

Christianity

(133)

PRIVATE THOUGHTS
OR
RELIGION,
&c. &c.

Private Thoughts
ON
RELIGION,
AND OTHER
SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH IT.

Extracted from
THE DIARY
OF
THE REV. THOMAS ADAM,
Late Rector of Wintringham.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A SHORT SKETCH
OF
HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM BAYNES AND SON,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1821.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Contents of this Book made part of Mr. Adams's Posthumous Works, published soon after his death. As it was then foreseen, that these Extracts from his private Diary would be esteemed the most interesting part of that publication, a greater number of the Volume that contained them was printed, than of the other two. Yet the whole impression was speedily sold, and a new Edition of the Private Thoughts has been repeatedly called for. They are here given to the Public, by the surviving Editor of the Posthumous Works, in a more convenient form. To those Readers who have carefully considered the Preface that accompanied them, nothing more need be said, by way of apology, for the peculiarities by which they are distinguished. But as there are many passages that have given offence to some Readers, and which

the Editor has been solicited to soften or omit, it seems necessary for him to give some reasons why he cannot conscientiously do this.

He has always considered the remarkable honesty and fidelity with which the venerable Author expressed the various exercises of his heart, as one of the principal excellencies of the book, and has therefore ventured to make few or no alterations, unless by omitting some repetitions of the same sentiment. Had he suppressed the passages objected to, this Register of the Thoughts of the Heart would resemble a register of the weather, in which no mention was made of storms or fogs, and nothing recorded but genial warmth and a clear blue sky. But what is the use of such a register?

The Editor is not surprised that the men of the world, who are ignorant of themselves and the law of God, and wish to remain so, should be disgusted with our Author's strong penitential language; yet he knows not how to account for the disgust of persons professing to be religious, but by supposing that they themselves are not yet brought to the knowledge of the Truth. For the light of Truth, shining into the soul, must make the same discovery of moral obliquity and pollution, that a sun-beam, darting across a room, makes of dust and impurity, which were before unperceived.

Would these squeamish Readers wish us to believe that their own hearts are constantly free from evil thoughts, and that all within them is peace unbroken, and purity unmixed? What hypocrisy or ignorance is this! The holiest of them must have attended very little to their own hearts and ways, if they do not know worse of themselves than any thing our Author has confessed: and it will be happy for them, if they can adopt those passages which express the steadfast faith, unwearied patience, strong consolation, and other marks of a spiritual mind, which he eminently possessed.

Should any upright Christian, after weighing what is said in the Preface, be still puzzled to make the existence of such evils in the heart consistent with such a state of holiness, let him try the following experiment upon himself. Let him carefully attend to what passes in his own mind, and commit to paper his thoughts, wishes, and emotions, under the different circumstances that may befall him, during the space of a week. Let him, at the end of the week, read over what he has written; and if he has executed his task with honesty and fidelity, he will start at his own deformity, and be unable to endure the sight of it.

The Editor professes himself to be no admirer of those accounts of characters, or devout exercises of the heart, in which the bright side only is dis-

played, since they leave a wrong impression, and afford a partial view of the subject. This method of describing the character and the heart of man, has not been learnt from the biographical parts of the Bible, or the book of Psalms. Every thing is recorded without disguise by the sacred writers, both of themselves and others, though we may be often tempted to wish that the faults of some distinguished persons, whose history is blended with that of the church of God, had been concealed. Their example has not been followed as it ought. Little is to be found, even in the Lives and Journals of those who have been eminent in the religious world, but what is calculated to excite the respect and applause of their Readers. What, then, is to be expected from the common class of Biographers but flattering pictures, calculated to mislead mankind.

Yet there are exceptions. To the honest heart, the penetrating mind, and powerful intellect of Dr. Johnson, the world is indebted for a superior method of Biography. The persons whose characters he has described, are introduced to our acquaintance without any flattering disguise, and made known to us as completely as if we had enjoyed a domestic intimacy with them. And it may be observed, that his own character has been described with equal fidelity, and that posterity

will view him exactly as he appeared to those who had daily access to him when he was alive.

Some, indeed, who dislike this honest dealing, affect to lament the injury done to the character of Dr. Johnson, by the unguarded communications of his friends, and particularly by the publication of his "Prayers and Meditations." Yet this book was published by his own direction; and even the peculiarities, in his devotional exercises, which may be called superstitious, were permitted to appear without any care, on his part, to excuse or conceal them. Hence it is evident, that he apprehended no dishonour to his memory, from being exhibited to the world as a penitent sinner, humbled with the review of past transgressions, trembling under a sense of the majesty of God, and imploring mercy through the merits of his Saviour. Nor was Mr. Adam under any concern at the thought of having the secrets of his heart disclosed to the world, as is evident from the paragraph with which the chapter containing his Confessions concludes.* Both had discernment to see their own faults, and honesty enough to confess them. Both abhorred hypocrisy and guile, and wished not to appear better than they were. And surely they have not suffered on this account in the esteem of the truly Wise and Good, unless a person can be wise

* *Vide* 1. 35.

or good who judges of characters by rules contrary to those which determine the Judgment of God. For "thus saith the Lord, to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

W. R.

York, March 14, 1803.

A SHORT SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER

THE AUTHOR.

THE Rev. THOMAS ADAM, author of the following work, was born at Leeds, in the West-Riding of Yorkshire, Feb. 25, 1701. His father, Mr. Henry Adam, was of the profession of the law, and town-clerk of that corporation. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Jasper Blythman, esq.* recorder there; by whom he had six children, Jasper, Henry, Thomas, Katherine, Elizabeth, and Sibyl.

Our author, Thomas, was first put to the public grammar-school in that town, under the care of the pious and worthy Mr. Thomas Barnard†, then head-master of that school, and afterwards to the school at Wakefield;

* "Elizabeth, the mother of Jasper Blythman, esq. recorder of Leeds, was one of the twenty children of Sir John Stanhope, which were born and baptized (besides two which were stillborn) before either he or his lady was forty years of age."

† Author of the *Life and Character of Lady Elizabeth Hastings*.

from whence, about the usual time of life, he went to Christ's College, Cambridge. But, after he had resided there about two years, he removed to Hart-Hall, (now Hertford College) in Oxford, under the care of that famous disciplinarian, Dr. Newton, (head of that seminary, and its founder as a college) for whose memory in that capacity he ever retained the highest respect.

He took the degree of Bachelor of Arts only, as he had imbibed the doctrine of the indefensible nature of pluralities from Dr. Newton, whose masterly Treatise on that subject is well known; and, therefore, concluded it a needless expense for him to proceed any further in academical degrees.

By the interest of an uncle, a person of some eminence in the profession of the law, and who had been of singular service to the family of the patron, about the year 1724, he was presented to the living of Wintringham, in Lincolnshire, of which he continued rector fifty-eight years; but not being of age to take possession, it was held for him by a friend for about a year.

Not long after he settled at Wintringham, his uncle, who seemed much set upon the advancement of so promising a nephew, urged him greatly to come up to London *to show himself*, as he termed it; concluding this to be the most likely way to recommend him to the favour of those who were most able to advance him in the world: but when

Mr. Adam understood that his view was to put him in the way of more preferment, he was so far from embracing this advantageous proposal, that he thought it his duty to decline the invitation in as civil a manner as he could, at the same time returning for answer, *that it was incumbent upon him to be with his flock at Wintringham*; an answer which gave great offence to his uncle, as it frustrated all his well-meant schemes for his promotion and advancement in the church.

Nor did he ever afterwards depart from the same disinterested determination to refuse all additional preferment.

When Dr. Thomas was promoted to the bishoprick of Lincoln, our author, whose good behaviour at the university had gained him the esteem of his governors there, was strongly recommended by them to his peculiar notice, as one whom he would find more especially deserving, amongst his clergy, of his attention and regard. And it is very probable that we find him, in consequence of this, appointed to preach before his lordship at Gainsborough, at his primary visitation there. But how much soever the bishop might be at any time disposed to befriend him, he gave him to understand that he was perfectly satisfied with what he at present had, then not quite two hundred pounds per annum, nor ever meant to engage in any second charge.

Not many years after his coming to Wintringham, Mr. Adam thought proper to change his state of life, by marrying Susanna, the eldest daughter of the Rev. Mr. Cooke, vicar of the neighbouring parish of Roxby, by whom he had one only daughter, who died in her infancy; and, after having lived together with much comfort during thirty years or more, in the year 1760, he was called upon to resign this dearest earthly treasure into his hands from whom he had received her. How greatly he was affected by this loss, and the truly Christian manner in which he bore it, will be best shown by a meditation* on the subject, found amongst his papers, in his own hand-writing, after his decease.

There is nothing in our Author's History, after this period, which calls for particular notice. An uninteresting sameness of events must almost necessarily attend a life passed in the obscure shade of country retirement. We shall therefore dwell upon those parts of his character as a minister and a Christian, which may furnish some considerations not unworthy of regard and imitation.

From the account which has been already given of Mr. Adam's faithful attachment to his parish at Wintringham, and his determined refusal of all additional preferment, it is natural for the reader to suppose that he

* See No. IV. Appendix.

was peculiarly diligent amongst his people, and instant in season and out of season for the conversion and salvation of their souls. But this does not by any means appear to have been the case at that time: for, though he was very exact and regular in the discharge of all the public parts of his office, and his sermons had even then a zeal and fervour in them beyond the generality; yet, as he himself afterwards observed to a particular friend, “neither his life nor his doctrine could be of any peculiar use to them, for he lived in a conformity to the world, and his doctrine was *contrary to the cross of Christ.*”*

We find, in his private reflections, (which are here republished) a remark of his own, which will fully show his judgment of the case on the review of it many years afterwards.

