nothing. What a ſmall and inconſiderable point is fixty, eighty, or a hundred years in reſpect of eternity? Compared with eternity, there is a greater diſproportion, than between a hair's breadth and the circumference of the whole earth. Why do we ſleep then in ſuch a ſhort day, while we are in hazard of loſing reſt through the long night of eternity? 2dly, Apply it to your endeavours for ſalvation, and they will be found very ſcanty. When men are preſſed to diligence in their ſalvation-work, they are ready to ſay, To what purpoſe is this waſte? Alas! if it were to be judged by our diligence, what it is we have in view; as to the moſt part of us, no man could thereby conjecture, that we have an eternity in view. If we duly conſidered eternity, we could not but conclude, that, to leave no means appointed of God uneſſayed, till we get our ſalvation ſecured; to refuſe reſt or comfort in any thing, till we are ſheltered under the wings of the Mediator; to purſue our great intereſt with the utmoſt vigour, to cut off luſts, dear as right hands and right eyes; to ſet our faces reſolutely againſt all difficulties, and fight our way through all the oppoſition made by the devil, the world, and the fleſh; are, all of them together, little enough for eternity.

USE II. Here is a balance of the ſanctuary, by which one may underſtand the lightneſs of what is falſely thought weighty; and the weight of ſome things, by many reckoned to be very light.

Firſt, ſome things ſeem very weighty, which, weighed in this balance, will be found very light. (1.) Weigh the world, and all that is in it, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life, and the whole will be found light in the balance of eternity.

nity. Weigh herein all worldly profits, gains, and advantages, and you will quickly ſee, that a thouſand worlds will not quit the coſt of the eternity of woe. "For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the "whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?" Matth. xvi. 26. Weigh the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, with the fire that is everlaſting, and you muſt account yourſelves fools and madmen, to run the hazard of the one for the other. (2.) Weigh your afflictions in this balance, and you will find the heavieſt of them very light, in reſpect of the weight of eternal anguiſh. Impatience under affliction, eſpecially when worldly troubles do ſo imbitter men's ſpirits that they cannot reliſh the glad tidings of the goſpel, ſpeaks great regardleſſneſs of eternity. As a ſmall and inconſiderable loſs will be very little at heart with him, who ſees himſelf in hazard of loſing his whole eſtate; ſo troubles in the world will appear but light to him who has a lively view of eternity. Such an one will ſtoop, and take up his croſs, whatever it be, thinking it enough to eſcape eternal wrath. (3.) Weigh the moſt difficult and uneaſy duties of religion here, and you will no more reckon the yoke of Chriſt unſupportable. Repentance, and bitter mourning for ſin, on earth, are very light in compariſon of eternal weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth in hell. To wreſtle with God in prayer, weeping, and making ſupplication for the bleſſing in time, is far eaſier than to lye under the curſe through all eternity. Mortification of the moſt beloved luſt is a light thing in compariſon with the ſecond death in hell. Laſtly, Weigh your convictions in this balance. O! how heavy does theſe ly upon many, till they get them ſhaken off! They are not diſpoſed to fall in with them, but ſtrive to get clear of them, as of a mighty burden. But the worm of an ill conſcience will neither die nor ſleep in hell, though one may now lull it aſleep for a time. And certainly it is eaſier to entertain the ſharpeſt conviction in this life, ſo as they

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may lead one to Chriſt, than to have them fixed for ever in the conſcience, while in hell one is totally and finally ſeparated from him.

Secondly, But, on the other hand, (1.) Weigh ſin in this balance; and, though now it ſeems but a light thing to you, ye will find it a weight ſufficient to turn up an eternal weight of wrath upon you. Even idle words, vain thoughts, and unprofitable actions, weighed in this balance, and conſidered as following the ſinner into an eternity, will each of them be heavier than the ſand of the ſea: time idly ſpent will make a weary eternity. Now is your ſeed-time; thoughts, words, and actions are the ſeed ſown: eternity is the harveſt. Though the ſeed now lies under the clod, unregarded by moſt men, even the leaſt grain ſhall ſpring up at length; and the fruit will be according to the ſeed, Gal. vi. 8. "For he that ſoweth to his "flesh ſhall of the flesh reap corruption, (i. e. deſtruc-"tion;) but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the "Spirit reap life everlaſting." (2.) Weigh in this balance your time and opportunities of grace and ſalvation, and you will find them very weighty. Precious time, and ſeaſons of grace, ſabbaths, communions, prayers, ſermons, and the like, are by many now a days made light of; but the day is coming, when one of theſe will be reckoned more valuable than a thouſand worlds, by thoſe who now have the leaſt value for them. When they are gone for ever, and the loſs cannot be retrieved, theſe will ſee the worth of them, who will not now ſee it.

USE III. and laſt, Be warned and ſtirred up to flee from the wrath to come. Mind eternity, and ſtudy ply the work of your ſalvation. What are you doing, while you are not ſo doing? Is heaven a fable, or hell a mere ſcarecrow? Muſt we live eternally, and will we be at no more pains to eſcape everlaſting miſery? Will faint wiſhes take the kingdom of heaven by force? And will ſuch drowſy endeavours, as moſt men ſatisfy themſelves with, be accounted flying from

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the wrath to come. Ye who have already fled to Chriſt, up, and be doing: ye have begun the work; go on, loiter not, but "work out your ſalvation with "fear and trembling," Phil. ii. 12. "Fear him which "is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell, Matth. x. 28. Remember, ye are not yet aſcended into heaven: ye are but in your middle ſtate. The everlaſting arms have drawn you out of the gulf of wrath ye were plunged into, in your natural ſtate; they are ſtill underneath you, that ye can never fall down into it again; nevertheleſs, ye have not yet got up to the top of the rock: the deep below you is frightful; look at it, and haſten your aſcent. Ye, who are yet in your natural ſtate, lift up your eyes, and take a view of the eternal ſtate. Ariſe, ye profane perſons, ye ignorant ones, ye formal hypocrites, ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs, flee from the wrath to come. Let not the young adventure to delay a moment longer, nor the old puff this work any more: 'To-day, 'if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;' leſt he ſwear in his wrath, that ye ſhall never enter into his reſt. It is no time to linger in a taſte of ſin, as in Sodom, when fire and brimſtone are coming down on it from the Lord. Take warning in time. They who are in hell, are not troubled with ſuch warnings; but are enraged againſt themſelves, for that they ſlighted the warning when they had it.

