

EVIDENCES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION,
DESIGNED CHIEFLY
FOR THE RISING GENERATION.

COMPILED BY JOSEPH CLARK.

Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost. JOHN VI. 12.

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PREFACE.

THE compiler of the following tracts, which are evidences in support of religion, has not the least sinister view in the publication thereof, but hopes they may prove persuasives to piety and virtue, for “the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect thereof is quietness and assurance for ever.” Feeling a tender regard for the poor of every religious denomination, and their offspring, particularly those who are situated in the wilderness, and remote parts of the continent, he has for their sakes frequently travelled into lonely obscure places, in order to distribute them from house to house, and from cottage to cottage.

And should this small compilation be a means of inducing any to lead a more circumspect and religious life, it will give the highest satisfaction to, and fully answer the disinterested intentions of

THE COMPILER.

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AN ACCOUNT
OF
JANE RATCLIFFE.

HER childhood and youth were too much devoted to vanity, but it pleased a sovereign and gracious God, effectually to call her to Himself, soon after her marriage, which was to a person who was repeatedly chosen mayor of the city and a member of parliament, by the ministry of Nicholas Byfield, whose powerful and instructive preaching was seconded by the loss of her first child; an event which she laid deeply to heart, and found greatly salutary, as well as painful: her early exercises on the subject of religion were of a very distressing kind, and often full of terror, such as seemed to border on despair. But after a time it pleased Him who maketh sore, and bindeth up, who woundeth, and whose hand maketh whole, to quiet her troubled spirit, and favour her with a comforting assurance of his love.

By an attentive perusal of sermons, and other pious books, especially the Bible, and by frequent conversation with the most informed and judicious Christians, she soon became a proficient in religion, and was very

diligent in instructing her family in divine things.

She concerned herself but little in wordly affairs; and when duty required that they should employ her time and her hands, her heart was in better things; in these she shone. It might be truly said, that the word of God dwelt richly in her in all wisdom. She was well prepared either to counsel or comfort, to reprove or defend, as occasion called, yet she was far from talkative; and so sparing of her speech, that those who admired the prudence of her conversation, admired that of her silence too. Especially was she guarded against speaking evil of any, and of the absent above all. She censured others little; herself often.

She was a woman of a composed spirit, and of remarkable discretion; directing her conduct by the dictates of grace and reason, without any degrading mixtures of passion. If at any time, duty seemed to require a warmth in reprehending, that warmth was so tempered, as that nothing in her words, looks, or gestures, contradicted or dishonoured religion. Though she possessed eminent gifts, she was far from any affectation of singularity; and though she had less to do with worldly things than most in her situation would have had, yet in the management of them, she was provident and prudent.

As her faith and knowledge of God were remarkable, so was her devotion. She con-

versed much with her Maker, not only in public, but in secret; and had gracious returns from Him. He sent forth the Spirit of grace and supplication into her heart, whereby she cried Abba, Father. She was favoured with great freedom in prayer: not only with a fervor and holy importunity of spirit, but such a pertinence and rich variety of expression, as gave cause to wonder how one so sparing of words in common conversation, should be so eloquent in her intercourse with God. Yet her speech was frequently interrupted by floods of tears. When the heart is full of love, the mouth is apt to be filled with praise of the beloved object. When this pious woman found an opportunity to turn the discourse on her favourite topic, and to speak of her heavenly Father, it was with such a relish, such reverence and affection, as if her soul would leap out of her lips into the ears of others, and kindle the same holy flame in their hearts, which burned in her own. She longed that others might with her, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, and rival her in religious love; and great was her joy, when a sinner was converted, or any subject of grace better enabled to promote the glory of God, the end at which she aimed in her discourse concerning Him.

After having given vent to her heart in spiritual conference, to the great delight and edification of her friends, she would frequently complain of her own expressions, as being faint and flat, and so far below what

was suitable to the majesty of the great Jehovah, that all the acceptance she desired, was but pardon for her presumption, in taking upon her to speak of his excellency in terms so very poor and inadequate.

She had a most tender love to the people of God, and to his worship. The progress and prosperity of religion, whether at home or abroad, she preferred above her chief joy ; and it was a great affliction to her to hear any ill tidings of a good man, or a good cause.

If by any insuperable obstacles, she was detained from public worship, her soul was fervently longing to be there. Far from absenting herself, with some, on slight occasions, she would often oblige her feeble body to carry her to the house of God, though the day before, she had been confined to her chamber, or even to her bed ; and it was remarkable, that though by this zeal her health was much hazarded, it seldom received any material injury.

She was greatly free from inordinate attachments to the world, particularly its gratifications. She not only abandoned the amusements which had engaged her youth, and exercised a remarkable abstinence in her diet, making it no object to gratify her appetite, but kept frequent fasts in secret. She found by happy experience the efficacy of fasting and prayer to strengthen her for spiritual conflicts, and to elevate her soul to God and heaven.

So sensibly did she cleave to God as her portion, and find her happiness in the riches of his love, that she had little regard to wealth. Though she well knew there was no certain connection between poverty and grace, and though she was frugal and provident in the concerns of her family, yet she often besought the Lord rather to make and keep her poor than suffer her heart to sink down from her Maker, and go astray after mammon.

Her fervent affection to God, and desire to be with him, induced a fear not very common; she was afraid she should have a long life. Death, which is an object of terror to most, she so much wished, that her friends found themselves constrained to plead with her to be pleased with life, though with little success; as appears from the two following statements, which she drew up for her own use, in the more immediate prospect of death.

“ First, Why I desire to die. ”

“ I desire to die, because I want, while I live here, the glorious presence of God, which I love and long for, and the sweet fellowship of angels and saints, who would be as glad of me, as I of them, and would entertain me with unwearied delight.

“ I desire to die, because, while I live, I shall want the perfection of my nature, and be as an estranged, banished child from my Father’s house.

“ I desire to die, because I would not live to offend so good a God, and grieve his holy Spirit; for his loving-kindness is better than

life, and he is abundant in mercy to me, and it often lies as a heavy load on my heart to think of displeasing Him.

“ I desire to die, because this world is generally infected with the plague of sin, and some have this plague-sore running upon them, and I myself am tainted with the same disease ; so that while I live here, I can be in no place, nor in any company, where I shall not be in danger of being infected, or of infecting others. And if this world hates me because I endeavour to follow goodness, how would it rejoice if my foot should slip ! How woeful would my life be to me, if I should give occasion to the world to triumph or blaspheme !

“ I cannot but desire to die, when I consider that sin, like a leprosy, hath so corrupted me, that there is no soundness in me. My mind, my memory, my will and affections, and my very conscience, are still impure ; in every faculty of my soul, there is a miserable mixture of vile infection, which makes me weary of my life. As the disease is in this world incurable, and my inseparable companion, I can go no where to avoid it ; there is no business I can dispatch, relating to my happiness, but there is a mutiny in my heart. Though the works of God are all fair, yet there are in my nature so many defects, insufficiencies, mistakes, and transgressions, that I may say with David, ‘ Innumerable evils have compassed me about ; my iniquities have taken hold upon me, so

that I am not able to look up.' I therefore desire heaven for holiness, rather than for happiness, that I may sin no more. I desire that condition in which I may most glorify God.

" I desire to die, because of the devil's malignant and perpetual assaults, I can stand no where before the Lord on earth, but one devil or another is at my right hand, and I must of necessity enter into conflict with them and their temptations, and be buffeted and gored by them, which is a thousand-fold worse than death. It is more easy to wrestle with flesh and blood than with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickednesses, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, for they are subtil and cruel, and, like roaring lions, they go about seeking whom they may devour.

" I desire to die, because by death I shall rest from the hard labours of this life.

" I desire to die, because nothing in this world can give me solid and durable contentment. I like life the less, and have the greater desire of death, when I consider the misery that may come both on my body and estate. Fearful alterations may come; wars may come, and all the desolations which accompany them, and I may be left in the hands of the sons of violence. Besides, I daily suffer the loss of my friends, the companions of my life, and the channels of much pleasure to me; and those whom I lose by my life, I shall find by my death, and enjoy in another

world, to all eternity. As to leaving my children, it doth not much trouble me; for that God who hath given them life and breath, and all they have, while I am living, can provide for them when I am dead. My God will be their God, if they are his; and if they are not, what comfort would it be for me to live? My life would be exceedingly bitter to me, if I should see them dishonour God, whom I so much love!

“ I fear not death, because it is but the separation of the body from the soul, and that is but a shadow of the body of death (Rom. vii. 24.) whereas the separation of the soul from God by sin (Isa. lix. 2.) and of soul and body for sin, is death indeed.

“ I fear not death, because it is an enemy that hath been often vanquished, and because I am armed for it, and the weapons of my warfare are mighty through God, and I am assured of victory.

“ I do not fear death for the pain of it, for I am persuaded I have endured as great pains in life, as I shall find in death, and death will be the cure of all my pains. Beside, Christ died a terrible and cursed death; and so any kind of death may be blessed to me. And that God who hath greatly loved me in life, will not neglect me in death; but his Spirit will strengthen and comfort me all the time of my combat. I do not fear death for any loss; for I shall only lose my body by it, and that is but a prison to my soul; an old rotten house, a tattered garment.

“ How shall I praise God, for my conversion....for his word, both in respect to my affection for, and the wonderful comforts I have received from it....for hearing my prayers....for godly sorrow....for fellowship with the godly....for joy in the Holy Ghostfor the desire of death....for contempt of the world....for private helps and comforts.... for giving me some strength against my sin.... for preserving me from gross evils, both before and after my calling ?”

She manifested her love to God by keeping his commandments. To know that any thing was enjoined or forbidden by him, was ever sufficient to determine her practice : nothing was with her so small, but that his word could give it weight enough to bow her soul to obedience. If the thing required was small, she apprehended that the contempt or neglect of it must incur aggravated guilt ; and that the easier the duty, the greater would be the disobedience if it were left undone. In this way she advanced in sanctification, and kept at a distance from great offences ; for he who is afraid of a small sin, will not easily be tempted to commit a great one.

She was very tender when absent, and would suffer neither her tongue nor her ears to be guilty of any thing to them ; she considered the robbery of reputation as the worst of robberies. Far from charging them with imaginary faults, she seldom mentioned, and never aggravated those sins which were most

known, nor disclosed those which were secret. She never denied, nor detracted from the virtues of any. Though her hatred of sin was such as became a Christian, yet she knew how to distinguish between sin and the sinner : and while she was incapable of being reconciled to the former, the latter had her love and compassion.

She distributed her alms according to her own ability, and the necessities of others. She preferred giving a little to many, to giving much to few ; and so ordered her charity as not to exhaust her whole stock on one, or a few occasions, but to have always something to communicate. If in cases peculiarly important or interesting, her donations were not magnificent, the obstacle was in her circumstances, not in her mind.

She performed this duty with great cheerfulness. She bestowed nothing on herself with greater alacrity than she imparted what she could spare, for the relief of the distressed : nor could a thief be more silent in stealing, than she generally was in giving. Few indeed did so much good, with so little appearance of it.

As to the objects of her charity, she did good to all, but especially to the household of faith. Her benevolence and affection to her friends were very great, but not confined to them ; she had no enemy so bitter, whom she could not love. Though quick in perceiving what tended to the disturbance of peace and patience, her serenity of mind was

seldom interrupted. In return for injuries, she could more easily pray and weep, than express sentiments of unkindness and indignation, either by actions or looks. In case of a misunderstanding between herself and others, she enjoyed the freedom of her judgment, but never felt at liberty to withdraw her affection from them, or to pass unimproved an opportunity to do them good. She hated nothing but sin; and she hated that most in herself. She tenderly sympathized in the sufferings of the church of God, and of particular saints; in all their afflictions she was afflicted: yet, though she sensibly felt the trials of others, she sustained her own with remarkable fortitude and patience. If she received news of losses, as she sometimes did, of great ones, she composed her spirit with such reflections as these:

“ It is God who gave all, who now takes away some: why should I take it ill? He would not have me be in love with, or trust in, uncertain riches, which were never true to any who trusted them, but to trust upon himself; and I willingly renounce them to rest upon him: he can, if he see it good, recompense the loss in the like, or some better kind. If he takes more from me, there will yet be many poor ~~than~~ myself; and if he takes away all my ~~goods~~, he can give me contentment without them, for he is all-sufficient; and so, though I have nothing, I may yet be as possessing all things. The world and I must part, and whether we be

loosened from each other by degrees, or torn asunder all at once, all is one to me. What God chooses, is most for his glory, and my good, if I murmur not against him, but willingly, as is my prayer, give way to his will."

The modesty and gravity of her countenance, and whole demeanor were such, as, without the aid of speech, to reprove every thing indecent, either said or done in her presence. There was in her aspect, mingled with much sweetness, a majesty which frequently overawed the most abandoned. In humility she was a great proficient; she could endure contradiction, and even reproach, without breaking peace with any. She was ever ready to wave her own claims, and yield to the opinions and demands of others, so she could with a good conscience. In lowliness of mind, she esteemed others better than herself. She disavowed the praise she received, though considered by others much less than her due; and gave place to those who were in fact far below her. The reason of this was, her intimate acquaintance with herself, and the deep sense she entertained of her own failings, while she observed others most for what was best in them, and in order to improve herself by imitating their excellencies, and being humbled for her own comparative defects.

But most of all did she arraign and abase herself before God. Comparing her own sins, infirmities, and wretchedness, with his infinite purity and majesty, she was filled

with love and admiration of him, while she heartily loathed and detested herself. If compelled to see any thing in herself which was good, she assumed none of the glory of it, but acknowledged the sovereign, self-moved goodness of God, in bestowing, as well as his patience and mercy in continuing it. It was a favourite maxim with her, that if it be good to be esteemed virtuous, it is much better to be so indeed; and that the substance of a good thing is always to be preferred to its semblance. Hence, in the whole of her life, she was eminently sincere, and hated every approach of hypocrisy.

In religion, she maintained an uncommon constancy and stability. Her heart was steadfast with God, and in his covenant. Her faith was so firmly fixed, that she was not carried about with every wind of doctrine; her religion wore the same general complexion at her first conversion and at all times afterward. But in regard to the measure of grace and holiness, she was habitually advancing; and her path was indeed that of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

In the conjugal relation she was a bright example; she had a deep sense of the importance of the duties of a wife, and wrote down for her regulation in this respect, a number of the leading hints suggested in the sacred oracles.

After her husband's death, she would have exchanged her style of dress for one less elegant; but on more mature consideration, she

apprehended that deference to the memory and rank of one who had been repeatedly mayor of the city, and a member of parliament, might dictate to her to retain it; which she did.

To sum up her character : she was an affectionate and submissive wife; a careful and tender mother; a gentle and beneficent mistress; a charitable neighbour; and a constant and faithful friend.

During her sickness, she had a strong desire for a speedy dissolution, which she expressed in the words of David, Psalm xxxviii. 22. and xl. 13. "Make haste to help me, O Lord of my salvation; be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me." And the happy hour was now come, when her best desires were granted; she was helped in the softest and tenderest manner; for when it was thought that she was only fallen asleep, her soul fled into the arms of her Redeemer. This blessed consummation took place, August 17th, 1638.

BARON HALLER.

ALBERT HALLER, one of the most illustrious literary characters of his age, was the son of a citizen and advocate of Berne, where he was born in the year 1708. The account of his early display of talents, are as extraordinary as almost any upon record. He chose the medical profession, in which he became very eminent. He was an anatomist, physiologist, and botanist, of the first order. It is not too much to say of him, that he was one of the best informed men in Europe. He wrote and spoke, with equal facility, the German, French, and Latin languages ; and read all the other tongues of civilized Europe, except the Slavonic dialects. His acquaintance with books was so extensive, that it would be difficult to point out any of the least note, which he had not perused, and of which the contents did not dwell upon his memory. He was a poet too of distinguished merit. The critics of Germany reckon Haller among the first who gave sublimity, richness, and harmony, to their poetical language ; and who described nature in true colours.