“Intrusion into the ministry, for worldly ends, and absolute unfitness for it; in great ignorance of Christ; great unconcern for the salvation of souls; consequent sloth and remissness; squandering a large income in sensual pleasure, and when I was something awakened; doing what I did in

* Lest this expression should appear in any degree obscure to some of our readers, we would observe, that what Mr. Adam meant by it, was, that he was not preaching Christ crucified as the foundation of hope for pardon and justification with God, but man's righteousness; thus making the cross of Christ of no effect.

self-dependence and self-seeking, How awful!"

How long it was after his entrance into the ministry, before it pleased God to give him a clearer insight into his own state, and the nature of his calling, we cannot exactly determine; though it seems probable that his conscience soon began to be not fully satisfied. All that we can gather on this head with certainty, is, that he received his first impressions of a serious kind from the writings of the mystics, particularly from the works of Mr. Law,* which appears to be further confirmed by the peculiar intimacy which he is well known to have had for many years, in the middle part of his life, with some ministers of these sentiments.

In this state he continued several years, greatly harassed in his mind and conscience; and though now more earnest respecting both his own soul and those of his people,

* The writings of Mr. Law seem to be principally useful in this respect. They are admirably calculated to awaken the conscience, and beget in the mind of the reader a conviction of the futility of nominal profession, and mere decency of conduct; and have in them such a strength of easy reasoning, level to every capacity, as almost irresistibly wins the reader's assent to the necessity of vital religion. I must beg leave, therefore, to differ from those who would utterly discard them; and to assert, that we have not perhaps in the language a more masterly performance in its way, or a book better calculated to promote a concern about religion, than *Mr. Law's Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*.

yet a stranger to real peace, and full of continual doubts and fears. He saw indeed the law to be holy, just, and good; but found, after all his utmost care and endeavour to fulfil it, he fell so short of its demands, and was so sinful, that he was continually under its righteous condemnation.

It was not till about the year 1748, that his mind gained any effectual relief. While he continued a disciple of Mr. Law, though growing in a conviction of his sinfulness, and becoming more strict and serious, yet still he could gain no solid peace of conscience. All his strictest mortifications, or multiplied exact performance of duties, were over-ruled by the more strict law of God, whose divine spirituality he could not attain to perfectly, nor save himself from its just condemnation. In this situation, therefore, his soul was in great distress; and that which served to heighten it the more, was, that he saw the word of God, instead of giving him any ground of comfort against his fears, was, on the contrary, in many places fully against him. Amongst the rest, *the epistle to the Romans* was particularly offensive and distressing to him in this view. He perceived that it evidently struck at, and overthrew the very foundation of his hope, and (as he then supposed) made no account of a life of superior piety and godliness. As he was at this time ignorant of God's righteousness, and of

any other way of salvation than by the merit of his own goodness, the levelling strain of the apostle was in a very high degree grating to his self-righteous pride. He could not bear to see those that were esteemed good men, treated only as sinners, and all their best righteousness passed by as of no account towards their justification. Hence he was sensible that St. Paul taught a very different doctrine from that which he held and preached; and that they were directly contrary to each other in the important article of man's justification and acceptance in the sight of God: for being possessed of much good sense and unfeigned honesty of heart, (a leading feature in his character all through life) and being truly desirous to know, and to teach his people the real truth of God's word, he would not suffer his conscience to be pacified and laid asleep with the too common way of persuading himself that both he and the apostle meant in reality, the same thing, though they evidently appeared so opposite; neither could he bear the thoughts of being a teacher of false doctrine to the people committed to his charge, and that in a point of such essential consequence. Like a worthy and diligent minister of God, therefore, and a faithful pastor of his flock, he was determined to take all possible pains to inform himself clearly on the subject: to this end he applied himself, with all his power, to every probable source of infor-

mation. Hammond, Whitby, Grotius, with other of the most eminent commentators, were consulted with the utmost care and attention;—but all in vain. These gave him no relief.* He found they understood the case no better than himself, and was amazed to see men of sense and understanding take pains to impose upon themselves and others, by labouring to no purpose, with much expense of learning and argument, to reconcile things so diametrically opposite, and to unite two systems which it is the professed design and intention of the apostle to oppose to each other, and to show their necessary and irreconcilable contradiction. Rom. xi. 6.

In this situation of things he went on for some time, determined not to give up the point without obtaining full satisfaction,

* From much experience and observation, it was the advice of Mr. Adam, to young divines especially, not to be too forward in taking their sense of the Scriptures from commentators. And we will venture to assert the justice of the caution.—If it be asked, Where then can we go in cases of difficulty? it is answered—Where Mr. Adam went, *i. e. to God in prayer*; comparing one part of the word of God with another, and humbly looking to *him* for his teaching and direction. Let this be duly tried, and we doubt not its success will prove the soundness of the observation. A clear insight will then be often given into the true sense, by such a satisfactory solution as no comment can afford, and our faith stand not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. Psalm. cxix. 18. John vi. 45. James i. 5.

though to all appearance no nearer than when he first began, and even perplexed more and more. He could not suppose indeed that St. Paul could be wrong, being persuaded of the divine inspiration which attended his writings, or that things which he had written were indeed unintelligible, much less that he would really inculcate or encourage licentiousness of life. Like a truly sensible man, he began to suspect that the fault must be in himself, and in the system which he had adopted; and that he had not properly considered the apostle's doctrine with all its connexions and relations: leaving, therefore, the bewildering guidance of commentators and expositors, he betook himself to the fountain of all knowledge, beseeching God and himself to teach and direct.

* While our author's mind was thus effected, many of his friends and acquaintance feared lest he was going out of his senses, through too great study and care about religion. This is nothing uncommon. The little attention which most people give to their souls, and the slight views which they have of the evil of sin, together with their lamentable ignorance of the great truths of God's word, make them form that suspicion of all who begin seriously to consider the infinite importance of these things, and to feel their weight; whereas, it is only the just and natural effect of a right conviction of sin.—What should call for our distressing grief, if sin against God does not? Or what should engage all our anxiety equally with a concern how we may obtain pardon, and recover the divine favour? Our author was lost here. The means which he had tried were ineffectual. His own soul and his people's were

One morning in his study, being much distressed on the subject, he fell down upon his knees before God in prayer, spread his case before the Divine Majesty and Goodness, implored Him to pity his distress, and to guide him by his *Holy Spirit* into the right understanding of his own truth. When he arose from his supplication, he took the Greek Testament, and sat himself down to read the six first chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, sincerely desirous to be taught of God, and to receive, in the simplicity of a child, the word of *his revelation*; when, to his unspeakable comfort and astonishment, his difficulties vanished—a most clear and satisfactory light was given him into this great subject—he saw the doctrine of justification by Jesus Christ alone, through faith, to be the great subject of the gospel—the highest display of the divine perfections—the happiest relief for his burdened conscience—and the most powerful principle of all constant and unfeigned holiness of heart and life. He was rejoiced exceed-

at stake; and till this great difficulty was solved, it is no wonder that his mind could find no rest. Whoever consults the Scriptures, will find that there is nothing new in such circumstances. Psalms vi. xxxii. lxxvii. cxxx. with many other parts, will show a similar situation of things in the minds of the true servants of God in those times; nor has it been otherwise in any age of the church; and we may venture to assert, that *this madness* (if such it be called) is far wiser than the wisdom of the world.

ingly; found peace and comfort spring up in his mind; his conscience was purged from guilt through the atoning blood of Christ, and his heart set at liberty to run the way of God's commandments without fear, in a spirit of filial love and holy delight; and from that hour he began to preach salvation *through faith in Jesus Christ alone*, to man by nature and practice lost, and condemned under the law, and as his own expression is, *Always a sinner.**

His sermons, though before animated by an honest zeal, were no longer mere lectures of morality, or filled only with legal condemnation. While all godliness in principle and practice was duly enforced, the enlivening display of that glorious Saviour, whose worth and excellence he had now tasted, and who was become all his salvation and all his desire, seasoned every discourse.

Those excellent and searching lectures on the church catechism, which having met with the general approbation of good men, and have passed through several editions, and which discover, in so eminent a manner, the

* In gratitude to God for his great mercy in opening his eyes, as well as to assist such of his fellow-creatures as might be in his case, he afterwards, in the year 1771, published a paraphrase of the eleven first chapters of the epistle to the Romans, (in which all the doctrinal part is contained) where the reader will find the whole scheme of our redemption laid open in a most clear and masterly manner, with many excellent improvements and observations.

able divine and the experienced Christian, were the early fruit of this alteration in his views of Christianity. A happy evidence of the great benefit which he had thereby received, and of his earnest zeal and ability to communicate it for the advantage of others.