Conſider, I pray you, (1.) How uneaſy it is to ly one whole night on a ſoft bed in perfect health, when one very fain would have ſleep, but cannot get it; ſleep being departed from him. How often will one in that caſe wiſh for reſt! How full of toſſings to and fro! But alas! how dreadful ſhall it then be to ly in ſorrow, wrapt up in ſcorching flames through long eternity, in that place where they have no reſt day nor night! (2.) How terrible would it be to live under violent pains of the cholic or gravel, for forty or ſixty years together, without any intermiſſion! yet, that is but a very ſmall thing in compariſon of eternal

ſeparation

ſeparation from God, the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched. (3.) Eternity is an awful thought: O long, long, endleſs eternity! But will not every moment, in eternity of woe, ſeem a month, and every hour a year, in that moſt wretched and deſperate condition? Hence ever and ever as it were a double eternity. The ſick man in the night toſſing to and fro on his bed ſays, it will never be day; complains that his pain ever continues, never, never, abates. Are theſe pretty time eternities, which men form to themſelves, in their own imaginations. ſo very grievous? Alas! then how grievous, how utterly unſupportable muſt real eternity of woe, and all manner of miſeries be! Laſtly, There will be ſpace enough there, to reflect on all the ills of one's heart and life, which one cannot get time to think of now; and to ſee that all that was ſaid of the impenitent ſinner's hazard, was true, and that the half was not told. There will be ſpace enough in eternity to carry on delayed repentance, to rue one's follies, when it is too late; and in a ſtate paſt remedy, to ſpeak forth the fruitleſs wiſhes: 'O that I had never been born; 'that the womb had been my grave, and I had never 'ſeen the ſun! O that I had taken warning in time, 'and fled from this wrath, while the door of mercy 'was ſtanding open to me! O that I had never heard 'the goſpel, that I had lived in ſome corner of the 'world, where a Saviour and the great ſalvation were 'not once named!' But all in vain. What is done cannot be undone; the opportunity is loſt, and can never be retrieved; time is gone, and cannot be recalled. Wherefore improve time, while you have it, and do not wilfully ruin yourſelves, by ſtopping your ears to the goſpel call.

And now, If you would be ſaved from the wrath to come, and never go into this place of torment, take no reſt in your natural ſtate; believe the ſinfulneſs and miſery of it, and labour to get out of it quickly, flying into Jeſus chriſt by faith. Sin in you is the

ſeed of hell; and if the guilt and reigning power of it be not removed in time, they will bring you to the ſecond death in eternity. There is no way to get them removed, but by receiving of Chriſt, as he is offered in the goſpel, for juſtification and ſanctification: and he is now offered to you with all his ſalvation. Rev. xxii. 12. 17. "And behold, I come quick-
"ly; and my reward is with me to give every man
"according as his work ſhall be. And the Spirit and
"the Bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth,
"ſay, Come. And let him that is a-thirſt, Come.
"And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life
"freely." Jeſus Chriſt is the Mediator of peace, and the fountain of holineſs: he it is who delivereth us from the wrath to come. "There is no condemna-
"tion to them who are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk
"not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1. And the terrors of hell, as well as the joys of heaven, are ſet before you, to ſtir you up to a cordial receiving of him with all his ſalvation; and to determine you unto the way of faith and holineſs, in which alone you can eſcape the everlaſting fire. May the Lord himſelf make them effectual to that end.

Thus far of man's eternal ſtate: the which, becauſe it is eternal, admits no ſucceeding one for ever.

GOSPEL-COMPULSION *.

A SERMON

Preached immediately before the Celebration of the LORD'S SUPPER, at *Ettrick*

LUKE xiv. 23. *Compel them to come in.*

AND are they not happy that are in? Is your rock as their rock, O ſinners, yourſelves being judges? And why will not ye come in too? Chriſt's houſe is not yet filled. Many have come in, but yet there is room for more, ver. 22. And we are ſent to compel you to come in. So we have it in charge in our text.

The ſcope of this parable (which, upon the matter, is the ſame with that of the marriage feaſt, Matth. xxii.) is to ſhew the rejection of the Jews for their rejecting of Chriſt, and the calling of the Gentiles into their room. The ſupper to which they are bidden here, is Jeſus Chriſt, with all his ſaving benefits: he is the maker, and the matter of this ſupper alſo. In the morning of time, in the patriarchal ages, men were invited to this feaſt; for even then there were not wanting preachers of righteouſneſs, 2 Peter ii. 5. In the mid day, under the law, they were invited to it, by Prophets, Prieſts, and Levites. And here in the evening, in the laſt times, the times of the goſpel, they are called to it as a ſupper; the diſpenſation of the goſpel being the laſt diſpenſation of grace to the world. The Jews were they that got the firſt offer,

* This ſermon originally intended to have been inſerted in the author's book, intitled, 'Human Nature in its Fourfold State,' &c. at the cloſe of the diſcourſes on 'The ſtate of 'grace, or begun recovery,' to which it plainly refers, and was prepared for the preſs with that view.

but they would not come; they made their excuſes, as ye may read ver. 17, 18, 19, 20. of this chapter. The Gentiles get the next offer: the ſervant is ſent out to the ſtreets and lanes; the miniſters of Chriſt preach the goſpel to the poor Gentiles, and they receive it. But all come not in at once: therefore the ſervant is ſent out into the high-ways and hedges, where the moſt miſerable ſort of people are to be found; and even theſe muſt be compelled to come in. Poſſibly, this double ſending forth of the ſervant, may point ot the Lord's way in the diſpenſation of the goſpel to the Gentile world: the goſpel being firſt preached to thoſe of them who had renounced the idolatry of their country, and worſhipped the true God; and ſometimes aſſembled with the Jews in their ſynagogues to learn of them the knowledge of God, though they did not embrace the ceremonial part of their religion: theſe might well be repreſented by the poor maimed, and blind, ſitting in the ſtreets and lanes of the city. But afterwards it was carried to the moſt dark corners of the earth, where there was no reſpect either to the Jewiſh or Chriſtian religion, but all were ſunk together in moſt groſs ignorance and idolatry; which might fitly be repreſented by the highways and hedges. See Acts x. and xiii. 42. 46. 49.