The talents and knowledge of Haller, his works in various departments of science and literature, and his unblemished integrity and virtue, rendered him, in the highest degree, respectable among the learned of Europe ; and his friendship and correspondence were

courted by the most celebrated men of his time. He was professor of medicine in the university of Gottingen. He filled successively the botanical, chemical, and anatomical chairs; and raised the reputation of the university to a very high pitch. Here he resided near seventeen years; and then returned to Berne, his native place, where he was elected a member of the sovereign council; and enjoyed the first authority in the administration of public affairs, till the time of his death, which took place in the year 1777.

This great and good man, in the early part of his life, had doubts concerning the objects of the Christian faith. But these doubts were dispelled by a successful application to every branch of science, on the one hand; and by a candid examination of the sacred oracles, on the other. The first, by purging his soul, according to his own emphatic phrase, of arrogance and pride, filled it with true poverty of spirit. The second convinced him that the divine revelation, conveyed in the holy scriptures, was a boon worthy of the merciful Author of our nature to give, and such as was fit for guilty mortals to receive, with humble gratitude and reverence.

There are hours of mental depression in human life, which can neither be prevented nor remedied by the most prosperous worldly circumstances, or by the greatest skill of man. The healing art, which Haller applied with singular success to the diseases of the body, could not, as he experienced in his own case,

reach that dissatisfaction with the present, and that apprehension of a future state, which so frequently disturb the breasts of mankind. But the divine laws were to him a delightful subject of attention, and a joyful object of hope. His confidence in the goodness of God, refreshed his mind; and so fortified it, that he beheld undismayed the king of terrors.

The consolations which he felt himself, he was anxious to impart to others. In imitation of the Saviour of the world, he went about doing good to the souls and bodies of men. He eagerly seized the numberless opportunities, which his profession as a physician gave him, of convincing those with whom he conversed, of the truth, and of converting them to the practice, of the Christian religion. And this he did, not only by his instructions, but by his example. For he was charitable to the poor; he sympathized in the tenderest manner with the distressed; and was humane and just in all his dealings with the sons of men.

A thousand incidents, which passed unheeded by the vulgar eye, recalled to his mind the Deity. And when he recollected or heard that great name, he gave way, in whatever company or circumstances he happened to be placed, to some pious ejaculations, with his eyes and hands lifted up towards heaven.

While his feeling mind embraced in the bonds of love all his fellow-creatures, and interested him in their present and future concerns, there was one person whom God and

nature had recommended to his peculiar tenderness and care. He had a daughter, dear to him as his own soul. He knew the inquietudes, to which the common lot of humanity would subject her through life; and the fears that would alarm her tender breast at the approach of death, of which, it was some consolation to him, that “he should not live to be the mournful witness.” To her he addressed, at different times, but in a regular succession, a number of letters on the truths of the Christian religion. They were afterwards, by his permission, published for the benefit of the world at large. The work possesses great merit; and is particularly proper for the perusal and study of young persons.

We shall conclude our account of Baron Haller, with an extract from the last letter contained in the publication just mentioned. It marks the writer’s high sense of the importance of religion; his solicitude for his daughter’s happiness; and his strong confidence in the future rewards of piety and virtue.

“Let us employ the time that is present: eternity will be our reward, if we make a good use of it. Let us always have before our eyes, the nature and consequences of sin; let us remember that it will deprive us of the favour of God, and expose us to his displeasure. Reflect on the value of that life and immortality, which Christ hath brought to light by the gospel. The enjoyments of

this present short life, which are indeed but puerile amusements, must disappear, when placed in competition with the greatness and durability of the glory which is to come.

“ By the mercy of God, we are restored from the lowest state of abasement and dejection. We are animated with the most comfortable promises. We now walk with confidence in that road, which has been marked out for us with so much wisdom ; and which so well corresponds with our new desires and abilities. We leave behind us those vices which tended to estrange us from God and happiness : before us is a benevolent Being, who offers to the victorious, incorruptible crowns, as the recompense of victory ; which victory he also helps us to gain. We may now rest satisfied with respect to our future condition, without perplexing ourselves about the trials we shall have to undergo, and which are yet at a distance. Let us be careful to employ to advantage the present hour. The means of salvation, the sacred writings, the precepts of our Saviour, are in our hands. We insensibly draw near to the desired harbour ; the approaches of dissolution become less formidable, the nearer we advance to the happy mansions of eternity, where error and vice will be disarmed, and have no more power over us. Receive, my daughter, these most important of all truths, from a father, who considers himself on the verge of life ; they are the most precious marks of tenderness which he can give you.

These instructions would have been more perfect, if his capacity had been more extensive. They are, however, the result of his reflections, and of the researches which he has made after truth : they are also the effects of his internal convictions. Your father, who now addresses you, has had his doubts : he has sometimes been mistaken ; and has wished, in those moments, that the consequences of sin were not so grievous. He has not been exempt from falling ; but the victorious grace of God has kindly come to his relief. The king of terrors approaches me with hasty steps : but I behold his advances without dismay. Beyond that æra of existence, I see objects of joy and hope which invite me to leave this world, and to step forward into eternity ; into mansions of holiness and bliss, where death shall be banished for ever, and where sin shall have no place. After having finished your course, you will again meet your father in those glorious and peaceful abodes, where the idea of our frail mortality shall no longer disturb our breasts, or fill them with shame ; and where the miseries of this life shall no longer draw tears from our eyes."

Story of St. John the Apostle, and a reprobate Young Man.

ST. JOHN, that great apostle and beloved disciple of Christ, coming to a place near Ephesus, in his visitation of the churches, he espied a youth of a comely shape, and pregnant parts, and taking hold of him, delivered him to the bishop of the place with this charge (which he repeated once and again) “ I commend this person to thee, to be looked to with all care and diligence, and that in the presence of Christ and the church.” The bishop undertook the charge, received the young man into his house, instructed him, and at last baptized him. Which being done, he thought he might remit a little of the strictness of his care : but the young man making an ill use of his liberty, fell into bad company, by whose arts and snares he was seduced into ways of riot and wickedness ; till despairing of all hope of pardon from God, he let loose the reins to all manner of exorbitancy ; and agreeing with his confederates, they combined themselves into a society of highway-men, and made him their captain, who quickly became as far beyond the rest in fierceness and cruelty, as he was in power and authority. St. John upon occasion returning some while after to the same place, after he had dispatched his own business, required from the bishop the pledge he had left with him ; who wondering, and not knowing

what he meant, "I mean," said St. John, "the young man; it is the soul of my brother that I require." The old man, with a dejected look, and tears in his eyes, answered, "He is dead." And being demanded by what kind of death, answered, "He is dead to God; for, alas! he is become a villain; and instead of the church, is fled with his companions to the mountains, to be a thief and a robber." The apostle, renting his clothes, and bewailing that he had so ill entrusted his brother's soul, immediately called for a horse and a guide, and made haste to the mountains, where, being taken by those that stood centinel, he begged to be brought before their captain, who stood ready armed some way off; but as soon as he perceived it was St. John that was coming towards him, he began to be ashamed, and to run as fast as he could. The apostle, not regarding his own age and weakness, followed after with all his might; and when his legs could not overtake him, he sent these passionate exclamations after him: "Why, O my son, dost thou fly from thy aged and unarmed father? Take pity of me, and fear not; there is yet hope of salvation for thee. I will undertake with Christ for thee; if need be, I will freely undergo death for thee, as our Lord did for us; and lay down my life to ransom thine; only stay and believe me, for I am sent by Christ." With that he stayed, and with a dejected look, throwing away his arms, he trembled, and dissolved into tears;

he embraced the aged apostle with all possible expressions of sorrow and lamentation, as if again baptized with his own tears. St. John assured him he had obtained his pardon of Christ; and having fasted and prayed with him, and for him, and with all the arts of consolation, refreshed his shattered and disconsolate mind, brought him into, and restored him to the church.

[*Cave's Primitive Christianity*, p. 320.



PETER GARDNER.

PETER GARDNER, a Friend who lived in Essex, had a concern to visit friends in Scotland; but being low in circumstances, and having a wife and several children, was under discouragement about it: the Lord in mercy condescended to remove his doubts, by letting him know he would be with him, and though he had no horse to ride, and was but a weakly man, yet he would give him strength to perform the journey, and sustain him so that he should not want for what was sufficient. And having faith, he laid his concern before the monthly meeting he belonged to, with innocent weight; and friends concurring with him therein, he took his journey along the east side of the nation, through Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire, and coming to a week-day meeting at Bridlington, where John Richardson

then dwelt, he lodged at his house. In the evening, the doors being shut, Peter asked him if any friend lived that way (pointing with his finger) John told him he pointed towards the sea, which was not far from thence; he said he believed he must go and see somebody that way in the morning; John asked him if he should go with him? he said he believed it would not be best, and so went to bed.

In the morning when John's wife had prepared breakfast, he thought he would go and see if the friend was well, but found the bed empty, and that he was gone, at which John Richardson wondered; but soon after Peter came in, to whom John said, "Thou hast taken a morning walk, come to breakfast:" and before they had done eating, a friend from the Quay or harbour (the way that Peter Gardner pointed to over night) came in, and said, "I wonder at thee, John, to send this man with such a message to my house," and related as follows, viz. That he came to him as he was standing at the fish-market place, looking on the sea, to observe the wind; that he asked him if he would walk into his house? to which Peter answered that he came for that purpose (this was in the twilight of the morning) that when he went into the house, he enquired whether his wife was well; to which the man answered, that she was sick in bed, and invited him to go in and see her; he said he came so to do: then being conducted into the chamber where the sick wo-

man was, he sat down by her; and after a short time told her, the will and resignation of her mind was accepted instead of the deed, and that she was excused from the journey which had been before her, and should die in peace with God and men: then turning to the man (her husband) he said, "Thy wife had a concern to visit the churches in another country beyond the sea, but thou wouldst not give her leave, so she shall be taken from thee; and behold, the Lord's hand is against thee, and thou shalt be blasted in whatsoever thou doest, and reduced to want thy bread." So the man seemed angry with John Richardson, who said to him, "Be still, and weigh the matter, for I knew not of the friend's going to thy house; but thought he was in bed, and did not inform him about thee nor thy wife;" at which he went away. So Peter pursued his journey towards Scotland, John Richardson and another Friend going with him to Scarborough, on horse back (for he would not let them go on foot with him) he kept before them full as fast as they chose to ride; and when they had gone about half way, he gained ground of them, and John said he was filled with admiration, for he seemed to go with more slight and ease, he thought, than ever he had seen any man before: and riding fast to overtake him, he thought he beheld a small white cloud as it were encompassing his head; when he overtook him, John said to him, "Thou dost travel very fast;" Peter replied, "My master told me

before I left home, that he would give me hinds feet, and he hath performed his promise to me."

When they came in sight of Scarborough, Peter said, "Take me to a friend's house, if there is any there;" John replied, "I will take thee to the place where I lodge, and if thou art not easy there, I will go until we find a place, if it may be:" so John Richardson took him to his lodgings, and just as they entered the door, they heard some one go up stairs, and anon the woman friend of the house coming down with a neighbour of her's invited them to sit down; and in a short time, Peter saith, "Here is light and darkness, good and bad in this house." The woman, after she had got them some refreshment, came and asked John, "Who hast thou brought here?" "A man of God," he replied. Having a meeting at Scarborough the next day, John Richardson stayed with him, and said he had good service; he also went with him to several friends houses there, and he frequently spake his sense of the state of the families; but as they were near entering one house, Peter stopped and said, "My Master is not there, I will not go in;" so they turned away.

Next morning at parting, John Richardson asked him how he was prepared for money, telling him the journey was long; to whom Peter answered, "I have enough, my Master told me I should not want; and now, a bit of bread, and some water from a brook

refreshes me as much as a set meal at a table :” but John insisted to see how much money he had, which was but two half-crowns ; upon which John took a handful of small pieces out of his pocket, and forced Peter to take them, telling him it was as free to him as his own, for so the Lord had put it into his heart ; thus they parted, John and the other friend returning home.”

In about two weeks afterwards the man’s wife (before mentioned) died, as Peter had foretold ; at that time, the same man had three ships at sea, his son was master of one, a second son was on board another, and in their voyages they were all wrecked or foundered, and their cargoes chiefly lost ; his two sons and several of the hands being drowned : the man soon after broke and could not pay his debts, but came to want bread before he died, though he had been in good circumstances, if not very rich.

John Richardson further said, that after some time he heard Peter Gardner was dead in Cumberland, on his return from Scotland, and being attached to him in near affection, he went to enquire how he ended.

John Bowstead, a noted friend near Carlisle, gave him an account that Peter had been through Scotland, and came to Carlisle, and the small-pox being there, he took the infection very suddenly, and lay ill with it : so John Bowstead went just as the pock was coming out on him, and took him to his house ; they never came out kindly, but

swelled him very much, so that he was blind, and died about the seventh day ; was quite sensible to the last, and knew the states of those who came to see him. He had enough to pay his funeral charges.



AMONG the numbers of worthy martyrs who, through Divine assistance, have triumphed over death, hell, and the grave, I will instance a female, by whose singular fortitude, a remarkable deliverance was wrought to a large congregation of Christians who were assembled together in order to perform divine worship.

“ When Valens, the Arian emperor who persecuted the orthodox Christians with as much fury and bitterness as any of the heathen emperors, came to Edessa, and found there great numbers of them daily meeting in their public assemblies, he severely checked the Governor, and commanded him by all means to root out and ruin them. The Governor, though of another persuasion, yet out of common compassion, gave them private notice of the Emperor’s commands, hoping they would forbear ; but they, not at all terrified with the news, met the next morning in greater numbers ; which the Governor understanding, went to the place of their assembly. As he was going, a woman

in a careless dress, leading a little child in her hand, rushed through the Governor's guard, who commanding her to be brought before him, asked her, why she made so much haste; "That I may the sooner come," said she, "to the place where the people of the catholic church are met together." "Know thou not," said he, "that the Governor will be there to-day, and kill all whom he finds there?" "I know it well," answered the woman, "and therefore make so much haste, lest I come too late, and be deprived of the crown of martyrdom." And being asked why she carried her little son along with her, she answered, "That he also may partake of the common sufferings, and share in the same rewards." The Governor, admiring the courage of the woman, turned back to the palace, and dissuaded the Emperor from his cruel resolution, as what was neither honourable in itself, nor would conduce to his purposes and designs." See Cave's Prim. Christ. p. 339.

Now let the learned, the opulent, and every rank and station in church and state, reflect a moment upon that all-sufficient power, who should cause a poor defenceless woman with her child to be the means of turning the heart of the greatest monarch then upon earth from this immediate cruel purpose; therefore let us diligently and seriously labour to have ourselves approved of God, seeing he chooses the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty.

The Power of Religion in a poor female Slave, and its Influence through her as an Instrument, upon those of the highest Birth, and in the greatest Affluence, even professed Heathens.

THE Georgians, a people near the Caspian Sea, were converted by means of a woman slave, who being a Christian, was become famous among them, for the incomparable strictness and piety of her life, and her miraculous cures; among others she cured the Queen of the Country, and thereby converted her, and by her solicitations, the King himself, who convening his subjects, preached to them, and persuaded them to embrace the faith; hereupon a church is erected.

[Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, page 14.]



The blessed Effect of a Holy Life and Daily Conversation with God, exemplified in a short Extract of the Life of Armelle Nicolas, a poor ignorant Country Maid.

TO THE READER.

THE person, whose daily conversation is here described, was not long since a poor simple country maid, and servant to a great family in France. The whole course of her life was very instructive, and a most shining

pattern of a true spiritual conversation. The particulars here related are taken out of the eighteenth chapter of the second part of her Life, giving great encouragement to a daily and uninterrupted conversation with God, and to wait before Him as the omnipresent Lord and Father.