About the time that this change took place, he stumbled (to use his own expression in the case) on some of the writings of that famous champion of the reformation, Martin Luther. If he had seen these in his former state, when he was well contented with his own righteousness, we may justly suppose he would at once have rejected them with the utmost disdain and abhorrence, as the very quintessence of Antinomianism; and however he might reverence St. Paul, as being an inspired apostle, would have made no hesitation to have spurned them from him, as contrary to the gospel of Christ, and subversive of all true godliness. 'Tis many, doubtless, have done through want of the same divine teaching respecting their real state, of which Mr. Adam was now happily become the subject. But his mind being now brought down, and, by the discipline of the law, convincing him deeply of his sinfulness, even in his best state, he was so far from being offended at the boldness of expression* and freedom of sentiment which

* It will readily be allowed, that there are, in the writings of Martin Luther, some expressions, which

he there met with, that he perceived them to be the very thing which his soul wanted, and the doctrine of St. Paul; and that however many may affect to admire the one, who yet at the same time reject and make light of the other, they must, in reality, stand or fall together; since they both speak one and the same thing, and all the objections which are prudentially brought against the reformer, lie equally, in all their force, against the inspired apostle also, and against the doctrine which he so strenuously inculcates.

seem to savour of Antinomianism, and from which imputation, it would be very difficult to defend them against a critical scrutiny; but that they never meant in that light is evident, not only from their admitting of a very different sense when candidly considered with their context, but from Luther's writings against the Anabaptists of his times, on this very account.

The genius and temper of the writer must be considered, as well as the age in which he lived, and the fundamental errors which he combated. He was a plain blunt man, and had an aversion to those softenings which are so fashionable in the present day, and thought they would injure the force of what he said, and make it less pointed against those errors which he had it in his heart to demolish. And although such bold strokes may give offence to those that feel nothing of his real want of a Saviour; yet they that know the urgency of their case, like Mr Adam, will find them the only remedy that can reach their disorder. And while the cold enervated exactness of the wise and prudent affords them no relief, this will be a balm to their wounded consciences, and the richest cordial to their fainting souls. And may we not add, that the divine blessing which has, in all ages, attended Luther's works, is no inconsiderable argument in favour of their truth and soundness?

This celebrated writer, therefore, was always his peculiar favourite; and often would he, with much thankfulness to God, and gratitude of heart, acknowledge to his friends the singular help which he found from his writings, particularly from his excellent comment on the epistle to the Galatians, highly recommending it to their serious perusal, for its admirable use and truly evangelical doctrine.*

In this blessed and happy faith of the gospel, he went on from this time to the very end of his days, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and adorning the doctrine of God his Saviour, in all things, by his truly Christian life and conversation: nor did increasing years, experience, and reading, give him any ground to alter the opinion which he had now espoused, or to depart from it in any degree; but, on the contrary, he was daily confirmed more and more both in the truth and in the necessity of these doctrines, while he found them, in sickness and in health, a sovereign cordial to his heart, and the alone, but all-sufficient support of his soul. This

* From the deficiency of our sources of information respecting Mr. Adam, in this part of his life, it is very difficult to know how to arrange the two last-mentioned circumstances. Of the facts themselves, we are certain, but cannot positively affirm that we relate them in their exact order as to time, nor indeed is it very material.

testimony he fully bore to them in his last illness, frequently repeating to his friends around him, *I find my foundation able to bear me.*

His departure was full of that serenity and peace which arise from a true acquaintance with Christ and his salvation. His body, worn out with the repeated attacks of his disorder, and with increasing years and infirmity, gradually sunk into the arms of death, while his soul winged its happy flight into the bosom of that blessed Redeemer, who had long been his portion and his all.

On the 31st day of March, 1784, and in the 84th year of his age, he departed without a groan, and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

Thus lived and died this eminent servant of Jesus Christ, full of days and full of grace; gathered as a shock of corn in its season into the garner of his heavenly Master. May we have grace to follow his good example; and may the Holy Spirit lead us on by the same way, to the same rest which remaineth for the people of God.

His character as a scholar, was very respectable. He had learning without ostentation; and, to a good acquaintance with the Greek and Latin classics, joined a considerable knowledge of Hebrew and the writings of the Fathers. But, though a man of taste, and well able to distinguish himself in the circle of letters, he made it a point of conscience to lay aside the scholar when he

addressed his people, and studied to accommodate himself to the capacity of the meanest of his hearers, that none might be unedified.

His views of the ministry were serious and honourable. We have already seen how far he was from looking upon it as a profession of advantage, in the answers which he gave to his uncle, and to the Bishop of Lincoln. He could not bear to see or to hear of the prostitution of the sacred character to such low and unworthy ends. A minister of Jesus Christ appeared^d to him a person devoted to the service of God and the souls of men, and therefore, not at liberty to live after his own will, and spend his income as he would that of an estate; but, as this is appropriated to him out of the substance of the people for the labour of their souls, he is in all duty and conscience bound to reside amongst them, to lay himself out for their good, and attend to their benefit and instruction. "Meditate upon these things,—give thyself wholly to them," was his standing motto for a minister of the gospel of Christ.

His discourses, which have been already published,* sufficiently show his ability as a divine, and the faithful manner in which he discharged his great office amongst his people: they are full of weighty matter, and are most honest and direct addresses to the heart

* Mr. Adam published a volume of sermons in 1781, besides some single discourses preached on different occasions.

and conscience. The heart, indeed, was ever his peculiar study. Being deeply acquainted with its exceeding deceitfulness and evil, his attention was always particularly directed here. Hence it was the great object of his ministry to undeceive his fellow-creatures respecting their own imagined righteousness, to detect them to themselves, to strip them of their vain pretences, and to bring them in guilty before God and their own consciences. For he well knew, that till this is done, Christ and his salvation are of little or no value. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

After the example of his divine Master, it was his constant endeavour to establish true humility as the ground-work of Christ's religion. Not that affected resemblance of it, which is often put on to please the world, and leaves the heart, all the time, unbumbled and only more pleased with itself, because of this its supposed excellence; but that true lowliness of soul, which is founded on a deep sense of its sinfulness, and exceeding unworthiness before God. This was the humility which he laboured after for himself and others; a humility proceeding from a divine principle, and influencing the whole man. He pitied the high and inconsiderate profession of many, who love to put themselves forward, and to be looked upon as *somebody* in the religious world; and esteemed

the complaints and self-accusations of a broken and contrite heart, a far better evidence of a Christian state, than the loudest pretensions of the bold and self-confident?

The practical parts of Christianity had ever his most sacred attention and regard, and were strongly enforced as the necessary and inseparable consequence of true saving faith: for though no man ever gloried more in the cross of Christ, or was more full and clear in maintaining the doctrine of *Christ's blood and righteousness*, as the only justification and hope of the soul, yet did he ever, in the strongest terms, inculcate that they who have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good works.* A strict and conscientious adherence to integrity and uprightness in all our dealings, and to truth and sincerity in our words, was a matter of high consequence in his estimation. Hence he entertained a very unfavourable opinion of the religion of those who could suffer themselves to deal in smuggled or prohibited goods; to neglect the duties of their station and calling; to gratify their pride, at the expense of common honesty, by living above their income; or to indulge in needless expenses, to the injury of their families, and of their ability to do good in acts of charity and benevolence.

The religious government of the tongue was likewise a subject on which he insisted

* See Letter, No. II. Appendix.

very strongly, I mean as to its regulation respecting the private concerns and character of our neighbour. Nothing seemed to hurt him more than to hear any one take pleasure in speaking ill of others, or retail slanderous reports to their disadvantage; and he would frequently stop them abruptly, by observing to them, "that the roots of the tongue lie very deep;"—or, with that remark, "I seldom see a fault in another, but I look for two in myself, and they generally are not far to seek."

In the distribution of his time, and the regulation of his family, he observed the most exact order and regularity; not merely on a principle of prudence and the better conducting of his business, but through a religious sense of the importance of his time and substance, as talents received from God, and of which he was sensible he must give an account.

His dress, furniture, and mode of living, exhibited a model of the most primitive simplicity; so that, in visiting him, you might imagine yourself a guest with one of the ancient fathers, rather than with a divine of the eighteenth century: nor let any suppose that this proceeded from covetousness, or a base love of money; it arose from a conviction of the exceeding evil of the waste of his talent, a disapprobation of the sumptuous manner of living too fashionable amongst the clergy, and a conscientious care

that he might have it in his power to relieve the wants of others.

In the private duties of the closet, he was diligent and unremitting. These he considered, not only as a discharge of duty, but as indispensably necessary for the life and support of his soul, and as a principal means of maintaining intercourse with God, and gaining those daily supplies of divine grace, which he stood in continual need of as a minister and as a Christian.

His caution and great candour respecting others, were also very remarkable, and highly worthy of imitation: and though he was firmly established in the Gospel-faith of salvation by Jesus Christ alone; yet was he ever ready to make great allowances for men's different views of things, and distinguished with much care between an error of the head and one of the heart.

His curate one day asking him what he thought of one of his people,—whether the person was a real Christian or not; he seemed to take no notice.—Some days afterwards he called him aside, and said to him: “Sir, you asked me the other day what I thought of the state of A. B. and would probably be surprised that I gave you no reply; but it was not through inattention. It is a point which requires much serious consideration, before we determine on the state of any person;” and then proceeded to give his sentiments with his usual candour.

This is but one instance, out of many, which might be produced, in proof of that Christian deliberation which he used in his determinations in general, and of his particular and close attention to the cardinal grace of 1 Cor. xiii. with which few were better acquainted than Mr. Adam.