In the text we have three things. (1.) The great deſign miniſters ſhould have before their eyes in preaching of the goſpel; and that is, to bring ſinners in to Chriſt. It muſt not be to draw them to a party, but to draw them to Chriſt. It is not to make them only change their work, they continuing ſtill without, by preaching mere morality to them; but it is to make them change their maſter too, to get them into Chriſt by faith. (2.) Conſider whom they are to deal with in order to bring them in; even thoſe that are ſitting in the high ways and hedges, like beggars in rags and ſores, the moſt unworthy and vile ſinners. (3.) The method they muſt uſe to get them in; com-

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pel them to come in, not by uſing bodily violence towards them. Chriſt put the ſword of the Spirit in the hands of his miniſters, but not the temporal ſword. Dragooning, torturing, murdering, may be fit means to bring in men to antichriſt, but not to bring them in to Chriſt. The compulſion in the text is a moral compulſion, ſuch as thoſe uſe who invite men to feaſts, who are not wont to cudgel them in, but ſeriouſly and earneſtly to deal with them until they conſent. So ſhould miniſters compel ſinners to come in to Chriſt, dealing with them ſeriouſly and affectionately, ſo as ſinners may ſee they are in good earneſt upon their Maſter's errand. We muſt give them the charming invitations and offers of the goſpel, upon the one hand, and lay before them the terror of the Lord, on the other hand, that if men will go to hell, they may go with a witneſs. Withal, here is intimated that efficacy of the Spirit, which goes along with the word, to the converſion of the elect; which does not force, but ſweetly neceſſitates them to come in.

DOCT: *It is the great work of miniſters to compel ſinners, in a goſpel-way, to come into Chriſt.*

The beſt way that I can handle this text, is to aim at that which is given in charge in it. And in order to this, conſider with me the import of it.

I. Sinners naturally are out. Were it not ſo, they needed not be compelled to come in. Hear all ye this day that are out of Chriſt, what ye are out of, and where ye are.

Firſt, Sinners, do ye know what ye are out of? (1.) All ye that are out of Chriſt, are out of God's family, Eph. ii. 18, 19. God's houſhold is the houſhold of faith, ye are none of it. His houſe may be an empty houſe for you. Adam ran out of the houſe, and all his poſterity with him; and ye are ſtill there, where Adam left you. And is not that a ſad caſe, to be out of

of God's family? Though ye are in our mother's houſe, ye cannot call him Father, ſeeing ye are not in Chriſt his Son: ye can have no claim to the portion and inheritance of the children, Gal. iv. 30. (2.) Ye are out of God's covenant of peace, and ſo without hope of ſalvation, while in that ſtate, Eph. ii. 12. Ye read of a glorious chariot, Cant. iii. 9, 10. It is the covenant of grace, the covenant of peace, as it is held forth in the everlaſting goſpel; for that is the word of truth, meekneſs, and righteouſneſs, upon which chriſt rides and proſpereth. The firſt chariot, wherein Adam and his children ſhould have been carried to heaven, was the covenant of works: Adam had the guiding of it; but it did not drive far, till it was broken to pieces. Now, there is a new one made, in which Chriſt is carrying all his people to glory; but ye are out of it. King Solomon, the Mediator Chriſt, made it; it could not be made without him. He made it for himſelf, to manifeſt his own glory, and the exceeding riches of his grace by it; and for the daughters of Jeruſalem, to carry his bride home to his Father's houſe, in it. It was made of the durable wood of Lebanon; for he will have it to be an everlaſting covenant, that ſhall never be broken. It has pillars of ſilver, thoſe excellent promiſes that are peculiar to the covenant of grace, as the promiſes of pardon, perſeverance, &c. for it is eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes. And becauſe there is no ſmall weight in this chariot when a ſinner is in it, he hath made the bottom thereof of gold, ſolid and ſtrong, ſo that none that are in it (though heavier than mountains of braſs) ſhall fall through it: "for the foundation of "God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord "knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19.; they are ſecured by God's eternal decree of election. No ſtorms of wrath can fall upon them that are in it; for it hath a covering of the purple blood of Jeſus Chriſt. The midſt thereof, the inner part of it, is paved with love: love lines the chariot; it is above them.

them, it is on every hand of them; yea it is underneath them, ſo that if they do fall in it, they ſhall not get ſuch a grievous fall, but they will be able to riſe again. Happy they that are in it! But, alas! ſinners, ye are out of it. Ye are lying there where the firſt chariot laid you when it broke. (3.) Ye are out of God's favour, being out of Chriſt. Now, that is dreadful; for our God is a conſuming fire. And there is no ſhelter from the wrath of God, but under the covert of the blood of the Mediator, Eph. ii. 13. The deſtroying angel is coming through, and there is no blood ſprinkled on your door-poſts. God is in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf; if ye do not come in, and meet him there, what can ye expect but that he will meet you without, as a bear bereaved of her whelps, rent the caul of your heart, and devour you like a lion? Hoſ. xiii. 8. What do your duties avail, while ye are out of Chriſt? Can they procure you God's favour? Your tears will never come into his bottle, nor will your prayers reach his ears, John xiv. 6.