If we know nothing else of Christianity, nor any other exercise but this, to spend one day after another in this manner, it would be sufficient. It is very remarkable, that this person, who served God with unwearied prayer and watchfulness, was so ignorant, that she could neither read nor write, and withal a servant, constantly employed in business and hard labour. By this we see that the true service of God is spiritual, universal, plain and easy, so that no person can be excused from it by any pretence whatsoever.

A Christian's Daily Conversation with God.

AS soon as I wake in the morning, saith she, I throw myself into the arms of my heavenly Love, as a child into the arms of his father. I rise with a design to serve and please Him. And if I have time to pray, I fall upon my knees in his holy presence, and speak to Him as if I really saw Him with my bodily eyes. I give myself up wholly to Him, and desire him to fulfil all his holy will in me, and that he would not suffer me that day to do the least thing which might be

offensive to Him. Then I recommend to Him all the prayers which shall be made that day. In short, I love and praise Him as much and as long as my affairs permit; though very often I have hardly so much time as to say the Lord's prayer. But I do not trouble myself about that; for I have God always in my heart, as well when I am about my business, which I do in obedience to his will, as when I retire on purpose to pray to Him. This he himself has taught me, that whatever I do out of love to Him, is a real prayer.

I dress myself in his presence, and he shews me that his love supplies me with raiment. And when I go about my business, even then doth He not forsake me, nor I Him, but He converses with me, and I with Him; yea, I am then as much united to Him, as when I am at my prayers, set apart on purpose for my spiritual recollection. O! how sweet and easy is all labour and toil in such good company! Sometimes I perceive such strength and support in my mind, that nothing is too hard for me, and I think myself alone able to manage the affairs of the whole family. Nothing but the body is at work, the heart and myself burn with love in the sweet familiarity I entertain with God.

When I am about my business in the day time, running up and down, till the body begins to be weary, or to repine, or to desire unseasonable rest, being oppressed with anger and uneasiness, my divine love enlightens

me forthwith, and shews me, how I ought to suppress those rebellious motions of corrupt nature, and not to nourish them at all, either by word or deed. This love keeps the door of my lips, and watches over my heart, that it may not in the least contribute to such irregular passions, which thus are crushed and subdued as soon as they rise.

But if, at any time, for want of care, I am surprized with those or the like faults, I cannot be at rest, till I have obtained pardon, and God be reconciled to me. I lie prostrate before his footstool, confessing all my faults to Him, as if he did not know them already; and there I continue, till he has forgiven me, renewed his friendship with me, and confirmed it more than before. For so it always happens through his infinite mercy, whenever I have committed a fault, which serves but to inflame my heart more and more with his divine love. If people persecute me, and by foul and uncharitable censures raise scandals upon me, or any other way afflict me; or if evil spirits attack me with their crafty and cunning temptations, I then presently run to my heavenly Love, who readily stretches forth his sacred arms to receive me, shewing me his heart and wounds open for my security; in which I hide myself as in a strong castle and fortress. And then I am so mightily strengthened, that if the whole army of hell itself, together with all the creatures, should rise up against me, I fear them no more than a fly, because

I am under the protection of the most high God, his love being the hiding-place and safe-guard of my soul.

If God at any time hides his face, making as if he would go away from me, I tell Him, "O! it is no matter, my Love, conceal thyself as much as thou pleasest, nevertheless I'll serve thee; for I know thou art my God." And then I stand upon my guard more than ever, to be faithful to Him, for fear of displeasing my Love. And at the same time perceiving the greatness of my misery and poverty, I insist the more upon the merits of our Saviour, and resolve to rest contented, though it should please Him to leave me all the days of my life in such a condition. But he never lets me continue long under these circumstances, and if I may venture to speak, he cannot forbear loving me, any more than I can live without Him.

If I am persuaded to be merry in company, I excuse myself. For nothing can be comparable to the pleasures of my Love, which are so much the sweeter and greater, for my withdrawing from all company whatsoever. If they wonder how I can stay always at home alone, I think within myself, "O! if you knew the glorious company I have, you would not say that I was alone; for I am never less alone, than when I have nobody with me."

The night coming on, and every one going to rest, I find rest only in the arms of divine Love: I sleep leaning on his holy

breast, like a child in his mother's bosom. I say, I go to sleep, but being still busied about the love and praises of my God, till I fall quite asleep. Many times this love rouses up all my senses, so that I cannot sleep the greatest part of the night, but I spend it in the embraces of the lovely grace of God, which never forsakes such a poor miserable creature as I am, but preserves me, and takes special care of me.

If in the night the evil spirits hover about, to torment or to surprize me (which often happens) this divine Love guards me, and fights for me. Yea, it gives me grace too, to resist them courageously, as if I were awake. For they seldom continue long to assault me unless it be in my sleep.

And this is the life I have led for these twenty years past, without perceiving the least change of that love which was poured out into my heart, after my sincere conversion unto Him. Nay, I have observed its daily increase, though every day it seemed impossible to endure any addition to what I already enjoyed. But truly, it is an infinite love, which satisfies and nourishes me, so that every day I have a new hunger, though methinks I can receive no more, than what I possess already every moment.

The author of her Life says, concerning the manner of her expressions, that they were always very modest, without any noise or vehemence: her common discourses were always holy and edifying; whereas others

too commonly mispend their time in useless conversation and unprofitable talk. If she was in company, where they talked of indifferent or evil things, she had the faculty of giving them such a handsome turn, as to bring them quite off from that, to some good and useful subject.

For a long while she could bear no other discourse but of God and his holy love. “I cannot imagine,” said she, “how a soul, created for heaven, can be concerned about the dross of this world.” From that time, if she happened to be in company, where the subject of the discourse was but indifferent, either she did not mind it at all, entertaining herself in the mean while with God; or, as soon as she thought it proper, she diverted and changed the discourse; thinking it but lost time, which was spent in the trifles of this world.

To every body, that had a mind to be acquainted with God Almighty, she gave this advice: “To be silent, and to learn to keep their thoughts together in the centre of the heart: for this, said she, is the beginning of our union with God, and by these means the soul forgets earthly things, and raises herself up to the contemplation of heavenly objects. We ought to lose our familiarity with the creatures, if we desire to enjoy the conversation of the Creator; a moment of which doth afford more delight and satisfaction, than all the finest discourses in the world.”

One time when her mistress was afraid that Armelle was like to run quite mad by an excess of devotion, she forbade her all spiritual exercises, and would not let her go even to church, except on the Lord's day only : Armelle, being sensible of the false step her mistress took, smiled within herself, saying, " Truly I am not mad, after I have found my Beloved, whom I now love with all my heart. I remember a time when I was seeking only God without me, and then I was mad indeed." This mistress of her's being of a sour and morose humour, shewed a deal of ill-nature to Armelle, of which, however, she never complained, but rather thanked God, that he was pleased to make this a means of her fuller purification.

" If," said she, " the soul be but well grounded in the favour of God, and lively affected with the operations of his grace, all the insults of the devil, and of the creature, are borne with joy and comfort. But this is misery indeed, when the Lord himself withdraws from the soul, and lets her shift for herself. Then she thinks that every step is a step into sin and corruption, being utterly unable to protect herself against it."

In what company soever she was, she talked of nothing more, than of being faithful to God. Nothing dropped more from her mouth than, " Let us be faithful ; let us be faithful to the Lord." This word she thought fit for any time, and suitable to every company. Now and then she would repeat

it an hundred times over ; and being asked by her friends, whether she had nothing else to say, she answered, “ Don’t wonder at my saying this over and over again. If I should live a thousand years, I should still tell you the same thing. For it is faithfulness, wherein the perfection of a Christian life consists.”

Of the constraining power of divine love, she has the following expression : “ Whenever I happened to adhere a little too much to my natural inclinations (apt to steal in upon the mind under the specious pretence of necessity) I was immediately reproved by the love of God. This divine love is like a careful tutor, who takes all the pains imaginable, for advancing his pupil in the way of learning he is engaged in ; and for this reason keeps his eye constantly fixed on him, both to correct his failings, though never so small, and to prevent his being led away by any thing that might divert him from his chief employment. Thus (says she) dealt the Lord with me. He kept me closely confined to an holy awe and wariness ; and when I happened by one oversight or other to withdraw, as it were, from his eye, he in that very moment pursued after me, and recalled me to my duty. But all this was done with so much love and tenderness, that it must be a heart of brass, if not mollified by such endearing marks of love and kindness.”

No sooner was she convinced of the will of God, but she was very earnest and diligent, to

answer it presently. She often wondered at some people's dilatory doings in the service of God, and said, it was a cunning fetch and stratagem of the devil, to make people put off from one day to another such designs as might serve to advance the glory of God, and the good of our fellow-creatures. "For," said she, "it often happens, that that grace which at one hour offers itself to a man, in order to support him under some difficult enterprizes, is not so easily met with at another time. And besides this, how uncertain is our life! nay, if we were sure to live longer, yet ought we not to linger, upon that account at all, nor to defer from one day to another what might be done this day.

"A man that is full of delays in the service of God, must needs have but little love at the bottom. Wherever love is raised to any considerable degree, there the soul can't rest, whilst there remains any thing to be done required by the beloved. And this dilatory temper (she said) was a great impediment in the way to perfection. Many souls were convinced of the will of God, but being too backward constantly to struggle against the corrupt propensities of their dull and lazy temper, they made but a slow progress in the work of religion. They say, 'To-morrow, to-morrow it shall be done in good earnest;' but that to-morrow never comes. The consequence whereof is, that the longer they flatter themselves in their disorderly and wonted customs, the less able

they are to resist them at last at all ; the Lord leaves them now to their own will, since they did not improve faithfully what once they had received.”

The virtue of humility was as remarkable in this holy maid as any of the rest ; and it was grounded on a true and solid foundation too. She confesses herself, that the infinite love of God kept her undefiled as to the vanity of pride ; insomuch that she ~~did~~ not know what pride or haughtiness was. “ I was astonished,” says she, “ when I was told to watch against pride ; for I thought whilst I was well in my wits, I could not possibly be proud.”

And this was the reason, that she never would quit that manner of life she was bred to, though mean and contemptible in the eye of the world.

Even her spiritual friends would now and then most importunately intreat her, to resign up to any body else her place (which was that of a servant) and this under a fair pretence too, viz. that she might have the more leisure to give herself up to a contemplative life, and thus to enjoy the favours and gracious infusion of the Lord more abundantly.

She said, her outward employment and all the drudgery she was put to, did not at all cool or weaken the sense of the love, and of the gracious presence of the Lord, she usually enjoyed. Nay, the more fervent she was to spend herself entirely in works of charity, cheerfully complying with every thing inci-

dent to her life, the more plentiful incomes she had of the love and favour of God. Hence it would be the effects of a false heart, if one should make bold to quit his outward employment, in order to gain more rest and quiet in another place. “God,” says she, “knows ways to find souls wherever they be, if they do not wilfully shut their hearts against him.”

Because her love to God was so great and fervent, the love she bore to her fellow-creatures was also wonderfully influenced and inflamed thereby. When she considered the woeful state of the wicked, and the dreadful judgment that is like to befall them at last, she then felt a more tender and commiserating love, and her very bowels began to yearn for compassion. When she looked upon the happy state she was arrived to, and the severe doom attending such profligate wretches, she used to say, “She seemed unto herself like one that had been in a great storm at sea, and by stress of weather like to be cast away every minute; but getting off at last safe and sound, remembered now ashore the dangers his brethren and near relations were still exposed to, being tossed up and down in the huge ocean, and left to the mercy of the roaring billows. Alas! (said she) thus it is with me, when I lay to heart the danger sinners run themselves into.* For the more endearing marks of divine grace the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon me,

the more fervent is my desire, that others also might partake of the same with me."

And now, ye learned men, and refined wits of the age, come hither and admire the ignorance and simplicity of this poor country maid! Consider how far she exceeds your high-flown superficial wisdom, and the dark flashes of human wit and learning? And was it possible for her, to attain to this heavenly wisdom and divine knowledge, to such a nobleness and elevation of mind, without the scraps and assistance of artificial learning and philosophy? then truly, there must be another school wherein those that "flow unto the Lord (Psalm xxxiv. 5.) are light-ed." Indeed, "to know the love of Christ, passeth all knowledge," Eph. iii. 19. Concerning which our Saviour was pleased thus to express his grateful sentiments with hearty joy, and heavenly triumph: "I thank thee, O Father! Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," Matt. xii. 25, 26.

Some Remarks on Silent Worship, or Devotion, seriously recommended to Mankind universally, for their most weighty Consideration. [From the London Review of December, 1791.]*

DEVOTION, considered simply in itself, is an intercourse between God and us : between the supreme, self-existent, inconceivable Spirit, which formed and preserves the universe, and that particular spirit, with which, for awful reasons, he has animated a portion of matter upon earth, that we call man. It is a silent act, in which the soul divests itself of outward things, flies into heaven, and pours forth all its wants, wishes, hopes, fears, guilt, or pleasure, into the bosom of an Almighty Friend. Though this devotion, in its first stages, may be a wearisome or insipid exercise, yet this arises merely from the depravity of nature, and of our passions. A little habit will overcome this reluctance ; when you have fairly entered upon your journey, the way of this wisdom will be ways of pleasantness, and all its paths peace. True devotion doubtless requires a considerable degree of abstraction from the world. Hence modern Christians teach it as a vision....hence many modern writers have little of its unction ;....but it glows in the scriptures....it warms us in the fathers...it burned in an Austin, and many

* The London Reviewers are a body of judicious and learned men, of different denominations, who constantly examine the publications in England, and publish their approbation monthly.

others of the persecuted martyrs, who now are with God. That we hear little of it, is not wonderful. It makes no noise in the circle of the learned, or of the elegant. Under a heap of worldly care, we smother the lovely infant, and will not let it breathe: vanity, ambition, pleasure, avarice, quench the celestial fire, and these, alas! are too much the god of mortals! Ever since the world began, writers have been amusing us only with shadows of this piety, instead of giving us its soul and substance. Superstition has placed it in opinions, ceremonies, austerities, pilgrimages, an august temple, or splendid imagery, which has little connection with sentiment or spirit. Enthusiasm has swelled with unnatural conceptions, and obtruded a spurious offspring on the world, instead of this engaging child of reason and truth; whilst the lukewarm have rested in a few outward duties, which have had no vigour; and, as they spring not from the heart, never entered the temple of the Most High.

Real piety is of a very different and of a much more animated nature;....it looks up to God....sees, hears, feels him in every event....in every vicissitude....in all places....in all seasons....and upon all occasions. It is theory, verified by experience; it is faith, substantiated by mental enjoyment; it is heaven transplanted in the human bosom; it is the radiance of the divinity warming and encircling man; it is a spiritual sense; gra-

tified by spiritual sensations ; without this, all ceremonies are inefficacious ; books, prayers, sacraments, and meditations, are but a body without a soul, or a statue without animation. That man is capable of such an intercourse with his Maker, there are many living witnesses to prove, without having recourse to the vision of fanatics, or the dreams of enthusiasts ; it may be proved to spring from natural and philosophical causes. God is a spirit, so is the mind ; bodies can have intercourse, so can souls ; when minds are in an assimilating state of purity, they have union with their Maker. This was the bliss of paradise, sin interrupted, and holiness must restore it to a soul : thus disposed, the Creator communicates himself, in a manner which is as insensible to the natural eye, as the falling of dews, but not less refreshing to its secret powers than that is to vegetation. The primitive saints are described thus when they speak of their transports : David felt it when he longed for God, as the hart panteth after the water brooks ; St. Paul, when he gloried in his tribulations, it was embodied in him, when he was carried up into the third heaven, and heard things impossible to be uttered. St. Stephen was filled with it, when he saw the heavens open, and prayed for his murderers ; by it martyrs were supported when they were stoned, and sawed asunder ; and till we feel it in ourselves, we shall never fully know how glorious the Lord is. If you

can acquire the spiritual abstraction, you will at once have made your fortune for eternity ; it will be of little moment, what is your lot on earth, or what the distinguishing vicissitudes of your life ; prosperity and adversity....health or sickness....honour or disgrace....a cottage or a crown....will all be so many instruments of glory : the whole creation will become a temple, every want, and every object will lead your mind to God, and his greatness and perfection. You will insensibly lose the littleness, the glory and tinsel of all human things. If I wish only to set off your person to the greatest advantage, I would recommend this true sublime of religion : it gives a pleasing serenity to the countenance, and a cheerfulness to the spirit beyond the reach of art, or the power of affectation : it communicates a real transport to the mind, which dissipation mimics only for a moment ; a sweetness to the disposition, and a lustre to the manners, which all the airs of modern politeness study but in vain. Easy in yourself, it will make you in perfect good humour with the world, and when you are diffusing happiness around you, you will only be dealing out the broken fragments that remain after you have eaten. This devotion, however, though essential to a silent intercourse between the soul and God ; yet to creatures consisting of matter, as well as spirit, must be nourished by external forms, it must strike the senses, in order to awaken the imagination.