The same grace of true Christian charity was eminently displayed by him in times of provocation. He was naturally of a very high and warm spirit, and evidently of very quick feelings in cases of this nature. But this served only the more fully to display the power of that divine grace which gave him such happy victory over his passions, that his meekness and humility were the admiration of all that knew him. A clergyman who lived in his family above six years, and had the opportunity of seeing him at all times, and in variety of circumstances, writes of him thus: "I don't recollect ever to have seen his temper ruffled above once or twice, in all the time that I lived with him. When any thing happened of a trying or provoking kind, he used to turn upon his heel, and say nothing, till he had thought it over, and examined whether there was indeed a just cause for anger or not."

But this conquest of himself was not attained to but by hard conflicts, and in the exercise of much labour, watchfulness, and prayer. He was forced to dispute his ground inch by inch, and would often say, "if ever

grace was grafted on a crab-stock, it is surely in me."

In this connexion it would be injustice to omit his forgiveness of injuries. That which was formerly said of Archbishop Cranmer, "Do my Lord of Canterbury a shrewd turn, and you make him your friend as long as you live," might, with the greatest truth, be applied to our worthy author. And often would he requite the ingratitude and rudeness of an ignorant and perverse parishioner, by taking occasion to do him some kind office as soon as possible.

But among all the graces which adorned his Christian profession, his patience and resignation, under the afflicting hand of God, were most remarkable. In these he was peculiarly eminent, and exceeded by few that we have either seen or read of. It pleased God to afflict him, for many years before his death, with a disorder of a very peculiar and trying nature, which, through a similarity in some of its symptoms, was, for a time, apprehended to be the *stone*; and the reader will find frequent references to it, under this description, in the private thoughts: but, through the whole, the power of divine grace shone with a most striking splendour, while nothing but meekness and submission were to be seen in his deportment, and adoration and thankfulness heard from his lips.

A prayer which he composed and made use of, on these occasions, will give the

APPENDIX.

The following LETTERS of Mr. Adam, written at different times, and two other Papers referred to in the foregoing Relation, will help to illustrate this short Sketch of his Character.

N^o I.

To a Lady in Cornwall.

MADAM,

Nov. 19, 1756.

PERMIT me to congratulate you on your happy deliverance from the religion in fashion; by which I mean a creditable profession, without that knowledge of the heart which brings us hungering and thirsting to Christ for the relief we want, and which he came from the bosom of the Father to offer us.

That such a profession may consist with a secret deep-rooted love of the world, and indulgence to almost every vanity of it, we have thousands of witnesses, who, never suspecting the goodness of their state, cannot bear to have it called in question, and almost necessarily dislike reproach, and hate those who condemn them, by turning from their ways and maxims. This is one of

the greatest difficulties in the way of a thorough conversion, and needs all the authority of that dreadful denunciation, "whosoever shall be ashamed of me, &c." to support us under it. I pray God send it with all its weight to your heart and mine, and enable us to make a steady confession of the gospel in its truth and purity, as opposite to our natural views, tempers, and affections, and calling us to an experimental knowledge of God, and a new state of holy communion with him.

How delightful a thing it is to count, and not to count but feel, the Christian's gains—faith and fidelity; peace with God through Jesus Christ; a renewed will; increasing love; and hope full of immortality! And how short is the time of our suffering, if upon the whole we do suffer, and are not richly compensated, even here, in every condition by the afore-mentioned advantages. Go on, Madam, knowing whom you have chosen, and let neither your own weakness, nor the frowns of the world terrify you. Christ will have his grace exalted, in opposition to all discouraging, unbelieving thoughts from the former; and a faithful acceptance of it, and establishment in it, will make you victorious over the latter.

Never to ask ourselves what our great want is, or what we should ask of God, if we might have the wish of our hearts, is great

blindness and stupidity; and yet 'it is the case, not only of the grossly irreligious, but of all those who are in the practice of an external form *only*.

The awakening of the soul from this sleep of nature, is necessarily the first step toward a recovery.

To know that we want remission of sin, and strength against it; a will to live to the glory of God, and mercy to save in our very best estate; and that the gospel comes home to our case in every one of these points, answers all our wishes, and reveals our wants only to relieve them, is illumination in the understanding.

But the great work is still to come, which is the spiritual life of faith, or the closing of the *heart*, resolutely and fully, with this blessed scheme of redemption!

May God Almighty support and bless you in the benefit of this redemption, comfort you in the blood of Christ, and carry you on swiftly in the way of holiness, conformity to the cross, and self-renunciation. As Christ has wrought salvation by himself, and gotten the victory for us with his own right-hand, he must have the whole glory of our recovery. But though he wants nothing of ours to make his payment full weight, and scorns whatever we can offer him by way of purchase, he expects, and is well pleased with the free tender of our service; and all he has done and suffered, fails of

its end, if it does not make us a willing people.

You, dear lady, love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Love him more, that you may be still more happy in him, and taste more of his love. Make communion with him, and access to God by him, the delight of your soul, and the great end you live for. Love his commands, because they are his; and then not one of them will be grievous. Love his friends, because they are such; and his enemies, to wish and make them his friends.

I write not to instruct you, who are much higher in the divine school than myself; nor can I have any end in flattering you, as I am unknown. But my desire is to animate you to ardour and perseverance in the glorious race; and my hope is, that whatever state you are in, you will set no value upon present attainments, but be always pressing on to still greater heights. A progressive state is always a hopeful one, because it is both sincere and self-condemning; and if it has one eye upon perfection, keeps the other steadily fixed on Christ. To him, your Saviour, gracious helper, and bountiful rewarder, I commend you, and myself to your prayers, and am, from a far country,

Madam,

Yours in Christian sincerity,

T. ADAM.

N^o II.

To the Rev. Mr. Burnett.

DEAR SIR,

June 27, 1760.

I AM letters in your debt, and should certainly have wrote before now, if I had not expected you every week. My wife too has been desiring it with great good will, and some degree of impatience. Alas! she is in a very weak condition, and I fear sinking under the infirmities of a broken constitution. God be gracious to her.— Help us with your prayers. I hope she knows her refuge, and flies to it. Nothing in life or death for strong consolation like our great High Priest, and his atonement for sinners. It is very mortifying to Nature to be saved as the thief upon the cross was; but there is no other way; and in our best estate we are brands plucked out of the fire. Settle yourself and your hearers upon this ground. If our good works follow us, we are beholden to our faith for them, and to faith, first and last, for our whole salvation. I hear you are labouring hard in conjunction with Mr. Venn, to whom I desire my best respects. Go on, and the blessing of God go along with you. Keep a watchful eye on the risings of pride. It will beset you on all occasions; and success or disap-

pointment, evil report and good report, will add fuel to it.

I have received a dozen franks from Lord D. for the use of Mr. Venn. I suppose his work goes on. Though it is a delicate affair, his light and spirit will carry him through. *The Whole Duty of Man* is in possession of the general esteem, and in many hands; but for that very reason the insufficiency of it, as not answering the title, should be laid open. To do justice to it, it is, perhaps, the completest system of Christian ethics we have. I never read a section of it, without being convinced by it of sin; and in that view, as well as a directory to those who are aiming at perfection under Christ, it is of great use, and cannot be too much commended. The apology commonly made for its defect, in not laying the foundation of Christian doctrine, is, that it was wrote at a time when faith was disgraced by practice. Ever since, things have been wheeling about to the other extreme; and there has long been a necessity of insisting on the glorious peculiarities of the gospel, and reminding men that there is no possibility of being in the way of duty without the love of God; which can never take place in the heart without a sense of redeeming mercy. Moral writing and preaching *only*, is destructive of morality, as it concerns the inward man, and has a fatal tendency to make persons,

even of the best natural tempers, fly to an outward decency of behaviour, and lay the weight of their salvation upon it, instead of faith in the pardoning love of God, humbling the soul, and productive of real holiness. Mr. Venn's performance, I imagine, will, in the main, be a working upon this plan; and I hope he will convince us of the necessity and great efficacy of gospel principles, in order to our acceptable obedience; and, that what is too generally thought the whole duty of man, is neither the whole nor the better half of it, but self-deceit, and a poor substitute for them.

I cannot find Rivington's letter to Mr. Venn, but suppose it is of no great consequence. I hoped I should have delivered Mr. Walker's Helps, &c. into your own hands; but, if you do not come shortly, will send it, if you desire it. The archdeacon, who will be glad to see you, told me lately he had wrote for a number of the "Ordination Question," but could not get them. Pray tell me whether and how they are to be had. What is become of the man of Truro? I have not heard from him for many months, though my last letter to him was of an interesting nature.

I am obliged to you and Mr. Venn for his Sabbath sermon, and heartily wish it may have an effect far and near; but there were some leaves wanting. It is very much to be lamented, that men of learning and piety

should ever have struck in with the corruption of mankind, as they once did in this nation, to weaken the obligation of a command, which is not only of a moral nature, as a guard and security to all the rest, but more especially sacred for its spiritual import, as the soul's call from earth to heaven. Certainly more was intended by it than only to take the yoke of servile labour from off our necks; and the man has no more benefit from it than his beast, who sees nothing else in it but a liberty to skip in his pasture. I trust you are always in the right school, and know that your fall and fever were the lessons of the day: perhaps, you find, too, by experience, that knowledge and strength are gained in the school of affliction. I do, for domestic trouble presses hard upon me. What is the use of this but to humble us in the dust, to ground us in the sense of our weakness, and thereby hinder us from thinking a lie of ourselves; to make us call louder and keep us close to our remedy? Dear sir, God bless you. Come when you can; it is but a day's journey, and you will be heartily welcome to,

Your affectionate brother,

THO. ADAM.