Secondly, Know ye, ſinners, where ye are? I will tell you where ye are. (1.) Ye are on the devil's paſture, the mountains of vanity, about the lions dens, and the monntains of leopards, where Satan feeds his herd. Ye are out of God's houſe, wandering abroad for bread, begging at the world's door, ſaying, Where is it? Ye know not Chriſt, the bread of life; and therefore the dung of worldly profits and pleaſures is ſo valuable in your eyes. But tell me, ſinner, are you ever ſatisfied? You would fain fill your belly with the huſks of the world; but do they fill you indeed? is not the ſubſtance ſqueezed out of theſe things, ſo as ye find them but empty huſks? In all your traverſing of the mountains of vanity, came ye ever to the place of which you could ſay, (and ſtand by it,) This is my reſt, and here I will ſtay? no, nor never ſhall, till ye come to Chriſt, Iſa. lv. 2. (2.) Ye are in hell upon earth. To be in hell, is to be

without

without, Rev. xxii. 15. and ye are not come in, ye are condemned already, John iii. 18. bound in the prison, Isa. lxi. 1. What is the difference betwixt you, and them that are in hell? Ye are both prisoners; only ye are in the outer prison, they are in the inner prison. Ye are both away from Christ; only ye will depart from him, they must depart from him. The fire of God's wrath is set on in the consciences of both; only it is not as yet blown up and made to flame in you, by the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone to kindle it, as it is in them; but ye know not how soon it may be so. But there is yet another difference; they are prisoners past hope, ye are prisoners of hope. Therefore we proceed to another point.

II. It is the great errand of the friends of the bridegroom to bring them in that are out. Sirs, ye that are out, ye are where ye should not be, ye are on forbidden ground. We would have you in; we would have you come in to Christ, to unite with him, by believing in him, accepting of him in all his offices.

First, We declare unto you, that our Lord is invested with the sole authority and commission to be the great Prophet, the Preacher, and Teacher of the way to Immanuel's land, Acts iii. 22, 23. He has set up his school amongst us, but he hath few disciples; and we are come to compel you to come in, that his house may be filled. Satan has many disciples; carnal wisdom has many scholars. Alas for it! O leave them. Our Lord alone is he that is given of the Father to be the great leader to the heavenly Canaan, Isa. lv. 4. None ever came, or shall come there, but his followers; come in then, giving up yourselves to him to be guided by him. Ye would all be happy, ye would all be at heaven at last: but ye are wandering in a wilderness, where there is no way; and ye will surely lose yourselves, if ye take not him for your leader. The way to glory is a difficult

ficult way, and ye are not acquainted with it; nay ye are blind travellers, ready every moment to fall over ſome precipice. O! will ye take a guide? Ye are now ſtanding (as it were) in a place where two ways meet, uncertain which of them to take. Your own wiſdom, which is folly, points out a fair broad way, ſaying, "Whoſo is ſimple, let him turn in hither," Prov ix. 16. but turn not in thither. for "the dead are there, "and her gueſts are in the depths of hell," ver. 18. The wiſdom of the Father, our Lord Chriſt, points out to you 'a narrow way,' but it 'leadeth to life;' and he is this day ſaying to you, "Whoſo is ſimple, "let him turn in hither," ver. 4. Come in then, renounce your own wiſdom, give up yourſelves to him, to be led and guided by him. 'Hear, and 'your ſouls ſhall live.'

Secondly, Sinners, do not ye know that ye are guilty, and that ye can have no acceſs to an unatoned God? There was a breach made betwixt God and man by ſin. Juſtice demands a ſacrifice; an atonement muſt be made. The ſinner himſelf is unclean, he cannot be the prieſt; and he is not able to provide a ſacrifice, for the cattle on a thouſand hills are not ſufficient for a burnt-offering. Wherefore Jeſus Chriſt became our Prieſt; his human nature was the ſacrifice; his divine nature the altar that ſanctified the gift; the wrath of God was the fire that burned the ſacrifice; the blood was carried in to the moſt holy place, when Chriſt aſcended into heaven, and ſat down at the Father's right hand, to intercede for ſinners, upon the ground of his ſatisfaction. Now, here is the atonement; and we would have you to fall in with this device of ſalvation by a crucified Chriſt, renouncing your own righteouſneſs, that you may mount to heaven by the ladder of Chriſt's mediation. In the earthly paradiſe God ſet up a ladder by which all mankind might get up to the heavenly paradiſe. It was the covenant of works; a ladder able to bear the weight of all the world at once; but

ſo contrived, that if but the leaſt pin in it were looſed, all would break together. All mankind mounted it, even the firſt Adam, and all his children in his loins: but he having looſed one pin thereof, in a moment the ladder broke, and he and his fell down into a gulph of miſery, and an horrible pit, where they might ſee heaven afar off, but no way, to get to it more. This dreadful break rejoiced the devils: it aſtoniſhed the angels; they ſaw that they could not mend it nor make another, and they were wiſer than to attempt it. The Son of God ſaw there was none amongſt all the creatures to help, and therefore his own arm brought ſalvation. Another ladder is made, Jeſus Chriſt God-man, the Mediator betwixt God and men, the way to the Father. Gen. xxviii. 12. The foot thereof is 'ſet on the earth,' for he is man; the ladder was ſet ſo low as ſinners might reach it; it was ſet very low, even in "the lower parts of the "earth," (Eph. iv. 9.) the region of death. The top 'of it reached to heaven,' for he is God; the ladder is ſo high, that it can ſet the ſinner up to heaven. It can neither looſe nor break with the utmoſt weight upon it; for it is knit together with blood of infinite value, ſhed to the utmoſt of what juſtice demanded, Heb. ix. 14. Come, ſinners, lay all your weight on it, and fear not. The firſt ladder could bear nothing but men's perſons; it could not bear one ſinner with a burden of guilt on his back, but it would break under him: but this will bear you, and your burden of guilt too, though it would be 'heavi-'er than the ſand of the ſea.' Ah! there are but few upon this ladder, we would compel you to come on. Have ye a mind to lie ſtill in the gulph? have ye taken your laſt ſight of heaven? have ye bid an eternal farewel to glory? or have ye not done it? then why will ye not be compelled to come on? O come before the ladder be drawn up. I know what ye are thinking in effect, ye that will not be compelled to come on; ye are thinking like 'a thief and a robber,