An Extract from the Memorial of the Falls Monthly Meeting in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, concerning Joseph White, a Minister among the People called Quakers, who departed this Life in the year 1777, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

AFTER a short pause he broke forth in these expressions: "The door is open, I see an innumerable company of saints, of angels, and of the spirits of just men, which I long to be unbodied to be with, but not my will, but thy will be done, O Lord! I cannot utter, nor my tongue express, what I feel of that light, life, and love, that attends me, which the world cannot give, neither can it take away from me. My sins are washed away by the blood of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world: all rags and filthiness are taken away, and in room thereof love and good-will for all mankind: O that we may become more united in the church militant, and nearer resemble the church triumphant! O that we all might make such an end as I have in prospect, for it is all life, all love, and all peace; the light that I see is more glorious than the sun in the firmament: come Lord Jesus Christ, come when thou pleasest, thy servant is ready and willing; into thy hands I commit my spirit, not my will, but thy will be done, O Lord! Let this mortal body be committed to the dust, be with me, with my children, and my grand-children; be with all them that love thee, that love thy appearance.

O the pains that I feel, that attend this mortal body, they are more comely to me than jewels ! I rejoice in my sighs and groans; for to me they are most melodious ; I am near to enter that harmony with Moses and the Lamb, where they cry, ‘ Holy, boly, holy.’ I cannot express the joy I feel. My heart (if it were possible) would break for joy ; if any inquire after me, after my end, let them know all is well with me.”



Rules out of Ptolemy's Golden Table.

I NEVER exalted the proud rich man, nor hated the poor just man. I never denied justice to the poor for poverty, nor pardoned the wealthy for his riches. I never gave reward for affection, nor punishment upon passion. I never suffered evil to escape unpunished, nor goodness unrewarded. I never denied justice to him that asked it, nor mercy to him that deserved it. I never punished in anger, nor promised in mirth. I never did evil upon malice, nor good for covetousness. I always sought to be loved by the good, and feared by the wicked. I always favoured the poor that were able to do little, and God, who is able to do much, favoured me.

Springet's Precepts.

1st, LET thy thoughts be divine, awful, godly.

2d, Let thy talk be little, holy, true.

3d, Let thy works be profitable, truly charitable.

4th, Let thy manners be sober, courteous, cheerful.

5th, Let thy will be compliant, obedient, resigned.

6th, Let thy reason be clear, evident, unbiassed.

7th, Let thy diet be temperate, convenient, frugal.

8th, Let thy apparel be grave, plain, convenient.

9th, Let thy sleep be moderate, quiet, seasonable.

10th, Let thy retirement be serious, holy, pure.

11th, Let thy prayers be devout, awful, fervent.

12th, Let thy meditation be of death, judgment, eternity.



The Predictions delivered by the ancient Prophets, and fulfilled in our Saviour, shew that he was the Messiah expected by the Jews, and that he came into the World by divine Appointment, to be the great Deliverer and Redeemer of Mankind.

THE word Messiah signifies anointed; that is, a person appointed to some high

station, dignity, or office ; because originally among the eastern nations men so appointed (particularly kings, priests, and prophets) were anointed with oil. Hence the word Messiah means the person pre-ordained and appointed by God to be the great deliverer of the Jewish nation, and the Redeemer of all mankind. The word Christ means the same thing.

Now it was foretold concerning the Messiah, that he should come before the sceptre departed from Judah, that is, before the Jewish government was destroyed ;* and accordingly Christ appeared a short time before the period when the Jewish government was totally overthrown by the Romans.

It was foretold, that he should come before the destruction of the second temple. " The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts ; the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former."† Accordingly Christ appeared some time before the destruction of the city and the temple of Jerusalem by the Romans.

It was foretold by the prophet Daniel, that he should come at the end of four hundred and ninety years after the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which had been laid waste during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and that he should be cut off ; and that afterwards the city and sanctuary of Jerusalem should be

* Gen. xlix. 10.

† Hag. ii. 7, 9.

destroyed and made desolate.* And accordingly, at what time soever the beginning of the four hundred and ninety years can, according to any fair interpretation of the words, be fixed, the end of them will fall about the time of Christ's appearing: and it is well known how entirely the city and sanctuary were destroyed by the Romans some years after he was cut off and crucified.

It was foretold, that he should perform many great and beneficial miracles; that the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; that the lame man should leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing;† and this we know was literally fulfilled in the miracles of Christ; the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the deaf heard.

It was foretold, that he should die a violent death; that he should be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; that the chastisement of our peace should be upon him; and that with his stripes we should be healed; that God would lay on him the iniquity of us all.‡ All which was exactly accomplished in the sufferings of Christ, “who died for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”§

It was foretold, that to him should the gathering of the people be; and that God would give him the heathen for his inheri-

* Dan. x. 26.

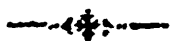
† Isa. xxxv. 5.

‡ Isa. liii. throughout; and Dan. ix. 26.

§ 1 Pet. iii. 18.

tance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession,* which was punctually fulfilled by the wonderful success of the gospel, and its universal propagation throughout the world.

Jesus employed no other means of converting men to his religion, but persuasion, argument, exhortation, miracles, and prophecies. He made use of no other force but the force of truth; no other sword but the sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God. He had no arms, no legions to fight his cause. He was the prince of peace, and preached peace to all the world. Without power, without support, without any followers but twelve poor humble men, without one circumstance of attraction, influence, or compulsion, he triumphed over the prejudices, the learning, the religion of his country; over the ancient rites, idolatry, and superstition, over the philosophy, wisdom, and authority of the whole Roman empire.



CONFUCIUS.

CONFUCIUS, the celebrated Chinese philosopher, was born in the kingdom of Lou, five hundred and fifty-one years before the Christian era. When a child, he had a

* Psalm ii. 8.

grave and serious deportment, which gained him respect, and plainly foretold what he would one day be. But he was most distinguished by his unexampled and exalted piety. He honoured his relations; he endeavoured in all things to imitate his grandfather, who was then alive in China, and a very pious man: and it was observable, that he never eat any thing, but he prostrated himself upon the ground, and offered it first to the Supreme Lord of heaven. One day, while he was a child, he heard his grandfather fetch a deep sigh; and going up to him, with much reverence, "May I presume," said he, "without losing the respect I owe you, to inquire into the occasion of your grief? Perhaps you fear that your posterity will degenerate from your virtue, and dishonour you by their vices." "What put this thought into your head," said the old man to him; "and where have you learned to speak after this manner?" "From yourself," replied Confucius: "I attend diligently to you every time you speak; and I have often heard you say, that a son, who does not by his virtue support the glory of his ancestors, does not deserve to bear their name."

At twenty-three years of age, when he had gained a considerable knowledge of antiquity, and acquainted himself with the laws and customs of his country, he projected a scheme for a general reformation of manners. Wisely persuaded that the people could not be happy, so long as avarice, ambition, voluptuousness,

and false policy reigned amongst them, he thought it incumbent upon him to recommend a severe morality ; and, accordingly, he began to enforce temperance, justice, and other virtues ; to inspire a contempt of riches, parade, and splendor ; and to excite such an elevation of mind, as would render men incapable of dissimulation and insincerity. In short, he used all the means he could think of, to redeem his countrymen from a life of pleasure to a life of reason. He was every where known, and as universally beloved : his extensive learning and great wisdom, soon made him known ; his integrity and the splendor of his virtues, made him beloved. Kings were governed by his counsels, and the people revered him as a saint. The good effects of his example and admonitions were, however, but temporary. He lived in times when rebellion, wars, and tumults raged throughout the empire. Men had little leisure, and less inclination, to listen to his philosophy : for, as we have observed, they were ambitious, avaricious, and voluptuous. Hence he often met with ill treatment and reproachful language, and it is said that conspiracies were formed against his life : to which may be added, that his neglect of his own pecuniary interests had reduced him to extreme poverty. Some philosophers among his contemporaries were so affected with the sad state of things, that they retired into the mountains and deserts, thinking that happiness could no where be found,

but in seclusion from society. They, in vain, endeavoured to persuade Confucius to follow their example: "I am a man," said he, "and cannot separate myself from the society of men, and consort with beasts. Bad as the times are, I shall do all I can to recal men to virtue; for in virtue are all things. If mankind would but embrace it, and submit themselves to its discipline and laws, they would not want me, or any body else, to instruct them. It is the duty of a teacher first to perfect himself, and then to perfect others. Human nature came to us from Heaven pure and without defect; but in process of time, ignorance, the passions, and evil examples, corrupted it. Reformation consists in restoring it to its primitive beauty: to be perfect, we must re-ascend to the point from which we have fallen. Let us obey Heaven. Let our reason, and not our senses, be the rule of our conduct: for reason will teach us to think wisely, to speak prudently, and to behave ourselves worthily upon all occasions."

Confucius did not cease to travel about, and do all the good in his power. He gained many disciples, who became strongly attached both to his person and his doctrine. These he sent into different parts of the empire to promote reformation of manners amongst the people. All his instructions were enforced by his own example. He was remarkable for his gravity and sobriety, his rigorous abstinence, his contempt of riches, and what

are commonly called the goods of this life ; for his continual attention and watchfulness over his actions ; and above all, for his unaffected modesty and humility. He is said to have lived three years in retirement ; and to have spent the latter part of his life in sorrow. A few days before his last illness, he told his disciples, with tears in his eyes, that he was overcome with grief at the sight of the disorders which prevailed in the empire : “ The mountain,” said he, “ is fallen, the high machine is demolished, and the sages are all fled.” His meaning was, that the edifice of perfection, which he had endeavoured to raise, was entirely overthrown. He began to languish from that time ; and a few days before his death expressed himself thus : “ The kings reject my maxims ; and since I am no longer useful on the earth, I ought not to regret leaving it.” After these words, he fell into a lethargy ; and, at the end of seven days, expired in the arms of his disciples, in the seventy-third year of his age. Upon the first hearing of his death, the prince who then reigned in the kingdom of Lou, could not refrain from tears : “ God is not satisfied with me,” cried he, “ since he has taken away Confucius.”

Wise and good men are indeed precious gifts, with which heaven blesses the earth ; and their worth is seldom justly appreciated till after their decease. Confucius was lamented by the whole empire. He was honoured as a saint ; and so high a veneration

was entertained for his memory, that it will scarcely ever be effaced in those parts of the world.



The following is an Extract taken from the late and learned Work, entitled, "The Asiatic Researches."

FROM a recent translation it appears that a religious sect exist in Persia, who are called Sosians, which in the Persian signifies pious, intelligent, spiritual. They wear mean clothing, made of wool, and exhibit humility; they appropriate a certain portion of time in reading....in the acquisition of scientific knowledge....in viewing the beauties of nature....and in meditation on the works and attributes of God. Some of them who dedicate the chief part of their time to *silent retirement*, seek in the abnegation of the world and of self, the enjoyment of a spiritual intercourse with the Supreme Being.

The following are some of their sublime sentiments :

“ A man is to be valued by that which he esteems; if he esteems the world, he himself is not estimable, for the world is not. If he esteems the life to come, and the things thereof, heaven is his price. But if he estimate God above all things, his own value is inestimable.”

One of those spiritual persons addressed the Almighty in this manner :

“ One man asks thee, O Lord, for the enjoyment of paradise, and another earnestly prays thee for deliverance from hell and its punishments : but I ask thee neither for the one nor the other of these ; my only desire is, that in me thy will may be accomplished.”



BISHOP BURNET.

GILBERT BURNET, bishop of Salisbury, was born at Edinburgh, in the year 1643. He was carefully educated by his father : and having a strong constitution, and a prodigious memory, he applied himself closely to study, and acquired a great portion of learning and knowledge, which he seemed to have ready for all occasions. He travelled through France, Italy, and Holland ; where he formed connexions with many of the greatest persons of his time, by whom he was much respected for his talents and virtues. At Amsterdam, he became acquainted with the leading men of the different persuasions tolerated in the United States, Calvinists, Arminians, Lutherans, Anabaptists, Brownists, Papists, and Unitarians ; amongst each of which, he used frequently to declare, he met with men of such

unfeigned piety and virtue, that he became strongly fixed in a principle of universal charity, and an invincible abhorrence of all severities on account of religious opinions.

He was instrumental in promoting the Revolution; and lived in great favour with William and Mary, and queen Anne. He distinguished himself in the house of lords, by declaring for moderate measures, with regard to the clergy who scrupled to take the oaths; and for a toleration of the Protestant dissenters. He composed many works, which evince his desire to promote the cause of piety and virtue. “The History of his own Time,” and “The History of the Reformation,” &c. have been much read; and for the latter, he received the thanks of both houses of parliament. His account of lord Rochester, is an elegant and interesting performance; and a striking display of the truth and excellence of the Christian religion.

The last five or six years of his life, he became more abstracted from the world; and he seems to have derived great advantage from the reflections which this leisure produced. The following sentiments, solemnly expressed by him towards the conclusion of his days, are so expressive of the nature and power of true religion, and of its influence upon his own mind, that they claim a place in these memorials.

.....“ I shall conclude with recommending to all sorts of men, in the most solemn and serious manner, the study and practice of

religion, as that which is the most important of all things, and which is both the light of the world, and the salt of the earth.

“ Nothing so opens our faculties, and composes and directs the whole man, as an inward sense of God ; of his authority over us ; of the laws he has set us ; of his eye ever upon us ; of his hearing our prayers ; assisting our endeavours ; watching over our concerns ; of his being able to judge, and reward or punish us in another state, according to what we have done in this. Nothing will give us such a detestation of sin, and such a sense of the goodness of God, and of our obligations to holiness, as a right understanding and firm belief of the Christian Religion. -

“ By living according to the rules of religion, a man becomes the wisest, the best, and the happiest creature that he is capable of being. Honest industry, the employing of time well, a constant sobriety, an undefiled purity and chastity, with continued serenity, are the best preservatives too of life and health : so that take a man as an individual, religion is his guard, his perfection, his beauty, and his glory. This will make him a light in the world, shining brightly, and enlightening many round about him.

“ Thus religion, if truly received and sincerely adhered to, would prove the greatest of all blessings to a nation. But, by religion, I understand something more than receiving particular doctrines, though ever so true, or professing them, and engaging to

support them, even with zeal and eagerness. What signify the best doctrines, if men do not live suitably to them ; if they have not a due influence upon their thoughts and their lives? Men of bad lives, with sound opinions, are self-condemned, and lie under a highly aggravated guilt.

“ By religion, I do not mean an outward compliance with forms and customs, in going to church, to prayers, to sermons, and to sacraments, with an external show of devotion; or, which is more, with some inward forced good thoughts, in which many satisfy themselves, while these have no visible effect on their lives, nor any inward force to control and rectify their appetites, passions, and secret designs. These customary performances, how good and useful soever when understood and rightly directed, are of little value when men rest on them, and think, because they do them, they have acquitted themselves of their duty, though they still continue proud, covetous, full of deceit, envy, and malice. Even secret prayers, the most effectual means, are designed for a higher end ; which is, to possess our minds with such a constant and present sense of divine truths, as may make these live in us, and govern us, and draw down such assistance, as to exalt and sanctify our natures.