N^o III.*To the same.*

DEAR SIR,

Nov. 4, 1760.

PERHAPS you will wonder, when I tell you I am not surprised to hear what has happened at H. Wherever the gospel is preached, there will be mistakes, even among the sincere; and opposers will catch at any shadow, and invent falsehoods, to keep off conviction, and harden themselves in the worst of errors. "I an advocate for the merit of good works?" I abhor the very sound of the words from my heart, and cannot imagine what there was in my sermons to ground such a misapprehension upon. I thank God, I have long been established in the belief of the eleventh article of our church, not being able to find comfort or sure of footing any where else; and would ask those miserable mistakers of the gospel, who are for laying any other foundation, whether they dare say, in cool blood, that what they think the best actions of their lives, or the choicest grace of their souls, will bear to be tried in God's balance; and if not, what will they do with all the rest? There is no trifling here: the soul is lost by sin; and how it can be recovered by actions which have a mixture of sin in them, as the best have, is not to be conceived. The

consequence is plain: salvation is a gift from first to last, altogether free and undeserved; and the man was never humbled, never considered what a fiery trial he has to go through, who can think of challenging it as a debt, in whole or in part. I am not vindicating myself to you and Mr. V. on this point, which I suppose to be quite needless; but give you leave to mention what I have said, wherever you think it may be necessary, and have pricked my finger, as the poor boy Leaf did, to sign it.

See Fox, vol. iii. p. 306.

It is true, in all my discourses I endeavour, as much as possible, to take in the whole scheme—repentance, faith, holiness; and if insisting on the last, in its due connexion, and for right ends, is preaching up works, I cannot help it. Wo be to those who separate what God has joined; for though faith alone saves us, and not according to the common gloss, if it works by love; yet I contend, that faith is not faith, if it does not work by love, keep the commandments, and make us new creatures. My dear Mr. V. will be upon his guard, and watch zealously over such of his converts as would make gospel-grace a pretence for sloth, or low attainments, and, by not building themselves up in their most holy faith, give occasion to the adversaries of the truth to speak reproachfully of it; and I say further to him, fear not; proceed quietly

and steadily in dependence on the arm of the Lord. Let him tell his flock not to give heed to any other gospel, by whomsoever preached: if he expects to have things go on smoothly, he is sadly out in his reckoning: it is a poor artifice of the father of lies, to set me in opposition to him; but this calumny, if despised, will die away of itself.

Those who are influenced by his preaching, and truly awakened, will soon discover what a wretched condition they are in, with respect to works; the rest must fret and speak all manner of evil, and prop themselves as well as they can with their own doings. It is something remarkable, that commonly those who have the fewest good works, and are evidently not in a state of careful walking and working, should build most upon them. Ask them what they mean by it, and you will find it is little more than that they do not pick pockets, and knock down every one they meet.

I desire my love to Mr. and Mrs. V. to whom I write this, as well as to you, and am your and their affectionate,

THO. ADAM.

N^o IV.

ON THE DEATH OF MY WIFE.

July 29, 1760.

If I have true *charity*, I need never want a wife. My parish, my family, my relations, my friends, every soul will be the object of my conjugal tenderness; and the exercises of it, from a root of love and obedience to my Saviour, a never-failing source of the purest delight.

I find I have settled that love upon *One* which is due to *All*. This is a painful stroke; but I am sensible that it is in order to another, and a more painful one; and may my God enable me to submit to it, and make it effectual to his own blessed end! Now is the time for a total separation from the world and the flesh, by the sharp knife of circumcision. Now God calls me to a full choice of him. Now Christ says to me, *Wilt thou be made whole?* Now the Spirit stands ready with his purifying fire to do his office in me. Holy and eternal Trinity. *Amen.*

O my soul! thy lawful comforts have been a snare to thee, and thou hast well nigh ruined thyself, by creature-dependence.—Know thy support—Know it is *thy God*—Know how wretchedly thou hast been deceived, and turn to him that smiteth thee.

O Lord, thou hast struck me to the ground, and what wouldst thou have me to do? I know; speak it evidently to *my heart*. If my own rebellious will does not oppose thy gracious design, I know I shall not want illumination and help.

I see plainly I am come to the turning point. From this day forward, a life of faith or sensuality;—of heavenly affections or prevailing love of earthly things;—of slavery or freedom:—of self-pleasing or entire devotedness to God.

One chain may bind us as fast to the world as a thousand. I have seemed to myself to be above it in many respects; but am sadly convinced it has all along had possession of me, and that my love of it, though less discernible, was perhaps more strong, through centring in one object. Oh! that I might be buried in the same grave with her; and that, henceforth, I had nothing to do in the world but to live to him that died for me, and love God with a pure heart fervently!

It is necessary for me to obliterate as much as possible all such thoughts and remembrance of the deceased as may augment my sorrows, make resignation to God more difficult, and obstruct his salutary operations.

Affliction, in union with grace, works powerfully to the healing of the soul; and if the former does not send us to the latter,

we shall not experience the healing benefit of the great Physician. I can now think, if the dear deceased was alive again, what would I not do, forbear, or suffer for her sake: but if I am not willing to do as much for Christ, what can be the reason of it, but want of love.

O my heart! nature has had its turn in great weakness. When I went into the room where she was laid out, the sight of a breathless, extended, icy corpse, so loved,—too much loved,—drew a flood of tears from me, with many sobs. I had not fortified myself before-hand by prayer and the exercise of resignation.

Blessed be God, I was more strengthened at her funeral; and hope I shall always remember it as an earnest of what he will do for me, upon all occasions, if I fly to his power.

If I look out for ease from the present distress any way but by resignation to the will of God, and desire of complete union with it for the remainder of my life, I take myself out of his hands, suffer without improvement, am still at the mercy of events, and shall be unprepared for my own death.

I have lost the dear partner of my heart, to whom I used to unbosom myself without reserve, and communicate all my thoughts and cares, designs and wishes, joys and griefs; and, in the want of her, seem to my-

self as if I were left alone in the midst of a desert.—Recall thyself, O my soul, wake from this stupor of a vain sorrow, and do not indulge a thought to harden thyself in it. *Where is thy God!* If thou hast *him* to go to, what canst thou complain of? Make *him* thy friend and counsellor. He is now inviting, and even *forcing* thee into his presence and familiarity. Speak as freely to *him*, as thou didst to *her*; and look so well to thyself, that thou needest not be afraid to tell him all thy secrets.

Nº V.

A Prayer used by Mr. Adam, in a Fit of the Stone.

O LORD, my Maker and Redeemer, I thank thee for all thy goodness to me, thy unworthy creature, and especially for the great mercy of *the stone*. I know thou sendest it for good, that I may make deep search into myself, and improve the pain of my body to the health and everlasting salvation of my soul. I confess my sins are more in number than the hairs of my head, and deserve a more severe chastisement; but thou dispensest thy corrections with unerring wisdom, and I desire to submit myself, in all things, to thy gracious disposal, and to

choose what thou choosest for me. O let me say, by a mighty power from thy grace, *It is good for me that I am afflicted*, that my life may be a continual preparation for death, and death welcome, through a living faith in Christ Jesus, who hath taken out the sting of it, redeemed us unto thee by the blood of his cross, and insured our justification by his resurrection from the dead.

Bless, I beseech thee, the means used for my ease and recovery; for my help and trust is only in thee: and if thou dost not think it fit to grant my request, enable me to bear what thou layest upon me, without a murmuring thought, and with perfect resignation to thy blessed will.

O Lord God of my life and of all my mercies, deal with me as thou pleasest. Do thy own work in thy own way. Into thy hands I commend my spirit. Grant me thy peace. Carry me safely through all my trials; and make it the desire of my heart to know, love, and bless thee, and be prepared for the everlasting enjoyment of thee, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

PREFACE.

THAT the Reader may reap the full benefit of these thoughts, it seemed proper to obviate a plausible objection, which not only the careless and profane, but even many well-disposed persons may often feel themselves inclined to make. The objection may be conceived to run in this form: "If Mr. Adam was so good a man, how happens it that he should every where be full of such complaints against his own sins and corruptions? It may be fairly allowed, that he should be so in the commencement of his religious course; but is it not unaccountable that he should continue so through life? Is this the benefit of religion to keep a person in a perpetual state of misery and distress? The language he uses, would suit the greatest slave to his lusts and vices; but not surely a man of exemplary piety and virtue, like Mr. Adam. One would expect that such a man should have enjoyed a continual feast within, from the consciousness of his uprightness and sincerity."

The objection does not meet the case of our author only, but that of the most emi-

nent saints, both in ancient and modern times: it deserves, indeed, a more minute discussion than the limits of a preface will allow: some few hints, however, may be given, sufficient to clear up the whole affair with minds of any intelligence in divine things; at any rate, they will not be in vain, if the reader finds himself led by them to a more useful and more satisfactory perusal of the author.