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'to climb up ſome other way.' I know what ye are doing; ye are doing one of two: ye are either mending the old ladder, and making the beſt ye can of the broken pieces, by your morality and legal walk; or ye are making a new one of your own, a ladder of uncovenanted mercy, truſting to the mercy of God, without uniting with the Mediator. But ſet ye the feet of them as low as ye will, God's juſtice will never ſuffer the tops of them to reach heaven. Lay your weight on them then, if ye will do no otherwiſe; venture your ſouls on them, venture eternity on them, and climb up: but know aſſuredly, though ye ſhould get up ſo high by them, as ye could knock at heaven's door, and ſay, 'Lord, Lord, open to us,' there they ſhall fail you, there they ſhall break, and tumble you down into the loweſt hell, John xiv. 6.

Thirdly, Chriſt has got a kingdom from his Father, Pſal. ii. 6, 7, 8. but he has few real ſubjects. He has ſet up his ſtandard here this day, and we are come to compel you to come in, and ſubmit to him as your Lord and King. Ye are under ſtrange lords, and have long refuſed allegiance to your true Lord. O renounce all your idols now, and give yourſelves away to him, to be from henceforth his only, his wholly, his for ever. Come in now, and "kiſs the Son," Pſal. ii. 12. Bow the knee to him; put the crown on his head, Cant. iii. 11. Open the everlaſting doors of your hearts, that the King of glory may come in, Pſal. xxiv. 7. If any poor ſoul be ſaying within itſelf, Alas! the armies of hell within my breaſt are not ſo eaſily diſpoſſeſſed; it is true indeed; but yet I hope you are not ſo cloſely blocked up, but that intelligence may be got betwixt Chriſt and you; ye hear his offer to be your King, will ye give your conſent to it? I will aſk you but two queſtions to clear this matter. (1.) If you can do no more, yet will you give your good-will of the kingdom? Are you willing to part with your luſts, though you be not able to

put them away? Though you cannot ſhake the yoke of bondage off your own neck, will you give Chriſt your good will, to take it off, and lay his own upon you? As a King "he will ſubdue our iniquities," Micah vii. 19. (2.) Can your heart conſent to the abſoluteneſs of his government? He muſt be an abſolute monarch, his will in all things muſt be thy law. And why ſhould he not be ſo? for he can do no wrong, Pſal. xlv. 6. 7. Will you conſent that he model the kingdom in thy heart as he will? Shall he ſet up and caſt down there as he pleaſeth? have you no ſecret reſerves, no luſt that is but a little one, and muſt be ſpared; no prince of the blood of hell, that he muſt deal gently with for your ſake? If it be ſo, 'Come in, thou bleſſed of the Lord, wherefore ſtand-'eſt thou without?' Thy conſent to him as he offereth himſelf, is thy coming in.

III. Sinners may come in. Know then ye have the Maſter of the houſe's good leave to come in. Were it not ſo, he would ſend out his ſervants to compel you to come in. Nay, ſirs, he could keep his doors bolted againſt you, if it were not his will ye ſhould come in: and if ye would be ſo bold as to come and knock at the door, or offer violence to it, he could ſpeak a word that would make you fall backward. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt gives fair liberty to all of you, even the worſt of you, to come. Ye that are bearing the devil's mark in your foreheads; ye openly profane perſons, that ſit as it were in the devil's high-ways; ye that are bearing his mark in your right hand, which ye can hide when ye pleaſe, ye vileſt hypocrites, who are hid about the devil's hedges; ye are all welcome for Chriſt's part, he will not caſt the door on your face. Surely there can be no leſs imported in his charge to compel you to come in. And therefore I would have you ſtep forward. Conſider (1.) Is it nothing to you that ye have leave to come in? It was not ſo always. If before Chriſt was revealed, the ſinner had offered to have come in, he would have met with the flaming ſword of juſtice,

that would have driven him back to his dungeon of misery and darkness. If Christ had not been ground betwixt the upper and nether millstones of the Father's wrath, he could not have been bread to sinners, though they had been hungering after him. (2.) The fallen angels have not leave to come in, and never had since they went out, Jude ver. 6. If it were possible they could believe in Christ, and be content to come in to him, they would get the door cast in their face; for they never got leave to come in. The door was barred on them, and the bar was never drawn, nor ever will, Heb. ii. 16. And God was no more debtor to us than to them. (3.) Be your case what it will, this is sufficient to determine you to come in. If ye remain without, ye are ruined, and all doors of hope are closed on you, except this, Acts iv. 12. The door is open, ye are not forbidden to come in, ye perish if ye come not in; could we say no more, but it may be ye may get in, this might determine you to give it a fair trial, if ye would but act rationally. Lastly, This leave to come in will not last always with you. "When once the "Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the "door," there will be no more leave to come in, Luke xiii. 25. They that are in hell this day, cannot get in though they would never so gladly; there is no passing of the gulph fixed betwixt Christ and them, Luke xvi. 26. The first Adam closed the door upon us, but there was a second Adam to open it; if the second Adam close the door on us, there is not a third to open it, 2 Cor. iv. 3. "But if our "gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." The apostle here had respect to what he had said of the vail on Moses's face, chap. iii. 13. the vail spread over the Old Testament, ver. 14. but the gospel removes this vail, ver. 16, 17, 18. "But," says he, "if our gospel also be vailed, it is vailed to them that "are lost;" there is not another dispensation of grace to be expected to take off that vail. It is God's last

grace

grace to the world, Heb. i. 1, 2. The Lord has been making a feaſt for the world theſe five thouſand years, and now the laſt ſervice is on the table. The laſt ſhip for Immanuel's land is now making ready to ſail; therefore ye muſt put to ſea, now or never, Heb. x. 26, 27.