“ So that, by religion, I mean such a sense of divine truth as enters into a man, and becomes the spring of a new nature within him ; reforming his thoughts and designs ; purify-

ing his heart ; sanctifying and governing his whole deportment, his words as well as his actions ; convincing him that it is not enough not to be scandalously vicious, or to be innocent in his conversation, but that he must be entirely, uniformly, and constantly, pure and virtuous, animated with zeal to be still better and better, more eminently good and exemplary.

“ This is true religion, which is the perfection of human nature, and the joy and delight of every one that feels it active and strong within him. It is true, this is not arrived at all at once, and it will have an unhappy alloy, hanging long even about a good man ; but, as those ill mixtures are the perpetual grief of his soul, so that it is his chief care to watch over and to mortify them, he will be in a continual progress, still gaining ground upon himself ; and as he attains to a degree of purity, he will find a noble flame of life and joy growing up in him. Of this I write with a greater concern and emotion, because I have felt it to be the true, and, indeed, the only joy which runs through a man’s heart and life. It is this, which has been, for many years, my greatest support. I rejoice daily in it. I feel from it the earnest of that supreme joy which I want and long for ; and I am sure there is nothing else which can afford any true and complete happiness.”

MARGARET ANDREWS.

SHE was the only child of Sir Henry Andrews, whose pious instructions, and those of his lady, seemed early attended with a special blessing to their beloved daughter. Almost as soon as she understood any thing, she exhibited promising symptoms of piety, in the delight she took in prayer; in her meekness, especially in receiving and regarding reproof; in her strict regard to justice, and utter detestation of falsehood; in her tenderness and pity to the poor, and eagerness to help them. At the age of seven or eight years, she gave more satisfactory evidences of a regenerate state; appearing very solicitous respecting her soul, and giving her chief attention to the things pertaining to its salvation. Her pleasure in the scriptures manifested itself not only in reading them with great attention, but in committing whole chapters to memory, which she did with great facility. She had a high respect for good ministers; delighting to hear them pray and preach, and asking them questions concerning God and her duty. Her charity also was proportionably improved. She was remarkably attentive to enquire out the necessities of the poor, and to procure relief for their distresses, as they were made known to her.

She early manifested a superiority and indifference of those objects which attract and

occupy the hearts of most, especially the young. She valued the world and its allurements as little as multitudes do their souls. These things had very little place even in her thoughts. Her mind was so conversant with heaven and its glories, that she seemed to be borne to a great distance from such earthly vanities; regarding them as unworthy her esteem, and far too small to satisfy the enlarged desires of her soul. Being once observed to sigh, and some around expressing their wonder respecting the cause, since she seemed to possess such advantages for being happy; she replied: "I want nothing in this world. I do not sigh for that; but how much better is heaven than all this!" Then starting up from her seat, and spreading her hands, she added, "O there are such joys in heaven, as cannot be conceived." She had a great indifference to those gaieties of dress which the young, especially of her sex, are apt to admire. When her parents bestowed any rarities upon her, they were thankfully acknowledged and prized, as tokens of their kindness, but little noticed on any other account: so that when she shewed her closet and its curiosities, to gratify her friends, it would be plainly seen that her heart was on very different things. Before the age of twelve, she was once taken by some of her friends, to see a play. As on her return she made no comments, she was asked, how she liked it. Her reply was; "I like it so, that I never desire to see another." Nor did she

ever vary from this determination. Not that she wanted either capacity or taste for what was sprightly and humorous. But her mind was so much occupied by things solid and useful, and so habitually conversant with heaven and its objects, that while the most innocent recreations had few charms for her, those that did but border on the contrary, were absolutely disgusting.

She was constant and diligent in reading books of piety. She appointed herself a daily portion of the scriptures, which she read with much observation; asking of others an explanation of such parts as she did not understand. In this way she soon obtained a share of knowledge which enabled her to instruct most who conversed with her. Reading once in the Psalms, she was much affected with the troubles of David, and thence took occasion to discourse with her maid about the afflictions of life in general, and particularly her own. The servant observing that *she* could have but little trouble, she replied, "They that have the least trouble, have a great deal: and if we do but consider what joys there are in heaven, it is enough to make us impatient to live here."

She was much in meditation; and when alone, was sometimes so much absorbed, as to be seen walking with her hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, and expressing, in other ways, much joy and comfort. When walking with others, she would discourse on the works, as well as the word of God, in a strain

which shewed them to be familiar to her thoughts. Her mind was much employed on the great subject of death. It was common for her, at going to bed, to converse with her maids about it; saying, "How ought we to think of our death, when this night may be the last!" Sometimes, when taking leave of them at night, she would say, "Well, I am going to death's kinsman."

Her devotion was eminent. She prayed regularly three times a day at least; and rarely an hour passed without secret ejaculations. Nor was it uncommon for her, in the midst of her youthful employments or recreations, to send away her maids, and retire for prayer. Such fervor and delight did she feel in this duty, that she sometimes forgot herself and her health so far, as to continue for two hours in her closet, even amid the severest cold. Not only on these occasions, but during the prayers of the family, it was common for her to shed tears in abundance. No company, no engagements, were permitted to supersede her devotions. Being once invited to go into the presence of the Queen, and being of course necessitated to spend a considerable time in dressing, she immediately after retired to her closet. The Lady who was to introduce her being come, and waiting for her, her mother, not knowing the cause of her delay, went hastily into the chamber, where she found her with her hands lifted up to heaven, and her face bedewed with tears, uttering these words:

“ Good Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ, suffer not Satan to prevail over me.”

In this way she consecrated every place into which she came, and converted every room of the house into a kind of Oratory. Yet though she spent so much of her time in retirement, she was cheerful, as well as affable, in company; and appeared as if her heart were almost continually filled with comfort and joy. The prayers, sighs, and tears which she sent to heaven, seemed to return in peace and blessings into her soul. Her exemplary devotion imparted to her whole demeanor a sweetness and solemnity which were equally engaging.

She was exemplarily strict in her observance of the sabbath. By secret devotion she prepared for the public worship of God. She heard his word with solemn and reverent attention. Returning from the sanctuary, she repeated in private what she could remember of the sermons, and spent the rest of the day in reading to others, or alone; in prayer, meditation, and other pious exercises. When requested for the sake of her health to walk abroad, she generally declined, lest her mind should be diverted from things divine.

She manifested a sincere love to the souls of others; instructing and admonishing the ignorant, reproofing the wicked, comforting the disconsolate, and doing what was in her power to prevent sin in all. She taught the servants the things of religion; exhorting

them to be constant in prayer and reading the scriptures, to avoid falsehood, and be kind, according to their ability, to the poor. She warned them against letting any business whatever prevent them from prayer ; and especially, that they should guard their hearts from wandering in that duty ; adding, “ This I tell you, because my heart is apt to do so.” Such pious counsels, strengthened by her good example, seemed much blessed to several of the servants. One of them in particular acknowledged that she had received more good to her soul by this young lady, than she had got elsewhere in all her life before.

Though anger was rarely, if ever, manifested by her on any other account, yet she has been known to reprove for sin with great pungency, where the occasion required it. In a person of such a sweet, gentle, inoffensive disposition, this discovered great zeal for the honour of God, and a lively sense of the danger of the guilty person. Nor was her fidelity in giving reproof greater than her humility, and even gratitude in receiving it.

So tender was her compassion to those who were afflicted, especially in mind, that though her modesty was great, she frequently found herself compelled to offer consolation to those in this state, who were much older than herself. To a visitant recently deprived of several near relatives, and otherwise much distressed, she judiciously enlarged on the wisdom and goodness of God, who knew what was best for her, and no doubt had gra-

cious purposes in sending those afflictions; representing in addition what might be the probable intention of them, and which way they might turn to her advantage, and the consequent reasons for setting bounds to her sorrow.

If any fault was committed in the house, she would desire her mother not to ask the servants about it, lest for fear of her anger, any of them should tell a lie to conceal it. When a boy in the family was taken in a fault, she desired her mother to correct him; to which her mother replied, "she had forgiven him so many faults, ~~that~~ she would turn him away." "No, mother," rejoined the young intercessor, "pray let him be corrected, and tell him the sin, and set before him the terrors of conscience, and the torments of hell, and I warrant you it will do him good."

If any poor came to the house, she did not fail to intercede for them with her parents, nor to add something of her own, though very secretly. When she met with a distressed object, she would come in with tears of compassion to desire relief: and when visited by some whom she suspected to be reduced to indigence from circumstances of ease, she would most tenderly draw from them an account of their state, and offer her assistance, if there was need. Nor was she contented to supply those who came to her father's house, but went abroad in quest of objects of charity; yet concealing her design

as much as possible. She once, on the morning of Monday, came unperceived behind a poor woman hard at work, who was that moment thinking how she should maintain her family through the week, and making her sad complaint to God; and putting a piece of money into her hand, went away. The unexpected relief greatly affected the poor woman, who thought it came, as by an angel from heaven. So frequent were such visits, with this compassionate young lady, that she was well acquainted with the condition of the poor of the parish, and sometimes gave particular information of their necessities to her parents, informing them who wanted victuals, clothes, or fire, and importuning them for a supply till it was granted. On one of these occasions, she said to them, "If you will but give what wood I will carry, they shall not want." She would also particularly reckon up to them the poor's charge, what they were allowed, and what they could earn, and then put the question to her parents, whether they could live upon so little; and this so judiciously, that they seldom or never had reason to controvert her statements. When she could not go abroad herself, she sent money to the poor by her maid, charging her not to say any thing of it. She also enjoined on her, that when any poor people came, she should not speak harshly to them, but go to her parents, and represent their condition; adding a charge that she should do the same wherever she might be placed; and that when

she should be settled in the world, she should be kind to the poor ; saying she would find that far from having less at the year's end, she would be doubly paid by Providence.

So displeased was she to hear any thing said injurious to the reputation of another, that she would reprove and silence the least whispers of detraction.

To these excellencies, truly uncommon in one so young, it may be added, that her discretion and judgment were so eminent, that even the aged were cautious what they said before her ; and that such was her humility, meekness, and universal exemplariness, as to rank her among the first-rate Christians.

A little before her last sickness, she thus expostulated with her mother, in whom she discovered an immoderate anxiety about her : “ Am I not,” said she, “ in the hands of God ? Cannot he preserve me ? If it be his pleasure, I shall live. If not, your care cannot preserve me. And what if he should take me ? you will not be long after me. If you live twenty or thirty years after me, what is that to eternity ?”....Such expressions render it not improbable that she had some apprehensions of approaching death ; especially as she was heard about this time to express a wish that her mother had another child, and that her parents had less affection for her. She likewise observed, in consequence of a journey being planned for her, that if she went to the place contemplated, she should never return.

Soon after, being within some months of fourteen, she was seized with the sickness which gave her up to God and glory. Being in great pain at first, she often called on God, and said, "He is very merciful to me; for what I feel is nothing to the sufferings of Christ for me." After some ease, she said, "God is very gracious in giving us pain; otherwise, we should not know how to be thankful for ease."

She spent much of her sickness in prayer; and when she could not speak, shewed great signs of inward devotion.

Two or three hours before her death, her mother said to her, "My dear, are you so ill that you think you shall die? Be not backward to tell me, for it will not be hard for me to part with you to God, if it be his pleasure." To this question she replied, smiling, "I hope God will pardon my sins;"....thus intimating her hope that she should find the sting of death taken out. She afterwards asked the Doctor, "Do you think I shall die?" He answered, "Madam, no one can tell that." She replied, "Pray, Doctor, deal plainly with me: I would not be deluded." He answered, "It is doubtful." She then said, "I have been a great sinner; but I hope God will pardon me. My Saviour is in heaven, and I hope he will put on me the white robe." She confessed the former mercies of God to her, said she had been troubled for sin, but the Lord had given her the Comforter, and sealed her, and she had

been comforted ever since. She then, with the consent of her parents, ordered considerable sums of money to be given to the poor after her death. After this, addressing her father and mother, she said, "Pray, do not be troubled when I am gone. Do you think you shall be long after me?" Her father and the rest of the family kneeling down, and recommending her to God, she seemed devout and cheerful.

How does such an example of piety thus mature in one less than fourteen, reprove the irreligious, useless, perhaps pernicious old age of multitudes! While it forcibly allures the young, the thoughtless and the gay, to that religion which confers such real dignity, and such substantial pleasure; which can render them in life so useful, in death so happy!

In a Latin epitaph, prefixed to her life, are expressions to the following purpose:

"She was a person rarely paralleled....the hope and love of her parents....the delight and ornament of her family....Her bosom was the temple of modesty, purity, and goodness....To the poor she richly scattered blessings....the pomps of the world she disdained....the powers of Satan she vanquished....for God dwelt in her, and she in God....Wonder not that such a spirit made so short a visit to our world, as its prayers and devout breathings were the wings and gales that wafted it to its heavenly rest. Depart, traveller; ponder, and be wise."

THE SURE PATH
TO
CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

THE greatest part of mankind, nay, of Christians, may be said to be asleep; and that particular way of life, which takes up each man's mind, thoughts and affections, may very well be called his particular dream. This degree of vanity is equally visible in every form and order of life. The learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, are all in the same state of slumber; only passing away a short life in a different kind of a dream. But why so? It is because man has an eternity within him, is born into this world, not for the sake of living here, not for any thing this world can give him, but only to have time and place to become either an eternal partaker of a divine life with God, or to have an hellish eternity among fallen angels: and therefore, every man who has not his eyes, his heart, and his hands, continually governed by this two-fold eternity, may be justly said to be fast asleep, to have no awakened sensibility of himself. And a life devoted to interest, and the enjoyments of this world, spent and wasted in the slavery of earthly desires, may be truly called a dream, as having all the shortness, vanity, and delusion of a dream; only with this difference, that when a dream is over, nothing is lost but fictions

and fancies : but when the dream of life is ended only by death, all that eternity is lost, for which we were brought into being. Now there is no misery in this world, nothing that makes either the life or death of man to be full of calamity, but this blindness and insensibility of his state, into which he so willingly nay, obstinately, plunges himself. Every thing that has the nature of evil and distress in it, takes its rise from thence. Do but suppose a man to know himself; that he comes into this world on no other errand, but to rise out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity; do but suppose him to govern his inward thoughts and outward actions by this view of himself, and then to him every day has lost all its evil; prosperity and adversity have no difference, because he receives and uses them both in the same spirit; life and death are equally welcome, because equally parts of his way to eternity. For poor and miserable as this life is, we have all of us free access to all that is great, and good, and happy; and carry within ourselves a key to all the treasures that Heaven has to bestow upon us.... We starve in the midst of plenty, groan under infirmities, with the remedy in our own hands; live and die without knowing and feeling any thing of the ~~one~~ only good, whilst we have it in our power to know and enjoy it in as great a reality, as we know and feel the power of this world over us: for heaven is as near to our souls, as this world is to our bodies; and we are created, we are

redeemed, to have our conversation in it : God, the only good of all intelligent natures, is not an absent or distant God, but is more present in and to our souls, than our own bodies ; and we are strangers to heaven, and without God in the world, for this only reason, because we are void of that spirit of prayer, which alone can, and never fails to unite us with the one only good, and to open heaven and the kingdom of God within us. All our salvation consists in the manifestation of the nature, life, and spirit of Jesus Christ in our inward new man. This alone is Christian redemption ; this alone delivers from the guilt and power of sin ; this alone redeems, renews, and regains the first life of God in the soul of man. Every thing besides this is self, is fiction, is propriety, is own will, and however coloured, is only thy old man, with all his deeds. Enter therefore with all thy heart into this truth, let thy eye be always upon it, do every thing in view of it, try every thing by the truth of it, love nothing but for the sake of it. Wherever thou goest, whatever thou dost, at home, or abroad, in the field, or at church, do all in a desire of union with Christ, in imitation of his tempers and inclinations, and look upon all as nothing, but that which exercises and increases the spirit and life of Christ in thy soul. From morning to night keep Jesus in thy heart, long for nothing, desire nothing, hope for nothing, but to have all that is within thee, changed into the spirit and temper of

the holy Jesus. Let this be thy Christianity, thy church, and thy religion. For this new birth in Christ thus firmly believed, and continually desired, will do every thing that thou wantest to have done in thee, it will dry up all the springs of vice, stop all the workings of evil in thy nature, it will bring all that is good into thee, it will open all the gospel within thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of God. This longing desire of thy heart to be one with Christ, will soon put a stop to all the vanity of thy life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy heart, or proceed from it, but what comes from God, and returns to God; thou wilt soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the chains of all holy affections and desires, thy mouth will have a watch set upon it, thy ears would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to God, nor thy eyes be open, but to see, and find occasions of doing good. In a word, when this faith has got both thy head and thy heart, it will then be with thee, as it was with the merchant who found a pearl of great price, it will make thee gladly to sell all that thou hast, and buy it. For all that had seized and possessed the heart of any man, whatever the merchant of this world had got together, whether of riches, power, honour, learning, or reputation, loses all its value, is counted but as dung, and willingly parted with, as soon as this glorious pearl, the new birth in Christ Jesus, is discovered and found by him. This therefore may serve as a touch-

stone, whereby every one may try the truth of his state ; if the old man is still a merchant within thee, trading in all sorts of worldly honour, power, or learning, if the wisdom of this world is not foolishness to thee, if earthly interests, and sensual pleasures, are still the desire of thy heart, and only covered under a form of godliness, a cloke of creeds, observances, and institutions of religion, thou mayst be assured, that the pearl of great price is not yet found by thee. For where Christ is born, or his spirit rises up in the soul, there all self is denied, and obliged to turn out ; there all carnal wisdom, arts of advancement, with every pride and glory of this life, are as so many heathen idols, all willingly renounced, and the man is not only content, but rejoices to say, that his kingdom is not of this world.