I. *In the first place*, however strange to many it may seem, that so confessedly good a man should complain so deeply of his sinfulness all his days, it must be insisted on that there is nothing in it unscriptural. The doctrines and views of divine revelation all confirm the propriety of it. From them it is evident, that true holiness, and a true growth in holiness, are ever attended with such a sense of indwelling sin. Let any man carefully attend to St. Paul speaking of himself, Rom. vii. That he is not personating a wicked man, is certain, from the whole tenour of the description. "What I hate," says he, "that do I;" and "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." To hate sin, and to delight in the law of God, belong only to a person of real piety: nor is there any thing in the whole account, which would lead us to suspect, that he means to speak of himself as being only in the first stage and entrance of practical Christianity. From the seventh to the fourteenth verse, he

speaks indeed of the time past, and is describing the former exercise of his mind with respect to the law of God, and which he experienced in his conviction and conversion: but from the fourteenth verse to the end of the chapter, he plainly speaks of the time present, and the very feelings of his soul while he was writing to the Romans. No other sense can certainly be put on them, without offering an intolerable violence to all the rules of grammatical construction. Toward the end of the chapter he looks forward, indeed, to the time to come, when, groaning in the bitterness of his spirit under present pressures and afflictions, he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and relieves himself with this answer: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He certainly expected deliverance, but it was in the world to come. And in the next chapter he explains more distinctly how the saints "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;" but here they wait for it with patience, and the Spirit helpeth their infirmities." This is the natural and obvious sense of the apostle; and, if it need any confirmation, it may receive it from various other passages in his epistles. But as brevity must be suited, I would only desire the reader to compare the chapter which has been considered with Gal. v. The same

inward conflict which is more largely described in the former chapter, is thus briefly illustrated in the latter; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would;" though, on the whole, they are "led by the Spirit" in their walk: nor is there the least intimation given that things will ever be otherwise with them while they are "waiting for the hope of righteousness by faith." It is not true only of St. Paul then, but of all real Christians in the world, whether weak or strong, whether babes, young men, or fathers in Christ, that the conflict described in Rom. vii. belongs to them all. However difficult it may be then for many to account for the repeated complaints and sense of sin, in which the author of the following thoughts abounds, it is certain at least that St. Paul, and with him all true Christians, have ever had the same; nor is there an expression more deeply descriptive of sin and misery, in the following pages, than those made use of by the inspired apostle: *I am carnal, sold under sin. What I do, I allow not. What I would, that I do not; sin dwelleth in me. I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, or sinful nature, what is properly my own, dwelleth no good thing. When I would do good, evil is present with me. I see another law in my members war-*

ring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity.

“O wretched man that I am!” These are not words of course. There are no words of course in the sacred oracles. Here is a very animated sensibility of wo and distress, because of sin. It is true, he has his reliefs and supports, his joys and consolations, and the next chapter powerfully describes them. The candid reader will see, too, that our author had the same; and when he further takes notice of the language of David every where in the Psalms, of Asaph in the lxxiii, of Heman in the lxxxviii, of Agur in Proverbs xxx, of Ezra in his ninth chapter; indeed of real good men in general, whether in Scripture or elsewhere, when speaking of themselves, the edge of his surprise may be blunted, and he may at length begin to think that our author speaks only as the Scriptures fully vindicate, and as the best of men have reason to do.

Yet still he may think the objection by no means answered, at least the difficulty by no means accounted for. Let him not be offended, if he be told that he himself needs a better acquaintance with his own heart, and with the methods of divine grace. How these things can be, shall be explained as concisely as possible; but those only to whom “a broken and contrite heart” hath given some light into this subject, will be expected duly to relish it.

II. In an unconverted person there is but one nature; in a real Christian there are two: the one is called the flesh; the other the spirit. These terms do not relate to the conflict between reason and passion, of which the pagan philosophers wrote; but, to the conflict between all that is of man by nature, whether reason, passion, or whatever else, and all that is of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, communicated through the Holy Ghost. Each nature has its distinct exercises in the same man: the result must be two sets, as it were, of affections, views, and propensities. This consideration, alone, accounts for the seeming paradox, that St. Paul should speak such apparent contradictions. If the reader be apt to wonder that Mr. Adam should sometimes speak so triumphantly of the happiness and holiness of a Christian, at other times so feelingly of his corruption and misery, he must be understood to speak with reference to these two states, and it will be a sufficient apology to say in his behalf, that the same seeming inconsistency is in St. Paul himself. He who, in Rom. vii. is "carnal, sold under sin," is in the viii. made "free from the law of sin and death." Each assertion has its truth, as reference is made to each of the states in which he is conversant. In one sense he is wicked, miserable, unclean, a slave of all that is evil; in another, he is holy, happy, pure in heart, the Lord's freeman,

and an heir of heaven. It is not to be wondered at, that the conflict of views and principles so opposite, should produce various exercises in the human heart; and that a mind vigorous and intelligent, like our author's, would be led to take large notice of them in viewing his own. This it is which constitutes the Christian's internal warfare, which will continue till death transmit the patient warrior to that rest which remains to the people of God.

Perhaps the difficulty which many find in admitting that St. Paul was speaking of himself in Rom. vii. will be further obviated, by considering that it is not a practical course of wickedness which he means, when he talks of being "carnal, sold under sin:" *concupiscence* is the term he uses; and that is what he means by indwelling sin. It is the tendency of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, that he complains of, as perpetually exerting itself in inward opposition to the will of God, and continually marking with imperfection the best of his purposes and actions. Did not the Christian himself inform us of it, it would often be scarcely discernible, seldom or never in a great degree, by others, that he had this sinful propensity. His walk is not after the flesh, but after the spirit, as St. Paul declares. And the general prevalency of holiness in his conduct, is the standing evidence of his sincere conversion. For *sin shall in no sense have dominion over*

any true children of God. And it is their privilege to grow in all practical godliness more and more, notwithstanding the strength and violence of their inbred foes. Persons unacquainted with these things, might think St. Paul speaks a language proper only for a murderer, an adulterer, or a robber; but the truth is, the evils which he feels are mere trifles, or even no evils at all in the eyes of the greater part of mankind. And were this matter properly understood, the candid reader might see, that it is the superior holiness of the man which drew from him that deep sigh, "O wretched man that I am!" and not an Antinomian spirit, as this interpretation of the apostle has been too uncandidly represented; that in proportion to men's growth in a gracious sensibility, these complaints (if cordial, and not affected complaints) will be more pungent and intense, because sin grows more and more offensive to the taste, and the man will naturally be led to be more and more displeased with himself, the more reason the rest of mankind have to be pleased with all his conduct. This seems to be a true account of St. Paul's case; and the discerning reader will see, that Mr. Adam's resembles his, and of course will need no better vindication.

III. It is this deep and abiding sense of internal sin, which lays the foundation for that all-important grace of a Christian's humility. To live under a daily consciousness,

that in him "dwelleth no good thing;" if this will not humble us, it will be hard to say what will. Hence, also, the grace of God and his Christ, so suitably adapted to his wants and his miseries, and the scriptural views of the gospel, become so unspeakably precious to his heart. Hither he is obliged continually to repair for relief and support, and he is not disappointed. The poverty of spirit which this view of things excites in his soul, gives the true relish to his Christian food, and the consolations of divine forgiveness and mercy become the sweetest cordial to his heart. Thus he may in one view be always sorrowful, in another always rejoicing. It will not now be difficult to conceive, that still wisdom's ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace; though to a mind jaundiced by pride, all things will bear a melancholy hue. And if it be a joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful, the gratitude hence excited towards his God and Redeemer, will repay itself in a feast of the sincerest pleasure. Forgiveness of injuries will, comparatively speaking, grow an easy and pleasant duty to him who daily feels his infinite obligations to a God of forgiveness. Liberality, long-suffering, and genuine universal benevolence, do obviously grow out of the same soil. And because the indwelling concupiscence still stains every work, and is the chief burden of the Christian life, hence heaven is desired with ardour inexpressible;

covetousness and the love of the world are dethroned in his heart; and that spirit of living for the world to come, and not for this, in which Mr. Adam most eminently excelled, and in which the generality of even true Christians are pitiably defective, will thrive in the soul, in proportion as it grows in a sense of indwelling sin. It were much to be wished, that this subject were better understood than it is. Well-disposed persons would find that the secret of growing in all true holiness much depends on it. Spiritual comforts would be sought earnestly, but in a right temper, and with due resignation; they would be grounded more solidly on the hope of heaven in Christ; and heavenly things themselves would still be more looked for than present consolation.

The primitive Christians were wont to place daily before their eyes the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the just, and the scriptural views of heavenly blessedness, as St. Paul's epistles abundantly evince. If we expect divine consolations in our warfare, abstracted from these things, we shall be tempted to embrace airy phantoms instead of solid nourishment, as too many have done. For if, on the other side, we look at the consequences of other sorts of views, it is but too plain that those who are carried out in their expectations beyond the line of sobriety which has been fixed by the apostle, do not grow in holiness, but in pride.

The presumptuous are encouraged, and the sincere are saddened, and real heavenly-mindedness is by no means promoted.

Thus does it appear—1st, That the objection which gave occasion to this preface, is answered on the grounds of scripture;—2dly, is invalidated by a fair and candid consideration of the case itself;—and, 3dly, will appear destitute even of a shadow of probability, when it is seen that true holiness of life much depends on the heart-felt consciousness of that indwelling sin which gives rise to the objection itself.