IV. Sinners are deſired to come in. They not only have leave to come in, but they are deſired by the Maſter of the houſe to come in. Ariſe then, ye worſt of ſinners, the 'Maſter calleth you.' Ye are called, not to a funeral, but a feaſt; not to a priſon, but to the gueſt chamber, where he may entertain you with all the delicates of heaven. If ye were not deſired, why would he ſend his ſervants to compel you to come in? and will ye refuſe when ye are deſired? Conſider, I pray you. (1.) It ill becomes you, vile worms, to ſit his call. I am ſure he might be for ever happy in himſelf, though ye and I both were where, in ſtrict juſtice we ſhould be, in the bottomleſs pit. He needs none of us. What are we that he ſhould be pleaſed to trouble himſelf about us, whether we ſink or ſwim! The angels adore him, his Father honours him, and vile wretches, whom he deſires to come in, have the face to refuſe him whom the Father heareth always. (2.) There are many as good as you, whom he never deſired to come in. He does not call you becauſe he has none other to call, who might fill his houſe. He might remove this goſpel from you, and ſend it into the dark places of the earth, and compel the Pagans to come in. Should he do it, it is very likely his offers would be better entertained amongſt them, than amongſt us.

Some divide the world into thirty parts, and find that nineteen of theſe are poſſeſſed by Pagans, ſix of them by Jews, Turks, and Saracens, and only five by Chriſtians; and of theſe five parts Chriſtian, many are antichriſtian, lying yet under the darkneſs of popery. And has the Lord choſen us out from among ſo many, to give us the invitation to come in,

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and ſhall we refuſe? Laſtly, How will ye look him in the face, when ye appear before his tribunal, if ye will not come in now at his deſire? How will ye look back on rejected love? What will ye do when he comes in wrath to you, that will not come to him now, upon his call?

Object. But ſome will ſay, Is it poſſible that he calls me, even vile and wretched me? Anſ. We have general invitations clogged with no conditions, free offers made to all that will come, Iſa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. And the Lord expreſsly ſhews, that no vileneſs nor unworthineſs ſhall ſtop any that will come, Iſa. i. 18. Jer. iii. 1. and what would ye have more? We are ſent this day in our Maſter's name, to compel you all to come in, be your caſe what it will. And if that would perſuade you, we ſhould come to you, one by one, and tell you, that it is you, and you, and you, that Chriſt calls to come in. But if ye believe our doctrine from the word, concerning the miſery of your natural ſtate, without hearing your name and ſirname in particular, why would ye require more in the doctrine concerning the remedy?

V. Sinners muſt come in. Compel them to come in. Sirs, ye not only may come, but ye muſt come, even the worſt of you. Ye are not only deſired to come in, but ye muſt not abide without. Conſider,

Firſt, "This is his commandment, that ye be-"lieve," 1 John iii. 23. Ye are peremptorily commanded to come in. God is peremptory with you, and ſo muſt we be peremptory with you too. Therefore I tell you, ye muſt come; and I charge you in his name to come in, and not ſit his peremptory command. Lay your hands to your hearts then, and ſee what ye will do; whether ye will ſtill abide without, and obey the devil, and your doubts, fears, and jealouſies of Chriſt, or come in upon God's command. Have ye any regard to the authority of God? have ye any reſpect at all to his command? then give a peremptory anſwer, within your own breaſts, juſt

now

now, whether ye will come in or not. Are ye peremptory, that ye will not come, like thoſe ſullen deſperate ſinners, Jer. ii. 25. "No, I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go?" then what ſhall we ſay or do for you? Lord, compel them to come in. Oh! will ye harden yourſelves againſt the Lord, will ye ſtretch out your hand againſt God, and ſtrengthen yourſelves againſt the Almighty? For Chriſt's ſake, for your ſoul's ſake, recal that word.

Secondly, But if ye dare not be peremptory that ye will not come, then be peremptory ye will come; for your coming is ſo commanded, that it will admit of no excuſe. Thoſe that were firſt bidden to this ſupper, they would not come, but they ſent their excuſes: but were their excuſes ſuſtained? no; God would not take them off their hand, but paſſeth a peremptory ſentence againſt them, ver. 24. "None "of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my "ſupper." We dare admit no excuſes in this matter, bring them from whence ye will, whether from the heaven above you, the hell within you, or the world about you; whether from God's greatneſs, your own vileneſs, or world's incumbrances. Whatever your caſe be, ye are commanded of God to come; and his commands are not to be diſputed, but obeyed. Wherefore, if ye will not be peremptory that ye will come, we muſt report to our Lord that ye will not come.

Thirdly. This duty is ſo peremptorily commanded, that ye muſt come, and come preſently; it admits of no delay. 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden 'not your hearts. Now is the accepted time.' We dare not allow you a day, nay nor an hour, to think on it, whether ye will come or not; leſt the next day, or the next hour, ye be caſt into hell, or a hell be caſt into you, for ſlighting the offer made to you this moment, which is gone before I can name it. Wherefore delay no longer; but this moment open