But thou wilt perhaps say, How shall this great work, the birth of Christ, be effected in me ? It might rather be said, since Christ has an infinite power, and also an infinite desire to save mankind, how can any one miss of this salvation, but through his own unwillingness to be saved by him ? Consider, how was it that the lame and blind, the lunatic and leper, the publican and sinner, found Christ to be their Saviour, and to do all that for them, which they wanted to be done to them ? It was because they had a real desire of having that which they asked for, and therefore in true faith and prayer applied to Christ, that his spirit and power might enter into them, and heal that which they wanted

and desired to be healed in them. Every one of these said in faith and desire, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole." And the answer was always this, "According to thy faith, so be it done unto thee." This is Christ's answer now, and thus it is done to every one of us at this day, as our faith is, so is it done unto us. And here lies the whole reason of our falling short of the salvation of Christ, it is because we have no will to it.

But you will say, Do not all Christians desire to have Christ to be their Saviour? Yes. But here is the deceit; all would have Christ to be their Saviour in the next world, and to help them into heaven when they die, by his power and merits with God. But this is not willing Christ to be thy Saviour; for his salvation, if it is had, must be had in this world, if he saves thee, it must be done in this life, by changing and altering all that is within thee, by helping thee to a new heart, as he helped the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the dumb to speak. For to have salvation from Christ, is nothing else but to be made like unto him; it is to have his humility and meekness, his mortification and self-denial, his renunciation of the spirit, wisdom, and honours of this world, his love of God, his desire of doing God's will, and seeking only his honour. To have these tempers formed and begotten in thy heart, is to have salvation from Christ; but if thou willest not to have these tempers brought forth in thee, if thy

faith and desire does not seek and cry to Christ for them in the same reality, as the lame asked to walk, and the blind to see, then thou must be said to be unwilling to have Christ to be thy Saviour.

Again, consider how was it ~~that~~ the carnal Jew, the deep-read Scribe, the learned Rabbi, the religious Pharisee, not only did not receive, but crucified their Saviour? It was because they willed and desired no such Saviour as he was, no such inward salvation as he offered to them. They desired no change of their own nature, no inward destruction of their own natural tempers, no deliverance from the love of themselves, and the enjoyments of their passions; they liked their state, the gratifications of their old man, their long robes, their broad phylacteries, and greetings in the markets. They wanted not to have their pride and self love dethroned, their covetousness and sensuality to be subdued by a new nature from Heaven derived into them. Their only desire was the success of Judaism, to have an outward Saviour, a temporal prince, that should establish their law and ceremonies over all the earth. And therefore they crucified their dear Redeemer, and would have none of his salvation, because it all consisted in a change of their nature, in a new birth from above, and a kingdom of Heaven to be opened within them by the Spirit of God.

Oh Christendom, look not only at the old Jews, but see thyself in this glass. For at this day (Oh sad truth to be told!) at this

day, a Christ within us, an inward Saviour raising a birth of his own nature, life, and Spirit within us, is rejected as gross enthusiasm, the learned Rabbies take counsel against it.

But to return : it is manifest, that no one can fail of ~~the~~ benefit of Christ's salvation, but through an unwillingness to have it, and from the same spirit and tempers which made the Jews unwilling to receive it. But if thou wouldst still farther know how this great work, the birth of Christ, is to be effected in thee, then let this joyful truth be told thee, that this great work is already begun in every one of us. For this holy Jesus, that is to be formed in thee, that is to be the Saviour and new life of thy soul, that is to raise thee out of the darkness of death into the light of life, and give thee power to become a Son of God, is already within thee, living, stirring, calling, knocking at the door of thy heart, and wanting nothing but thy own faith and good will, to have as real a birth and form in thee, as he had in the virgin Mary. For the eternal Word, or Son of God, did not then first begin to be the Saviour of the world, when he was born in Bethlehem of Judea; but that Word, which became man in the virgin Mary, did, from the beginning of the world, enter as a word of life, a seed of salvation, into the first father of mankind, was inspoken into him, as an ingrafted word, under the name and character of a bruiser of the serpent's head. Hence it is, that Christ said to his disciples, the

kingdom of God is within you ; that is, the divine nature is within you, given unto your first Father, into the light of his life, and from him rising up in the life of every son of Adam. Hence also the holy Jesus is said to be the light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Not as he was born in Bethlehem, not as he had an human form upon earth ; in these respects he could not be said to have been the light of every man that cometh into the world ; but as he was that eternal Word, by which all things were created, which was the life and light of all things, and which had as a second Creator entered again into fallen man, as a bruiser of the serpent ; in this respect it was truly said of our Lord, when on earth, that “ He was that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” For he was really and truly all this, as he was the Immanuel, the God with us, given unto Adam, and in him to all his offspring. See here the beginning and glorious extent of the catholic church of Christ ; it takes in all the world. It is God’s unlimited, universal mercy to all mankind ; and every human creature, as sure as he is born of Adam, has a birth of the Bruiser of the serpent within him, and is so infallibly in covenant with God, through Jesus Christ. Hence also it is, that the holy Jesus is appointed to be Judge of all the world, it is because all mankind, all nations and languages have in him, and through him, been put into covenant with God, and made capable of resisting the evil of their fallen nature.

When our blessed Lord conversed with the woman at Jacob's well, he said unto her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that talketh with thee, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." How happy (may any one well say) was this woman of Samaria, to stand so near this gift of God, from whom she might have had living water, had she but vouchsafed to have asked for it! But, dear Christian, this happiness is thine; for this holy Jesus, the gift of God, first given unto Adam, and in him to all that are descended from him, is the gift of God to thee, as sure as thou art born of Adam; nay, hast thou never yet owned him; art thou wandering from him, as far as the prodigal son from his father's house? Yet is he still with thee, he is the gift of God to thee, and if thou wilt turn to him, and ask of him, he has living water for thee.

Poor sinner! consider the treasure thou hast within thee, the Saviour of the world, the eternal Word of God lies hid in thee, as a spark of the divine nature, which is to overcome sin, and death, and hell within thee, and generate the life of heaven again in thy soul. Turn to thy heart, and thy heart will find its Saviour, its God within itself. Thou seest, hearest, and feelest nothing of God, because thou seekest for Him abroad with thy outward eyes, thou seekest for Him in books, in controversies, in the church, and outward exercises, but there thou wilt not find Him,

till thou hast first found Him in thy heart. Seek for Him in thy heart, and thou wilt never seek in vain, for there he dwelleth, there is the seat of his light and Holy Spirit.

For this turning to the light and Spirit of God within thee, is thy only true turning unto God, there is no other way of finding Him, but in that place where he dwelleth in thee. For though God be every where present, yet He is only present to thee in the deepest, and most central part of thy soul. Thy natural senses cannot possess God, or unite thee to Him, nay, thy inward faculties of understanding, will, and memory, can only reach after God, but cannot be the place of his habitation in thee. But there is a root, or death in thee, from whence all these faculties come forth, as lines from a centre, or as branches from the body of the tree. This depth is called the centre, the fund, or bottom of the soul. This depth is the unity, the eternity, I had almost said, the infinity of thy soul; for it is so infinite, that nothing can satisfy it or give it any rest, but the infinity of God. In this depth of the soul, the holy Trinity brought forth its own living image in the first created man, bearing in himself a living representation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and this was his dwelling in God, and God in Him. This was the kingdom of God within Him, and made paradise without Him. But the day that Adam did eat of the forbidden earthly tree, in that day he absolutely died to this kingdom of God

within Him. This depth, or centre of his soul having lost its God, was shut up in death and darkness, and became a prisoner in an earthly animal, that only excelled its brethren, the beasts, in an upright form, and serpentine subtilty. Thus ended the fall of man. But from that moment that the God of mercy inspoke into Adam the Bruiser of the serpent, from that moment all the riches and treasures of the divine nature came again into man, as a seed of salvation sown into the centre of the soul, and only lieth hidden there in every man, till he desires to rise from his fallen state, and to be born again from above.

Awake then, thou that sleepest, and Christ, who, from all eternity, hath been espoused to thy soul, shall give thee light. Begin to search and dig in thine own field for this pearl of eternity, that lieth hidden in it; it cannot cost thee too much, nor canst thou buy it dear; for it is all, and when thou hast found it, thou wilt know, that all which thou hast sold, or given away for it, is as mere a nothing, as a bubble upon the water.

But if thou turnest from this heavenly pearl, or tramplest it under thy feet, for the sake of being rich or great, either in church or state, if death finds thee in this success, thou canst not then say, that though the pearl is lost, yet something has been gained instead of it. For in that parting moment, the things, and the sounds of this world, will be exactly alike; to have had an estate, or only to have heard of it; to have lived at

Lambeth twenty years, or only to have twenty times passed by the palace, will be the same good, or the same nothing to thee.

But I will now shew a little more distinctly, what this pearl of eternity is. First, it is the light and Spirit of God within thee, which has hitherto done thee but little good, because all the desire of thy heart has been after the light and spirit of this world. Thy reason and senses, thy heart and passions, have turned all their attention to the poor concerns of this life, and therefore thou art a stranger to this principle of heaven, this riches of eternity within thee. For as God is not, cannot be truly found by any worshippers, but those who worship Him in spirit and in truth, so this light and Spirit, though always within us, is not, cannot be found, felt, or enjoyed, but by those, whose whole spirit is turned to it.

When man first came into being, and stood before God as his own image and likeness, this light and Spirit of God was as natural to him, as truly the light of his nature, as the light and air of this world is natural to the creatures that have their birth in it. But when man, not content with the food of eternity, did eat of the earthly tree, this light and Spirit of Heaven was no more natural to him, no more rose up as a birth of his nature, but, instead thereof, he was left solely to the light and spirit of this world. And this is that death which God told Adam he should surely die, in the day that he should eat of the forbidden tree.

But the goodness of God would not leave man in this condition ; a redemption from it was immediately granted, and the Bruiser of the serpent brought the light and Spirit of Heaven once more into the human nature. Not as it was in its first state, when man was in paradise, but as a treasure hidden in the centre of our souls, which should discover, and open itself by degrees, in such proportion, as the faith and desires of our heart were turned to it. This light and Spirit of God thus freely restored again to the soul, and lying in it as a secret source of Heaven, is called grace, free grace, or the supernatural gift, or power of God in the soul. Hence it is, that in the greatest truth, and highest reality, every stirring of the soul, every tendency of the heart towards God and goodness, is justly and necessarily ascribed to the Holy Spirit, or the grace of God. It is because this first seed of life, which is sown into the soul, as the gift or grace of God to fallen man, is itself the light and Spirit of God, and therefore every stirring, or opening of this seed of life, every awakened thought or desire that arises from it, must be called the moving, or the quickening of the Spirit of God ; and therefore that new man which arises from it, must, of all necessity, be said to be solely the work and operation of God. Hence also we have an easy and plain declaration of the true meaning, solid sense, and certain truth, of all those scriptures, which speak of the inspiration of God, the opera-

tion of the Holy Spirit, the power of the divine light, as the sole and necessary agents in the renewal and sanctification of our souls, and also as being things common to all men. It is because this seed of life, or bruise of the serpent, is common to all men, and has in all men a degree of life, which is in itself so much of the inspiration, or life of God, the Spirit of God, the light of God, which is in every soul, and is its power of becoming born again of God. Hence also it is, that all men are exhorted not to quench, or resist, or grieve the Spirit; that is, this seed of the Spirit and light of God that is in all men, as the only source of good. Again, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." By the flesh and its lustings, are meant the mere human nature, or the natural man, as he is by the fall; by the spirit is meant the bruise of the serpent, that seed of the light and Spirit of God, which lieth as a treasure hid in the soul, in order to bring forth the life that was lost in Adam. Now as the flesh hath its life, its lustings, whence all sorts of evil are truly said to be inspired, quickened, and stirred up in us; so the spirit, being a living principle within us, has its inspiration, its breathing, its moving, its quickening, from which alone the divine life, or the angel that died in Adam, can be born in us.

When this seed of the Spirit, common to all men, is not resisted, grieved, and quenched, but its inspirations and motions suffered

to grow and increase in us to unite with God, and get power over all the lusts of the flesh, then we are born again, the nature, spirit, and tempers of Jesus Christ are opened in our souls, the kingdom of God is come, and is found within us. On the other hand, when the flesh, or the natural man, hath resisted and quenched this spirit or seed of life within us, then the works of the flesh, adultery, fornication, murders, lying, hatred, envy, wrath, pride, foolishness, worldly wisdom, carnal prudence, false religion, hypocritical holiness, and serpentine subtilty, have set up their kingdom within us.

See here in short the state of man as redeemed. He has a spark of the light and Spirit of God, as a supernatural gift of God given into the birth of his soul, to bring forth by degrees a new birth of that life, which was lost in paradise. This holy spark of the divine nature within him, has a natural, strong, and almost infinite tendency, or reaching after that eternal light and Spirit of God, from whence it came forth. It came forth from God, it came out of God, it partaketh of the divine nature, and therefore it is always in a state of tendency and return to God. And all this is called the breathing, the moving, the quickening of the Holy Spirit within us, which are so many operations of this spark of life tending towards God. On the other hand, the Deity, as considered in itself, and without the soul of man, has an infinite, unchangeable tendency of love, and

desire towards the soul of man, to unite, and communicate its own riches and glories to it, just as the spirit of the air without man, unites, and communicates its riches and virtues to the spirit of the air that is within man. This love, or desire of God towards the soul of man is so great, that He gave his only begotten Son, the brightness of his glory, to take human nature upon him, in its fallen state, that by this mysterious union of God and man, all the enemies of the soul of man might be overcome, and every human creature might have a power of being born again according to that image of God, in which he was first created. The gospel is the history of this love of God to man. Inwardly he has a seed of the divine life given into the birth of his soul, a seed that has all the riches of eternity in it, and is always wanting to come to the birth in him, and be alive in God. Outwardly he has Jesus Christ, who, as a Sun of Righteousness, is always casting forth his enlivening beams on this inward seed, to kindle and call it forth to the birth, doing that to this seed of Heaven in man, which the sun in the firmament is always doing to the vegetable seeds in the earth.