Are you, Reader, bowed down with a sense of much sin and corruption? Have you long laboured against it, and are you tempted to think you have done so to little purpose? Did you expect that by this time you should have been much further advanced in the divine life, and have had far less to do with sin; and that none had ever so wicked a heart as yourself? It is a mistake commonly made; and even those who are most fortified against it in their judgment, are yet continually prone to make it. But be not discouraged: the holy man, whose thoughts you are going to peruse, felt the same evils daily which you do; and we have seen reason for concluding, that a still greater degree of the same sensibility may yet be your lot. You would grow in grace; but you must leave to God himself the way and manner of it. Indeed, a very essential part

of true holiness lies in this resignation of spirit. Descend more willingly into the valley of humiliation, and you will find comfort in Christ, and strength against sin to abound more freely. Assure yourself, that a state of uniform ease in religion, is a fool's paradise. Much sensible conflict and serious warfare, attended often with great variety of frames, belong to those who yet are thriving Christians, and advancing safely and vigorously towards heaven. Many go on smoothly, unacquainted with their own corruptions and Satan's temptations. Their tranquillity is more the result of stupefaction, than of growth in grace. Be not seduced by plausible reasonings of those of lower attainments in religion, to quit your ground, and follow any other scent than that you are upon. You must trust in the world; you must exercise patience; you must be content to meet with strange things, such as are very mortifying to flesh and blood, and such as confound the pride of your understanding. For in all things God's ways are not as man's ways; those whom he means to fill, must be emptied. Look steadfastly at the grace of Christ by faith, and at heaven as your aim, and you will never want either consolation or fruitfulness by the way.

Those must, however, be solemnly warned who would abuse the grace of God to licentiousness. For some may abound in complaints of themselves all their days, and,

fancying that to be a sufficient mark of humility, content themselves in their present state, sinning that grace may abound. What has been said, was meant to instruct the ignorant, and to correct some mistakes in the sincere concerning the nature of true holiness, and the way of growing in it. It was not meant to harden you in your vain presumption. If your complaints be sincere, the constant tenor of an humble, charitable, heavenly-minded life will evidence it. But if you can go on in the love of the world, and in the practical indulgence of sin at your ease, be assured that the sensations of the writer you are going to read, are in their whole nature distinct from yours. Learn to repent, and believe the gospel.

Some readers of the following papers may belong to those professors of godliness, who rather affect a rational cast of thinking, and though not void of the love of heavenly things, are yet too much in danger of being carried away by the strong current of the age, which prides itself on accuracy of reasoning. The thoughts of our venerable author will rather offend your state; if you can see enough in him to cause you to respect him as a Christian, you will be tempted to think meanly, however, of his judgment in religion. But beware of forming a rash conclusion. He was unquestionably a man of deep thought, strong sense, and in personal holiness a shining light in his day. You have

reason to suspect, then, that his spiritual understanding must have been very good, even better than your own. What if that too practical conformity to the world; that strong desire of human applause; that too eager taste after the best worldly things, as human literature and philosophy; and that habitual deadness in divine things, which for years have been your burden, arise from the lowness of your views in real religion. You too hastily take it for granted, that you know all that is to be known; you affect a simplicity in religion, but a simplicity more like that of a philosopher than a Christian. You have too great an aversion to the depth of Christian mysteries. Could you be persuaded to pray more fervently, and submit in a more childlike and reverent manner to the teachings of God's Spirit, you might find something in the thoughts of this man of God more suitably useful to your souls, and well calculated to advance you in Christian life.

After all that can be said, if these thoughts should fall into the hands of persons unacquainted with the whole of vital religion, no prefatory explanation can render them agreeable. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* The most obvious, if not the

* Cor. ii. 14.

only use, which such can make of them, is, to take occasion from thence to suspect their own ignorance and unconverted state; to seek diligently the means of light and recovery; and to ask wisdom from above, with a power of conviction to which they have hitherto been strangers, even wisdom from that God, "who giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not," and it shall be given them. †

Something it may be necessary to add respecting the form in which these private thoughts of Mr. Adam are presented to the public. They are extracted from a kind of diary, wherein, during more than thirty years, he occasionally wrote his sentiments on a variety of subjects, as they arose in his mind, without observing any particular order or method, and very seldom prefixing a date. In this state it came into the hands of the editors, to whom the author had committed the care of his papers, with a discretionary power to publish or suppress what they pleased. Struck with the remarkable honesty and wisdom that appeared in the observations it contained, they thought that such a selection might be made for the press, as would greatly tend to illustrate the subject of human nature, and a work of grace upon the heart. In order to make these select observations more useful, it was thought necessary to reduce them

† James i. 5.

into some order, and class them under certain heads. This has been attempted in the way which the editors of Mons. Pascal's "Thoughts on Religion" tell us, in their preface, they pursued. A distinct chapter is allotted to each subject, and a regular method is aimed at in the order and connexion of the subjects. This attempt was not without its difficulties. Many of the author's observations being of a complex kind, it was not easy to fix upon the leading sentiment, so as to assign them their proper place. Some inaccuracy will perhaps be discovered, and some indulgence is requested of the public in this respect. Under the head of *Confessions*, which is the title of the first chapter, will be found most of those devout aspirations and reflections, whether of a penitential or thankful kind, which lie scattered about in the author's diary; and under the term *Christian Life*, which is the title of another chapter, the editors meant to give all his observations that relate to those exercises, conflicts, and circumstances that peculiarly constitute and attend the "Life of God in the Soul of Man."

The Reader has been prepared for that appearance of inconsistency which he will meet with in the following work. If he will but keep in remembrance the existence of two opposite principles in a believer's breast, and is able to enter into the meaning

of the apostle's character of himself and his brethren, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," he will see nothing absurd or contradictory in our author's views. Whatever belong to the dark side of the subject, such as the guilt and misery of our fallen state, the pride and hypocrisy that lurks within us, and the bitter and deadly workings of our carnal mind, will chiefly be found in the chapter of *Human Depravity*. On the other hand, that which relates to the bright side of the subject, viz. the comfortable doctrine of justification, the blessed hope of eternal life, and the rich consolation which the gospel affords, will principally be met with under the following titles—*Jesus Christ—Faith—Heaven*. The chapter on *Resignation* will include the author's thoughts on the benefit of afflictions, and the use of the pains, diseases, and crosses, that attend this mortal life. The connexion between the titles of the other chapters, and the sentiments they contain, will, perhaps, be found sufficiently obvious. In order to avoid the inconvenience of an endless multiplication of heads, it was thought expedient to reduce them to their present number, and to admit many of the observations into the chapters where they stand, with a considerable latitude of interpretation.

PRIVATE THOUGHTS, &c.

CHAP. I.

CONFESSIONS.

O LORD, I yield myself to the clear radiance and full discovery of thy word, to be convinced by it of sin. I know, with infallible certainty, that I have sinned ever since I could discern between good and evil, in thought, word, and deed; in every period, condition, and relation of life; every day against every commandment.

Thy dread Majesty I have not revered; thy sovereign authority and absolute right over me I have not kept in mind; I have set no value upon communion with thee; my heart has been alienated from thee, my will bent against thee, and I have lived inordinately to myself, seeking only my own ease in worldly things, and neglecting my portion in thee.

I have not made a conscience of improving the talents thou gavest me for the benefit of others and the good of my own soul, but most shamefully and wickedly wasted my time in impertinent visiting, idle amusements, riot and excess, and all manner of sensual indulgence.

I have been proud and envious, wrathful, uncharitable and censorious, morose, ill-natured

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION, &c.

and imperious, where I was obliged to show the greatest kindness; and ungrateful to my best benefactors. I shall never be better till I know how bad I am, and pray with more feeling.

I am in danger of losing two of the most precious things in the world—God's favour and my own soul; and yet at ease! It is the desperateness of my distemper that I am at ease.

I am lying under the curse of a disobedient, passionate will. What pleases God does not please me; but often vexes, frets, hurts me, harrows up my soul.

Oh! when shall I feel the plague of sin, and long for a deliverance from it, as I would from a sore disease of my body!

Sin is still here, deep in the centre of my heart, and twisted about every fibre of it. Does my deliverance consist chiefly in the removal of it from my heart, or in the remission which is in Christ?

Is sin such a plague and burden to me, that I should think myself undone if there was no God to hear and answer my prayers for deliverance from it?

Who was it that said, "I will not sin against my God?" Who can say less? Why do not I say it?

All I have been doing in religion; the opinions I have taken up; the appearance of it I have put on, my seeming zeal for it, have too often been nothing but a contrivance to keep the Spirit's fire out of my heart, and give some kind of ease to my mind and conscience, without coming to the true point, viz. pure conformity to the will of God, with a total denial of self.

My great controversy is with myself, and I am resolved to have none with others till I have put things upon a better footing at home.

What will the next hour do for me that this cannot?

Past sin I see, and lament; but not present sin, though struggling against it; or not in all its guilt, and as I shall see it hereafter.

Go, sin, (and, O Lord, do thou speak it this day with my heart) go for ever thou rebel to God! thou crucifier of Christ! thou griever of the Spirit! thou curse of the earth! thou poison in my blood! thou plague of my soul, and bane of all my happiness!

I content myself with telling God that I want his graces, and yet can bear well enough to be without them.

Devoted to ease and sloth, never easy but in doing nothing, and always contriving to have nothing to do.

If I love God, I must love him for his holiness, and how then can I love sin? Nevertheless I have full conviction in myself that I do not hate it as I ought.

Where have I not sinned? The reason is evident—I carry myself about with me.

I would have joy of Christ, and take possession of his benefits, without his heart, without entering into his views, or taking part in his labours.