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the everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Fourthly, This is the duty God has commanded you: John vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that "ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Ye can do the Lord no greater pleasure than to come in. Would ye exalt him this day? then come on his call, Hos. xi. 7.: would ye put the crown on Christ's head? would ye make it a "day of the gladness of "his heart?" then come in, Cant. iii. 11. It is a great ease for full breasts to be sucked: the breasts of mercy and love are full; come, starving sinner, do him the pleasure to suck the breasts of his consolations. This is the great comprehensive duty: If ye do this, ye do all; if ye do not this, ye do nothing. What mean ye to be nibbling at the works of God, neglecting this, which is the work. Ye are keeping your windows closed in the day-light, and setting up a candle here and there, within your house; yet there are terrible dark corners within the house still; open your windows, I beseech you and let in the sun, ('the Sun of righteousness,') and that will be instead of all, and better than all. Would ye, all at once, be wise, righteous, and holy? then come in to Christ, 1 Cor. i. 30. Ye that can do nothing, come to Christ, and so ye shall do all, Philip. iv. 13. Would ye honour God? would ye honour his law? then come to Christ. But if ye come not to Christ, do what ye will, ye do nothing. Should ye henceforth keep all the ten commands, but neglect this, all you do would get a black note of condemnation from heaven written on it. Remember, I pray you, that "he that honoureth not the Son, "honoureth not the Father," John v. 23. All your other duties are but cyphers without this; and multiply them as ye will, the sum in all will be but nought, if this duty do not stand upon their head.

Lastly, It is a duty commanded, with certification of God's eternal displeasure and wrath against those

that will not come: Mark xvi. 16. "He that belie-
"veth not ſhall be damned." Pſal. ii. 12. "Kiſs the
"Son leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way."
And therefore I, as an ambaſſador for Chriſt, do, in
his name, command and charge you, and every one
of you, to come in, under the pain of God's diſplea-
ſure, under the pain of vengeance, even the Media-
tor's vengeance; certifying, that if ye will not come,
our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will come out of heaven againſt
you, and ye ſhall be ſlain before him, Luke xix. 27.
To be ſlain and die before Chriſt, who died to ſave
ſinners, is a thouſand deaths in one; it is a hell upon
a hell. But thoſe "that obey not the goſpel of our
"Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſt-
"ing deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord,"
even that Lord whoſe goſpel they have not obey-
ed, 2 Theſſ. i 8. 9. Ah! would he be pleaſed
but to confine his preſence to heaven, and only allow
thoſe that now deſpiſe and ſlight him, the favour of
being puniſhed from the abſence of the Lord; ah!
would he but make their deſtruction come to them
at ſome diſtance, would he dart the arrows of his
wrath into them from afar: nay, but he will have a
throne of juſtice in hell, that they may be puniſhed
from the preſence of the Lord, who while in the world
fled from his preſence on a throne of grace in the goſ-
pel. O conſider in time what ye do: no fire will
burn ſo violently as that which breaks forth from the
altar; no flame of wrath will pierce into a damned
ſoul, like that which is blown up by the breath of a
ſlighted Mediator.

VI. And laſtly, Sinners ſhall come in. Compel
them to come in. Leaving ſecret things to the Lord
I muſt tell you, ſinners, Chriſt will not want as many
as will fill his houſe. And ſtruggle as long as ye will,
in ye ſhall come. His houſe ſhall be filled. The Me-
diator has bought the furniture of his houſe too dear
to want any of it, and to leave ſo much empty room
in it. I hope there are ſome here that are the pur-

chaſe

chaſe of blood, which men and devils ſhall not get kept back from Chriſt. His Father has engaged by covenant, that his houſe ſhall be filled, Pſal. xxii. 30. "They ſhall come." See Iſ. liii. 10, 11. Nay, is not Chriſt's hand at the hearts of ſome juſt now? Do not ſome of you find a moving of the iron gate of your hearts, towards an opening of it to Chriſt? Have you not felt ſomething within working to compel you to come in? Are not ſome almoſt in already? Thruſt forward; there is no ſafety till ye be not only almoſt, but altogether Chriſtians.

Come in to Chriſt then, ye old people, that are bowing down to meet the grave. Ye have delayed long, delay no more. Though it is very rare, yet it ſometimes falls out, that a man is born when he is old, Joel ii. 28. Come in, ye of middle age. Are ye out of Chriſt in your beſt eſtate? Surely then your beſt ſtate is a bad ſtate, a miſerable ſtate. Ye are buſy providing for your families, but what are ye doing for your ſouls? Ye are laying up for old age, which, it may be, you will never ſee; what are ye laying up for eternity? Come in, ye young people; ye are too old to be out of Chriſt. Do not think religion is only for the hoary head, the wrinkled brows, and hollow eyes; there are more with green heads than with gray hairs in the grave Therefore come in, and delay not. The older ye grow putting off the work of religion, your hearts will grow the harder to work upon. Come in, ye profane wretches, that are far from righteouſneſs: come ye hypocritical profeſſors, that are not far from the kingdom of God: come, ye trembling ſouls, that are hard at it, and yet dare not come in. O why will ye not come in? I think it muſt be either becauſe ye will not, or becauſe ye dare not. I fear there are ſome amongſt us that will not come in; they have no mind to quit their luſts, they muſt follow their old courſes, coſt what it will; they ſee no beauty in Chriſt for which he is to be deſired. I ſhall ſay little more to ſuch. If ye be reſo-

lute for ſin, hell, and death, and that no Chriſt, no heaven, no hell, ſhall keep you back from the broad way; who can ſtop you? But be it known unto you, and be it recorded in the black book of your conſciences, which ſhall be opened at the day of judgment, That ſalvation was in your offer this day, that we endeavoured to compel you to come in to Chriſt, but ye would not; and that therefore your blood ſhall be on your own heads.

As to you that dare not come in, why dare ye not, after all ye have heard? are ye afraid to come in on Chriſt's call? dare ye not embrace his invitation? dare ye not obey the great command of God?