Consider this matter in the following similitude. A grain of wheat has the air and light of this world enclosed, or incorporated in it: this is the mystery of its life, this is its power of growing, by this it has a strong continual tendency of uniting again with that ocean of

light and air, from whence it came forth, and so it helps to kindle its own vegetable life.

On the other hand, that great ocean of light and air, having its own offspring hidden in the heart of the grain, has a perpetual strong tendency to unite and communicate with it again. From this desire of union on both sides, the vegetable life arises, and all the virtues and powers contained in it.

But here let it be well observed, that this desire on both sides cannot have its effect, till the husk and gross part of the grain falls into a state of corruption and death; till this begins, the mystery of life hidden in it, cannot come forth. The application here may be left to the reader. I shall only observe, that we may here see the true ground, and absolute necessity of that dying to ourselves, and to the world, to which our blessed Lord so constantly calls all his followers. An universal self-denial, a perpetual mortification of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not a thing imposed upon us by the mere will of God, is not required as a punishment, is not an invention of dull and monkish spirits, but has its ground and reason in the nature of the thing, and is as absolutely necessary to make way for the new birth, as the death of the husk, and gross part of the grain, is necessary to make way for its vegetable life.

But secondly, this pearl of eternity is the wisdom and love of God within thee. In this pearl of thy serpent Bruiser, all the holy

nature, spirit, tempers, and inclinations of Christ lie as in a seed, in the centre of thy soul, and divine wisdom, and heavenly love, will grow up in thee, if thou givest but true attention to God present in thy soul. On the other hand, there is hidden also in the depth of thy nature, the root, or possibility of all the hellish nature, spirit and tempers of the fallen angels. For heaven and hell have each of them their foundation within us, they come not into us from without, but spring up in us, according as our will and heart is turned either to the light of God, or the kingdom of darkness. But when this life, which is in the midst of these two eternities, is at an end, either an angel or a devil will be found to have a birth in us.

Thou needest not therefore run here, or there, saying, "Where is Christ? Thou needest not say, Who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring down Christ from above? or who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from the dead?" for behold, the Word, which is the wisdom of God, is in thy heart, it is there as a bruiser of thy serpent, as a light unto thy feet, and lanthorn unto thy paths. It is there as an holy oil, to soften and overcome the wrathful, fiery properties of thy nature, and change them into the humble meekness of light and love. It is there as a speaking Word of God in thy soul; and as soon as thou art ready to hear, this eternal speaking Word will speak wisdom and love in thy inward parts, and

bring forth the birth of Christ, with all his holy nature, spirit and tempers, within thee. Hence it was (that is, from this principle of heaven, or Christ in the soul) hence I say it was, that so many eminent spirits, partakers of a divine life, have appeared in so many parts of the heathen world. Glorious names, sons of wisdom, that shone, as lights hung out by God, in the midst of idolatrous darkness. These were the apostles of a Christ within, that were awakened and commissioned by the inward bruiser of the serpent, to call mankind from the blind pursuits of flesh and blood, to know themselves, the dignity of their nature, the immortality of their souls, and the necessity of virtue, to avoid eternal shame and misery. These apostles, though they had not the law, or written gospel, to urge upon their hearers, yet, having turned to God, they found and preached the gospel, that was written in their hearts. Hence one of them could say this divine truth, viz. that “such only are priests and prophets, who have God in themselves.” Hence also it is, that in the Christian church, there hath been in all ages, amongst the most illiterate, both men and women, who have attained to a deep understanding of the mysteries of the wisdom and love of God, in Christ Jesus. And what wonder? since it is not art or science, or skill in grammar or logic, but the opening of the divine life in the soul, that can give true understanding of the things of God. This life of God in the soul, which for its

smallness at first, and capacity for great growth, is, by our Lord compared to a grain of mustard-seed, may be, and too generally is, suppressed, and kept under, either by worldly cares, or pleasures, by vain learning, sensuality, or ambition. And all this while, whatever church or profession any man is of, he is a mere natural man, unregenerate, unenlightened by the Spirit of God, because this seed of Heaven is choaked, and not suffered to grow up in him. And therefore his religion is no more from Heaven, than his fine breeding; his cares have no more goodness in them, than his pleasures; his love is worth no more than his hatred; his zeal for this, or against that form of religion, has only the nature of any other worldly contention in it. And thus it is, and must be with every mere natural man; whatever appearances he may put on, he may, if he pleases, know himself to be the slave and machine of his own corrupt tempers and inclinations; to be enlightened, inspired, quickened, and animated by self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking, which is the only life and spirit of the mere natural man, whether he be Heathen, Jew, or Christian.

On the other hand, wherever this seed of Heaven is suffered to take root, to get life and breath in the soul, whether it be in man or woman, young or old, there this new-born inward man is justly said to be inspired, enlightened, and moved by the Spirit of God, because his whole birth and life is a birth

from above, of the light and Spirit of God, and therefore all that is in him, hath the nature, spirit, and tempers of heaven in it. As this regenerate life grows up in any man, so there grows up a true and real knowledge of the whole mystery of godliness in himself. All that the gospel teaches of sin and grace, of life and death, of heaven and hell, of the new and old man, of the light and Spirit of God, are things not got by hear-say, but inwardly known, felt, and experienced, in the growth of his own new-born life. He has then an unction from above, which teacheth him all things, a Spirit that knoweth what it ought to pray for, a Spirit that prays without ceasing, that is risen with Christ from the dead, and has all its conversation in heaven; a Spirit that hath groans and sighs that cannot be uttered, that travaileth and groaneth with the whole creation, to be delivered from vanity, and have its glorious liberty in that God, from whom it came forth.

Again, thirdly, this pearl of eternity is the church, or temple of God within thee, the consecrated place of divine worship, where alone thou canst worship God in spirit and in truth. In spirit, because thy spirit is that alone in thee, which can unite, and cleave unto God, and receive the workings of his divine Spirit upon thee. In truth, because this adoration, in spirit, is that truth and reality, of which all outward forms and rites, though instituted by God, are only the figure for a time, but this worship is eternal. Ac-

custom thyself to the holy service of this inward temple. In the midst of it, is the fountain of living water, of which thou mayst drink, and live for ever. There the mysteries of thy redemption are celebrated, or rather opened in life and power. There the supper of the Lamb is kept; the bread that came down from Heaven, that giveth life to the world, is thy true nourishment: all is done, and known in real experience, in a living sensibility of the work of God on the soul. There the birth, the life, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection, and ascension of Christ, are not merely remembered, but inwardly found and enjoyed, as the real states of thy soul, which has followed Christ in the regeneration. When once thou art well-grounded in this inward worship, thou wilt have learnt to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be a Sabbath to thee, and wherever thou goest, thou wilt have a priest, a church, and an altar along with thee. For when God has all that he should have of thy heart, when renouncing the will, judgment, tempers, and inclinations of thy old man, thou art wholly given up to the obedience of the light and Spirit of God within thee, to will only in his will, to love only in his love, to be wise only in his wisdom, then it is, that every thing thou dost, is as a song of praise, and the common business of thy life is a conforming to God's will on earth, as angels do in heaven.

Fourthly, and lastly, this pearl of eternity is the peace and joy of God within thee, but can only be found by the manifestation of the life and power of Jesus Christ in thy soul. But Christ cannot be thy power and thy life, till, in obedience to his call, thou deniest thyself, takest up thy daily cross, and followest him in the regeneration. This is peremptory, it admits of no reserve, or evasion; it is the one way to Christ and eternal life. But be where thou wilt, either here, or at Rome, or Geneva, if self is undenied, if thou livest to thine own will, to the pleasures of thy natural lust and appetites, senses and passions, and in conformity to the vain customs and spirit of this world, thou art dead whilst thou livest, the seed of the woman is crucified within thee, Christ can profit thee nothing, thou art a stranger to all that is holy and heavenly within thee, and utterly incapable of finding the peace and joy of God in thy soul. And thus thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and empty, and livest a miserable life in the vanity of time; whilst all the riches of eternity, the light and Spirit, the wisdom and love, the peace and joy of God, are within thee. And thus it will always be with thee, there is ~~no~~ remedy, go where thou wilt, do what thou wilt, all is ~~shut~~ up, there is no open door of salvation, ~~no~~ awakening out of the sleep of sin, no deliverance from the power of thy corrupt nature, no overcoming of the world, ~~no~~ revelation of Jesus Christ, ~~no~~ joy of the new birth from above, till dying

to thyself and the world. thou turnest to the light and Spirit, and power of God in thy soul. All is fruitless and insignificant, all the means of thy redemption are at a stand, all outward forms are but a dead formality, till this fountain of living water is found within thee.

But thou wilt perhaps say, "How shall I discover this riches of eternity, this light, and Spirit, and wisdom, and peace of God, treasured up within me?" Thy first thought of repentance, or desire of turning to God, is thy first discovery of this light and Spirit of God within thee. It is the voice and language of the Word of God within thee, though thou knowest it not. It is the Bruiser of thy serpent's head, thy dear Immanuel, who is beginning to preach within thee, that same which he first preached in public, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." When therefore but the smallest instinct or desire of thy heart calleth thee towards God, and a newness of life, give it time and leave to speak; and take care thou refuse not him that speaketh. For it is not an angel from heaven that speaketh to thee, but it is the eternal speaking Word of God in thy heart, that Word which first created thee, is thus beginning to create thee a second time unto righteousness, that a new man may be formed again in thee, in the image and likeness of God. But above all things, beware of taking this desire of repentance to be the effect of thy own natural sense

and reason, for in so doing thou lovest the key of all the heavenly treasure that is in thee, thou shuttest the door against God, turnest away from Him, and thy repentance (if thou hast any) will be only a vain, unprofitable work of thy own hands, that will do thee no more good, than a well that is without water. But if thou takest this awakened desire of turning to God to be, as in truth it is, the coming of Christ in thy soul, the working, redeeming power of the light and spirit of the holy Jesus within thee, if thou dost reverence and adhere to it as such, this faith will save thee, will make thee whole; and by thus believing in Christ, though thou wert dead, yet shalt thou live.

Now all dependeth upon thy right submission and obedience to this speaking of God in thy soul. Stop therefore all self-activity, listen not to the suggestions of thy own reason, run not on in thy own will, but be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to this new risen light within thee. Open thy heart, thy eyes, and ears to all its impressions. Let it enlighten, teach, frighten, torment, judge, and condemn thee, as it pleaseth, turn not away from it, hear all it saith, seek for no relief out of it, consult not with flesh and blood, but with a heart full of faith and resignation to God, pray only this prayer, that God's kingdom may come, and his will be done in thy soul. Stand faithfully in this state of preparation, thus given up to the Spirit of God, and then the work of thy repentance will be

wrought in God, and thou wilt soon find, that He that is in thee, is much greater than all that are against thee.

But that thou mayest do all this the better, and be more firmly assured, that this resignation to, and dependance upon the working of God's Spirit within thee, is right and sound, I shall lay before thee two great, and infallible, and fundamental truths, which will be as a rock for thy faith to stand upon.

First, that through all the whole nature of things, nothing can do, or be a real good to thy soul, but the operation of God upon it. Secondly, that all the dispensations of God to mankind, from the fall of Adam, to the preaching of the gospel, were only for this one end, to fit, prepare, and dispose the soul for the operation of the Spirit of God upon it. These two great truths, well and deeply apprehended, put the soul in its right state, in a continual dependance upon God, in a readiness to receive all good from Him, and will be a continual source of light in thy mind. They will keep thee safe from all errors, and false zeal in things, and forms of religion, from a sectarian spirit, from bigotry and superstition; they will teach thee the true difference between the means and end of religion, and the regard thou shewest to the shell, will be only so far as the kernel is to be found in it.

Man, by his fall, had broke off from his true centre, his proper place in God, and therefore the life and operation of God was

no more in Him. He was fallen from a life in God, into a life of self, into an animal life of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking, in the poor perishing enjoyments of this world. This was the natural state of man by the fall. He was an apostate from God, and his natural life was all idolatry, where self was the great idol that was worshipped instead of God. See here the whole truth in short. All sin, death, damnation, and hell, is nothing else but this kingdom of self, or the various operations of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking, which separate the soul from God, and end in eternal death and hell.

On the other hand, all that is grace, redemption, salvation, sanctification, spiritual life, and the new birth, is nothing else but so much of the life and operation of God found again in the soul. It is man come back again into his centre, or place in God, from whence he had broke off. The beginning again of the life of God in the soul, was then first made, when the mercy of God inspoke into Adam a seed of the divine life, which should bruise the head of the serpent, which had wrought itself into the human nature. Here the kingdom of God was again within us, though only as a seed, yet small as it was, it was yet a degree of the divine life, which, if rightly cultivated, would overcome all the evil that was in us, and make of every fallen man, a new-born son of God.

All the sacrifices and institutions of the ancient patriarchs, the law of Moses, with

all its types, and rites, and ceremonies, had this only end; they were the methods of divine wisdom for a time, to keep the hearts of men from the wanderings of idolatry, in a state of holy expectation upon God; they were to keep the first seed of life in a state of growth, and make way for the farther operation of God upon the soul; or, as the apostle speaks, to be as a schoolmaster unto Christ. That is, till the birth, the death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, should conquer death, and hell, open a new dispensation of God, and baptize mankind afresh with the Holy Ghost, and fire of Heaven. Then, that is, on the day of Pentecost, a new dispensation of God came forth; which, on God's part, was the operation of the Holy Spirit in gifts and graces upon the whole church. And on man's part, it was the adoration of God, in spirit and in truth. Thus all that was done by God, from the Bruiser of the serpent given to Adam, to Christ's sitting down on the right-hand of God, was all for this end, to remove all that stood between God and man, and to make way for the immediate and continual operation of God upon the soul. And that man, baptized with the Holy Spirit, and born again from above, should absolutely renounce self, and wholly give up his soul to the operation of God's Spirit, to know, to love, to will, to pray, to worship, to preach, to exhort, to use all the faculties of his mind, and all the outward things of this world, as enlightened, inspired,

moved, and guided by the Holy Ghost : who, by this last dispensation of God, was given to be a Comforter, a teacher, and guide to the church, who should abide with it for ever.

This is Christianity, a spiritual society, not because it has no worldly concerns, but because all its members, as such, are born of the Spirit, kept alive, animated, and governed by the Spirit of God. It is constantly called, by our Lord, the kingdom of God, or heaven, because all its ministry and service, all that is done in it, is done in obedience and subjection to that Spirit, by which angels live, and are governed in heaven. Hence our blessed Lord taught his disciples to pray, that this kingdom might come, that so God's will might be done on earth, as it is in heaven, which could not be but by that same Spirit by which it is done in heaven. The short is this : the kingdom of self, is the fall of man, or the great apostacy from the life of God in the soul, and every one, wherever he be, that liveth unto self, is still under the fall and great apostacy from God. The kingdom of Christ is the Spirit and power of God, dwelling and manifesting itself in the birth of a new inward man : and no one is a member of this kingdom, but so far as a true birth of the Spirit is brought forth in him. These two kingdoms take in all mankind, he that is not of one, is certainly in the other ; dying to one, is living to the other.

Hence, we may gather these following truths : first, here is shewn the true ground and reason of what was said above, namely, that when the call of God to repentance first ariseth in thy soul, thou art to be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to this new risen light within thee, by wholly stopping, or disregarding the workings of thy own will, reason, and judgment. It is because all these are false counsellors, the sworn servants, bribed slaves of thy fallen nature, they are all born and bred in the kingdom of self ; and therefore if a new kingdom is to be set up in thee, if the operation of God is to have its effect in thee ; all these natural powers of self are to be silenced and suppressed, till they have learned obedience and subjection to the Spirit of God. Now this is not requiring thee to become a fool, or to give up thy claim to sense and reason, but is the shortest way to have thy sense and reason delivered from folly, and thy whole rational nature strengthened, enlightened, and guided by that light, which is wisdom itself.