Object. But my ſins are innumerable, and moſt heinous; can there be any room for me? dare ſuch a vile and unworthy wretch as I come in? Anſ. If your ſins were each of them as big as a mountain, were they as numerous as the ſand of the ſea; yet the blood of Chriſt, being the blood of the Son of God, is able to purge them away, 1 John i. 7. Lay over all your guilt and unworthineſs on him who is altogether lovely: ſooner ſhall the rocks ſink under the weight of a bird lighting down upon them, than that blood ſhall fail you. Remember none are compelled to come in, none are called, but the vile and unworthy, Matth. ix. 13. Should your diſeaſe keep you from the phyſician? dare ye not come to the fountain to waſh, becauſe ye are unclean? for whom is the fountain opened, but for unclean ſinners? The goſpel-ſupper, though a coſtly one indeed, was provided for none, but thoſe that were unworthy of a drop of water, and far more, unworthy of Chriſt's blood. Be aſſured, beloved, the queſtion betwixt Chriſt and you is not, Whether or not Chriſt will ſtoop ſo low as to waſh ſuch a foul ſoul in his own blood? that is a queſtion determined already, Iſa. i. 18. Zech. xiii. 1. But the queſtion that remains to be decided, is, whether or not, after Chriſt has ſtooped ſo low as to be willing to do that, the vile unworthy creature will give

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him the affront of ſtooping in vain? What ſay ye to that queſtion? Ye have affronted the law of God; will ye affront the Son of God too, refuſing his offer? If vileneſs and unworthineſs could have kept ſinners out from Chriſt, never one of Adam's ſons had come in. Did not Chriſt find all the fair ones that are now in glory, lying in their blood? are there any now walking in white, but thoſe who were waſhed in the blood of the Lamb? Turn over the Bible, look into the hiſtory of ages that are paſt, ſee if ye can find any one that died at his door, who could not be admitted becauſe he was ſo vile, wretched, and unworthy.

Object. But there was never a caſe like mine. Anſ. There have been very bad caſes in Chriſt's hand, which he has cured; and never did the cure of any caſe put in his hand miſgive. What think ye of Mary Magdalen's caſe, out of whom he caſt ſeven devils? Mark xvi. 9. Was not Paul's caſe, who was a blaſphemer and a perſecutor, and yet found mercy, a caſe that may be compared with your's? 1 Tim. i. 13. Sure I am, the workings of ſovereign grace upon him were deſigned to encourage the worſt of ſinners to come in, verſ. 16. Manaſſeh, though he had the benefit of a religious education by his godly father, was an horrid idolater, a conſulter with the devil, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6. a bloody murderer, 2 Kings xxi. 16.; yet he came in, and was received graciouſly, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. And what do you think of the caſe of Adam, who at once murdered all his children, ruined the ſouls of all mankind, and ſinned againſt greater light than ever ye could do? But let us yield it to you this once, that never one's caſe was like your's; and let us add to it, and never ſhall one be like it hereafter, it is ſo very bad: then I think ye have as the penitent thief on the croſs had, an occaſion of glorifying our great Redeemer peculiar to yourſelf, wherein none of the veſſels of glory have ſhared, or ſhall ſhare with you. Come in then, thou whoſe caſe is a marrowleſs caſe, whoſe caſe has

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no parallel; you have the advantage of an occaſion to honour Chriſt with the cure of a caſe ſo deſperate, that the like of it was never in his hands before. "Remember not the former things, neither conſider "the things of old," Iſa. xliii. 18.; come into Chriſt with your new caſe, and behold, (ſays our Lord), I will do a new thing, verſ. 19. His blood has not yet gone ſo far as it can go. Grudge him not a new jewel in his crown of grace, that will ſhine brighter than any yet put into it. Come in, then, and take the place appointed for the chief of ſinners, deepeſt in the debt of free grace, if it be yet empty. I aſſure you, they that have come in already think it is not, but that they themſelves have filled it up. If it be indeed as thou ſayeſt, then they are miſtaken; come you in, and you ſhall get it.

Object. But, alas! I cannot believe, I cannot come in to Chriſt. Anſ. To clear your way in this matter; ſee that ye ſet yourſelves to come in to Chriſt in a promiſe. Chriſt is held forth to ſinners in the promiſes of the goſpel, Iſa. lv. 1. John vi. 37. Rev. iii. 20. and chap. xxii. 17. If ye would come to his ſeat, come to the promiſes; he is in the ſtill ſmall voice; ye will find the babe wrapped up in theſe ſwaddling-cloaths. They that overlook the promiſe, and try to believe and come in to Chriſt, go the wrong way to work: that is like a woman's conſenting to marry a man, of whoſe conſent to take her ſhe has no declaration. But the goſpel-promiſe is the contract ſent down from heaven, ſigned already with the Bridegroom's hand; do ye take and read it over, ſign it, by your heart's conſenting thereto; and then Chriſt is yours and ye are are his. But cloſe with Chriſt in the promiſe as a free promiſe, as indeed it is, Iſa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. Many bar the doors of the goſpel-promiſe with bars of their own making, and then they cry out and complain that they cannot enter in by them. O! ſay ſome, if I had ſo much love, repentance, and brokenneſs of heart, then I could believe. But I

adviſe

adviſe you to believe, that ye may get theſe things, Zech. xii. 10. Acts v. 31. Now, though the promiſe be written in the Bible only, it is aſſuredly Chriſt's conſent to be yours, as if ye had a voice from heaven for it, yea and more ſurely. But you will ſay, I dare not meddle with the promiſe. Anſ. Then meddle not with Chriſt, but periſh; for there is no meddling with him, but in the goſpel-promiſe. But why is a drowning man ſo fearful, that he dare not catch hold of a cord, even a ſilver cord, thrown in to hale him to land? Nay, beloved, be not ſo fooliſh: though the promiſe be, in your eyes, like Moſes's rod, turned into a ſerpent; yet take it by the tail, and it will become a rod in your hand. Hoſ. xi. 10. "The chil-" dren ſhall tremble from the weſt;" as the Iſraelites trembled after Saul, that is, "followed him trem-" bling," 1 Sam. xiii. 7. So then Chriſt's Bride may ſign the contract with a trembling hand, love her Lord with a trembling heart and follow him with trembling legs. And O that all of you would ſay, though it were with a trembling voice, "Behold, we " come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God." If ſo ye would not be in vain compelled to come in.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.