A child that obediently denies his own will, and own reason, to be guided by the will and reason, of a truly wise and understanding tutor, cannot be said to make himself a fool, and give up the benefit of his rational nature, but to have taken the shortest way to have his own will and reason made truly a blessing to him.

Secondly, hence is to be seen the true ground and necessity of that universal mor-

tification and self-denial with regard to all our senses, appetites, tempers, passions, and judgments. It is because all our whole nature, as fallen from the life of God, is in a state of contrariety to the order and end of our creation, a continual source of disorderly appetites, corrupt tempers, and false judgments. And therefore every motion of it is to be mortified, changed, and purified from its natural state, before we can enter into the kingdom of God. Thus when our Lord saith, "Except a man hateth his father and mother, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple;" it is because our best tempers are yet carnal, and full of the imperfections of our fallen nature. The doctrine is just and good: not as if father and mother were to be hated; but that love, which an unregenerate person, or natural man, hath towards them, is to be hated; as being a blind self-love, full of all the weakness and partiality, with which fallen man loves, honours, esteems, and cleaves to himself. This love, born from corrupt flesh and blood, and polluted with self, is to be hated and parted with, that we may love them with a love born of God, with such a love, and on such a motive, as Christ hath loved us. And then the disciple of Christ far exceeds all others in the love of parents. Again, our own life is to be hated; and the reason is plain, it is because there is nothing lovely in it. It is a legion of evil, a monstrous birth of the serpent, the world, and the flesh; it is an apostacy from the life and

power of God in the soul ; a life that is death to Heaven, that is pure unmixed idolatry, that lives wholly to self, and not to God, and therefore all this own life is to be absolutely hated, all this self is to be denied and mortified, if the nature, spirit, tempers, and inclinations of Christ are to be brought to life in us. For it is as impossible to live both these lives at once, as for a body to move two contrary ways at the same time. And therefore all these mortifications and self-denials have an absolute necessity in the nature of the thing itself.

Thus when our Lord further saith, unless a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. The reason is plain, and the necessity absolute ; it is because all that the natural man hath, is in the possession of self-love, and therefore this possession is to be absolutely forsaken, and parted with. All that he hath, is to be put into other hands, to be given to divine Love, or this natural man cannot be changed into a disciple of Christ. For self-love in all that it hath, is earthly, sensual, and devilish, and therefore must have all taken away from it ; and then to the natural man all is lost, he hath nothing left, all is laid down at the feet of Jesus. And then all things are common, as soon as self-love has lost the possession of them. And then the disciple of Christ, though having nothing, yet possesseth all things ; all that the natural man hath forsaken, is restored to the disciple of Christ an hundred-fold. For self-

love; the greatest of all thieves, being now cast out, and all that he had stolen and hidden, thus taken from him, and put into the hands of divine Love, every mite becometh a large treasure, and mammon openeth the door into everlasting habitations. This was the spirit of the first draught of a Christian church at Jerusalem, a church made truly after the pattern of heaven, where the love that reigns in heaven reigned in it, where divine love broke down all the selfish fences, the locks and bolts of me, mine, my own, &c. and laid all things common to the members of this new kingdom of God on earth.

Now though many years did not pass after the age of the apostles, before Satan and self got footing in the church, and set up merchandize in the house of God; yet this one heart, and one spirit, which then first appeared in the Jerusalem church, is that one heart and spirit of divine love, to which all are called, that would be true disciples of Christ. And though the practice of it is lost as to the church in general, yet it ought not to have been lost; and therefore every Christian ought to make it his great care, and prayer, to have it restored in himself. And then, though born in the dregs of time, or living in Babylon, he will be as truly a member of the first heavenly church at Jerusalem, as if he had lived in it in the days of the apostles. This spirit of love, born of that celestial fire, with which Christ baptizes his true disciples, is alone that spirit, which can enter into hea-

ven, and therefore is that spirit which is to be born in us, whilst we are on earth. For no one can enter into heaven, till he is made heavenly, till the spirit of heaven is entered into him. And therefore all that our Lord hath said of denying and dying to self, and of his parting with all that he hath, are practices absolutely necessary from the nature of the thing.

Because all turning to self, is so far turning from God, and so much as we have of self-love, so much we have of a hellish. earthly weight, that must be taken off, or there can be no ascension into heaven. But thou wilt perhaps say, if all self-love is to be renounced, then all love of our neighbour is renounced along with it, because the commandment is, only to love our neighbour as ourselves. The answer here is easy, and yet no quarter given to self-love. There is but one only love in heaven, and yet the angels of God love one another in the same manner as they love themselves. The matter is thus; the one supreme, unchangeable rule of love, which is a law to all intelligent beings of all worlds, and will be a law to all eternity, is this, viz. that God alone is to be loved for himself, and all other beings only in Him, and for Him. Whatever intelligent creature lives not under this rule of love, is so far fallen from the order of his creation, and is, till he returns to this eternal law of love, an apostate from God, and incapable of the kingdom of heaven.

Now if God alone is to be loved for himself, then no creature is to be loved for itself; and so all self-love in every creature is absolutely condemned.

And if all created beings are only to be loved in and for God, then my neighbour is to be loved as I love myself, and I am only to love myself, as I love my neighbour, or any other created being, that is, only in and for God. And thus the command of loving our neighbour as ourselves, stands firm, and yet all self-love is plucked up by the roots. But what is loving any creature, only in, and for God? It is when we love it only, as it is God's work, image, and delight; when we love it merely as it is God's, and belongs to Him, this is loving it in God, and when all that we wish, intend, or do to it, is done from a love of God, for the honour of God, and in conformity to the will of God, this is loving it for God. This is the one love, that is, and must be the spirit of all creatures, that live united to God. Now this is no speculative refinement, or fine-spun fiction of the brain, but the simple truth, a first law of nature, and a necessary band of union between God and the creature. The creature is not in God, is a stranger to Him, has lost the life of God in itself, whenever its love does not thus begin and end in God.

The loss of this love was the fall of man, as it opened in him a kingdom of self, in which Satan, the world, and the flesh, could all of them bring forth their own works. If

therefore man is to rise from his fall, and return to his life in God, there is an absolute necessity that self, with all his brood of gross affections, be deposed, that this first love, in and for which he was created, may be born again in him. Christ came into the world to save sinners, to destroy the works of the devil. Now self is not only the seat and habitation, but the very life of sin. The works of the devil are all wrought in self, it is his peculiar workhouse, and therefore Christ is not come as a Saviour from sin, as a destroyer of the works of the devil in any of us, but so far as self is beaten down, and overcome in us. If it is literally true what our Lord said, that his kingdom was not of this world, then it is a truth of the same certainty, that no one is a member of this kingdom, but he that, in the literal sense of the words, renounces the spirit of this world. Christians might as well part with half the articles of their creed, or but half believe them, as to really refuse, or but by halves enter into these self-denials.

For all that is in the Creed, is only to bring forth this dying and death to all, and every part of the old man, that the life and Spirit of Christ may be formed in us.

Our redemption is this new birth; if this is not done, or doing in us, we are still unredeemed. And though the Saviour of the world is come, he is not come in us, he is not received by us, is a stranger to us, is not ours, if his life is not within us. His life is

not, cannot be within us, but so far as the spirit of the world, self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking are renounced, and driven out of us.

Thirdly, hence we may also learn the true nature and worth of all self-denials and mortifications. As to their nature, considered in themselves, they have nothing of goodness or holiness, nor are any real parts of our sanctification, they are not the true food or nourishment of the divine life in our souls, they have no quickening, sanctifying power in them; their only worth consists in this, that they remove the impediments of holiness, break down that which stands between God and us, and make way for the quickening, sanctifying Spirit of God to operate on our souls. Which operation of God is the one only thing that can raise the divine life in the soul, or help it to the smallest degree of real holiness, or spiritual life. As in our creation, we had only that degree of a divine life, which the power of God derived into us; as then all that we had, and were, was the sole operation of God in the creation of us, so in our redemption, or regaining that first perfection, which we have lost, must be again the operation of God, every part of the divine life restored in us, be it ever so small, must and can be nothing else but so much of the life and operation of God found again in the soul. All the activity of man in the works of self-denial, has no good in itself, but is only to open an entrance for the

one only good, the light of God, to operate upon us.

Hence also we may learn the reason, why many people not only lose the benefit, but are even the worse for all their mortifications. It is because they mistake the whole nature and worth of them. They practise them for their own sakes, as things good in themselves, they think them to be real parts of holiness, and so rest in them, and look no farther, but grow full of self-esteem, and self-admiration for their own progress in them. This makes them self-sufficient, morose, severe judges of all those that fall short of their mortifications.

And thus their self-denials do only that for them, which indulgences do for other people; they withstand and hinder the operation of God upon their souls, and instead of being really self-denials, they strengthen and keep up the kingdom of self.

There is no avoiding this fatal error, but by deeply entering into this great truth, that all our own activity and working has no good in it, can do no good to us, but as it leads and turns us in the best manner to the light and spirit of God, which alone brings life and salvation into the soul. "Stretch forth thy hand," said our Lord to the man that had a withered hand; he did so, and "it was immediately made whole as the other."

Now, had this man any ground for pride, or a high opinion of himself, for the share he had in the restoring of his hand? Yet just

such is our share in the raising up of the spiritual life within us. All that we can do by our own activity, is only like this man's stretching out his hand; the rest is the work of Christ, the only giver of life to the withered hand, or the dead soul. We can only then do living works, when we are so far born again, as to be able to say with the apostle, "Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me." But to return, and further shew how the soul that feels the call of God to repentance, is to behave under it, that this stirring of the divine power in the soul, may have its full effect, and bring forth the birth of the new man in Christ Jesus. We are to consider it (as in truth it is) as the seed of the divine nature within us, that can only grow by its own strength, and union with God. It is a divine life, and therefore can grow from nothing but divine power. When the virgin Mary conceived the birth of the holy Jesus, all that she did towards it herself, was only this single act of faith and resignation to God: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." This is all that we can do towards the conception of that new man that is to be born in ourselves. Now this truth is easily consented to, and a man thinks he believes it, because he consents to it, or rather, does not deny it. But this is not enough, it is to be apprehended in a deep, full, and practical assurance, in such a manner as a man knows and believes that he did not create the stars, or cause life to

raise up in himself. And then it is a belief that puts the soul into a right state, that makes room for the operation of God upon it. His light then enters with full power into the soul, and his Holy Spirit moves and directs all that is done in it, and so man lives again in God as a new creature. For this truth thus firmly believed, will have these two most excellent effects : first, it will keep the soul fixed, and continually turned towards God, in faith, prayer, desire, confidence, and resignation to Him, for all that it wants to have done in it, and to it ; which will be a continual source of all divine virtues and graces. The soul thus turned to God, must be always receiving from Him. It stands at the true door of all divine communications, and the light of God as freely enters into it, as the light of the sun enters into the air. Secondly, it will fix and ground the soul in a true and lasting self-denial. For by thus knowing, and owning our own nothingness and inability, that we have no other capacity for good, but that of receiving it from God alone, self is wholly denied, its kingdom is destroyed ; no room is left for spiritual pride and self-esteem ; we are saved from a pharisaical holiness, from wrong opinions of our own works and good deeds, and from a multitude of errors, the most dangerous to our souls, all which arise from the something that we take ourselves to be either in nature or grace. But when we once apprehend but in some degree the all of God, and the no-

thingness of ourselves, we have got a truth, whose usefulness and benefit, no words can express. It brings a kind of infallibility into the soul in which it dwells; all that is vain, and false, and deceitful, is forced to vanish and fly before it. When our religion is founded on this rock, it has the firmness of a rock, and its height reaches unto heaven. The world, the flesh, and the devil can do no hurt to it; all enemies are known, and all disarmed by this great truth, dwelling in our souls. It is the knowledge of the all of God, that makes cherubims and seraphims to be flames of divine love. For where this all of God is truly known and felt in any creature, there its whole breath and spirit is a fire of love, nothing but a pure, disinterested love can rise up in it, or come from it, a love that begins and ends in God. And where this love is born in any creature, there a seraphic life is born along with it. For this pure love introduces the creature into the all of God, all that is in God, is opened in the creature; it is united with God, and hath the life of God manifested in it.

There is but one salvation for all mankind, and that is the life of God in the soul. God has but one design or intent towards all mankind, and that is to introduce or generate his own life, light, and Spirit in them, that all may be as so many images, temples, and habitations of the holy Trinity. This is God's good will to all Christians, Jews, and Heathens. They are all equally the desire of his

heart, his light continually waits for an entrance into all of them, his “wisdom crieth, she putteth forth her voice,” not here, or there, but every where, in all the streets of all the parts of the world.

Now there is but one possible way for man to attain this salvation, or life of God in the soul. There is not one for the Jew, another for a Christian, and a third for the Heathen. No; God is one, human nature is one, salvation is one, and the way to it is one; and that is, the desire of the soul turned to God. When this desire is alive, and breaks forth in any creature under heaven, then the lost sheep is found, and the shepherd hath it upon his shoulders. Through this desire the poor prodigal son leaveth his husks and swine, and hasteth to his father; it is because of this desire that the father seeth the son while yet afar off, that he runs out to meet him, falleth on his neck, and kisseth him. See here how plainly we are taught, that no sooner is this desire arisen, and in motion towards God, but the operation of God’s Spirit answers to it, cherishes and welcomes its first beginnings, signified by the Father’s seeing, and having compassion on his son, whilst yet afar off, that is, in the first beginnings of his desire. Thus does this desire do all, it brings the soul to God, and God into the soul, it unites with God, it co-operates with God, and is one life with God. Suppose this desire not to be alive, not in motion either in a Jew or a Christian, and then all the sacrifices,

the service, the worship either of the law or ~~the~~ gospel, are but dead works, that bring no life into the soul, nor beget any union between God and it. Suppose this desire to be awakened, and fixed upon God, though in souls that never heard either of the law or gospel, and then the divine life, or operation of God enters into them, and the new birth in Christ is formed in those, that never heard of his name. And these are they that shall come from the east, and from the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac in the kingdom of God.

Oh my God, just and good, how great is thy love and mercy to mankind, that heaven is thus every where open, and Christ thus the common Saviour to all that turn the desire of their hearts to thee! Oh sweet power of the Bruiser of the serpent, born in every son of man, that stirs and works in every man, and gives every man a power, and desire, to find his happiness in God! O holy Jesus, heavenly light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, that redeemeth every soul that followeth thy light, which is always within Him! O holy Trinity, immense ocean of divine love, in which all mankind live, and move, and have their being! None are separated from thee, none live out of thy love, but all are embraced in the arms of thy mercy, all are partakers of thy divine life, the operation of thy Holy Spirit, as soon as their heart is turned to thee! Oh plain, and easy, and simple way of salvation, wanting no subtilties

of art or science, no borrowed learning, no refinements of reason, but all done by ~~the~~ simple natural motion of every heart, that truly longs after God. For no sooner is the finite desire of the creature in motion towards God, but the infinite desire of God is united with it, it co-operates with it. And in this united desire of God, and the creature, is the salvation and life of the soul brought forth. For the soul is ~~shut~~ out of God, and imprisoned in its own dark workings of flesh and blood, merely and solely because it desires to live to the vanity of this world. This desire is its darkness, its death, its imprisonment, and separation from God.

When therefore the first spark of a desire after God arises in thy soul, cherish it with all thy care, give all thy heart into it, it is nothing less than a touch of the divine loadstone, that is to draw thee out of the vanity of time, into the riches of eternity. Get up therefore and follow it as gladly, as the wise men of the east followed the star from heaven that appeared to them. It will do for thee as the star did for them; it will lead thee to the birth of Jesus, not in a stable at Bethlehem, in Judea, but to the birth of Jesus, in the dark centre of thy own fallen soul.

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