It is my great unhappiness, and the curse of nature, that I cannot please both God and myself.

“Grant that this day I fall into no sin.” When I was saying these words, Feb. 23, 1763, I sinned grievously by an uncharitable thought of C. S.

I pray faintly, and with reserve, merely to quiet conscience, for present ease, and almost wishing not to be heard. In a full prayer for full deliverance there is hope.

All my reading and pursuit of knowledge is more with a view to talking, than my own private use, or the benefit of others.

Day by day I am in pursuit of pleasure from animal gratifications, and my life is still propped by sensuality, only a little more decently than formerly.

I should be ready to die with shame and vexation, if others knew what I have been doing in the world, and what I am; it gives me but little concern that the eye of God is always upon me.

In bodily ailments, I look out every way for help without delay. I have no such anxiety for my soul, though I feel the plague of it, and know of an infallible physician.

If I might have my beloved enjoyment, and live cordially to my own will as long as I pleased, I do not perceive that I should choose to die soon, and go to heaven for the sake of being with God, and freed from sin.

In a state of greater danger and horror from self, (January, 1768,) than if I was in a town on fire at midnight, with two lions, a tiger, and three bears broke loose, and devouring all before them.

Two things I know with infallible certainty, that I cannot help myself, and that I am unhelped. I have wishes, form resolutions, make efforts, say prayers, mention particular sins; but do not find that I am a jot better. The only hopeful thing in my case is, that I do not despair.

Whether a late occurrence was a providential direction or not, it has convinced me, beyond all doubt, that I never reflected enough upon the uncertainty and emptiness of worldly things, and that my heart and treasure are not so much in heaven as I imagined.

“Woe be to the idle (Heb. good for nothing) shepherd!” I am a sinful creature. Lord, pardon me and pity my weakness, and make me duly sensible of what I am, that I may humble myself

before thee. Preserve me from self-love; and from the love of the world, and from the workings of a carnal mind, and bring me back again to thyself, through Jesus Christ, by the Spirit. Amen.

I want one point of selfishness, which is, to convert the word of God to my own use. All the reflections I make upon the pride, corruption, blindness, and deadly fall of man; upon the necessity of the daily cross, and death to the world, I bestow freely upon others; and am hindered by the deceitfulness of my own heart, and the artifice of the devil, from turning the edge of them upon myself.

I have just religion enough to make me gloomy, morose, proud, censorious; but not enough to make me cheerful, easy, good-natured, humble, and charitable.

The same failings, perverse tempers, and evil habits which I see, and abhor justly in others, I know and believe to be in myself, and possibly in a higher degree; and yet, in spite of my reason, judgment, and conviction, in spite of all the efforts I can use, I neither do nor can see them in the same light in myself that I do in others.

I have lived hitherto in a continual state of darkness, deception, and lying to myself. Though I have practised one kind of self-denial, so as to be taken by some, and almost to take myself for a Christian indeed, I now find, by a recent instance, that the chain which binds me to the world, is as strong as ever. I am resolved for the future not to believe any thing of myself till after a sufficient time of trial.

I want humility, for what? To be admired. My pride will hardly let me believe this, though I fear it is truth.

A certain person told me, that in advising, speaking of religious matters, and recommending religious truths, I was fierce, passionate, uncondescending. Blessed be God, I am sensible of it; and may God bless my friend for the admonition, though I fear it proceeded in part from anger. See and consider Gal. v. 19, 26. vi. 1, 3. I cannot help observing that I had a very strong touch of this matter upon my spirit, a day or two before my friend told me of it.

When I hear of any crime or series of villany, I think I have got a plausible occasion of giving full scope to the passion of hatred, and my indignation immediately rises to the utmost: but then I feel distinctly within myself that it is not against the sin, but the person; and, without any mixture of pity, I fairly give him up to destruction, and could rejoice to be the author and instrument of his sufferings. And though this might be excused, as proceeding from a proper detestation of vice, yet I fear there is little in it at the bottom besides pride and self-conceit, which are always accompanied with a lurking, diabolical, malignity of heart.

When I see others astonishingly blind to their failings, I suppose it to be my own case, and should think that man my friend who helps to open my eyes.

The great work is still to do; the heart is kept back, and God will accept nothing less from me. My guilt is damnable in withholding it, because I know and believe his love, and what Christ has done to gain my consent—O heavens! to what? My own happiness!

I should be ready and willing to show my warmest gratitude to the person who can give me ease from pain, or tell me of a cure for my body. O Jesus! what hast thou not done and suffered

for my soul! How coldly do I think of it! how poorly do I requite it!

Thank God for decay, pain, and suffering; thank God that I was born to die; thank God that I can die; thank God the time is near; thank God for the prospect and hope of a better world; and thank God for strong consolation through Christ.

I had rather see my own faults than other people's.

I will not form any schism, nor have another religion for the world. Help me, God.

I have been fool enough all my life to do every thing with a view to please, and, for the most part, to defeat my own design.

I have been ready enough all my life to prefer myself to all others. When shall I be Christian enough to honour all men, and sink down into my own nothingness.

St. Paul knew human nature but too well, when he said, "Their feet are swift to shed blood." Rom. iii. 15. I protest I am often catching myself at it; and do verily believe, that if we were sincere, we should find within ourselves abundant proof of the assertion. Strange, that I should be conscious of such a nature, and yet unhumiliated! But then, at the worst, and in the worst of men, there is still a capability of goodness; and, therefore, so long as I have breath, I will present my case before the God of my life. "Thou who hatest evil infinitely, and infinitely wiltest the destruction of it, and wouldst not the death of a sinner, discover to me this whole depth and mystery of iniquity, that, seeing it by a ray of light from thee, I may be inspired with thy own hatred of it, and enabled by thee to remove all the impediments to the manifestation of thy power and presence in my soul!"

I cannot perceive any other principles in myself than those of fear and shame. I would disobey God, if I durst; and, in some instances, I even durst do it, upon a confused hope of mercy, or future repentance, if it was not for fear of hurting my reputation.

When I return to a better temper, after having been under the impressions of black melancholy, that is, from being morose, sullen, discontented, impatient, quarrelsome, I cannot help saying, What a beast and a devil I was! meaning that I am so no longer. An open confession of this kind is looked upon as a mark of great ingenuousness, when, in truth, it is nothing but self-deception, counterfeit humility, and a stratagem to reinstate myself in my own good opinion, or the esteem of others. The style of the confession should run in the present tense—*I am, I am, I am*; for the nature is the same, though at present it may be smoothed over with a handsome appearance, as a filthy puddle is always the same, though it does not always smell alike.

Prayer and other spiritual exercises are often a weariness to me; a task and a force upon nature. I am but too well pleased with pretences for omitting them; and when they are over, I feel myself at ease, as it were, after the removal of a heavy weight: "yet thou, O my Saviour, dost warrant and command my importunity and earnestness in asking under all discouragements; I will therefore still present myself before the throne of grace, notwithstanding the want of sensible consolations. Fear not, my soul, the operations of the Spirit are in secret, and the daily growth of the spiritual man is imperceptible as that of corn." Mark iv. 27. John iii. 8.

I have all my life long been considering what I would do in such and such circumstances, and

putting off the season of working to some imaginary period, without ever duly considering what I can do at present, or using the opportunities and abilities I have.

It is in vain to struggle against nature, or, which is the same thing, habit. No caution, consideration, or effort, howsoever repeated, can set me free. I find myself exactly in the state described by St. Paul, Rom. vii. and am always crying out with him, "Who shall deliver me?" What immediately follows, fills me with hope and consolation. I am absolutely certain that my deliverance must come from God; and if he pleases to offer it, I will not be so perverse as to take up needless exceptions to his method. There is a great deal in the person and religion of Christ to engage my attention; and I want deliverance so much, that I could almost accept it from the hands of Mahomet, if he could give it.

I have for some years been giving myself airs in religion, and assuming a part which does by no means belong to me. I fancied that I must necessarily be something extraordinary, because I endeavoured to be so. I am sensible that all the while I advanced in nothing but outside and hypocrisy. I now see the reason of it. The work was my own, and the event accordingly, shame and confusion, and conviction of my own impotence.

I know that I am hateful and contemptible, and yet I cannot help idolizing that painted thing which I myself am; nor do I ever think worse of any man for being so mistaken as to offer me the incense of his esteem.

In points wherem I thought it was clear I could almost stand upon my own defence before God, I daily discover my hypocrisy and infinite defects. "Lord, what is man! in thy sight shall

thee, and be fitted to dwell with thee in the regions of everlasting peace and love."

If any man pretending to be humble, tells me that God has given him a sight of his own frightful ugliness, I can believe him; but not if he pretends to come by his humility in any other way.

I see enough in others, for a ground in all to be humble; and yet this very thing prevents me from being so. I cannot help comparing myself with them instead of the rule of perfection.

I am perpetually looking out for some fitness in myself, some procuring meritorious cause of God's acceptance of me, as if I could never be safe till I could challenge reward at his hands as a debt; and yet I believe this is pure opposition to the gospel scheme, and the very infidelity which St. Paul, in particular levels all his reasonings against, the more dangerous as being the more specious, and at all times the religion of the more sober and rational part of mankind.

I plainly perceive that I am what I think hateful in others, and what I really hate and despise others for.

There can be no repenting, asking forgiveness, or desiring a change upon a general confused apprehension of our unworthiness. We can only come to Christ with a catalogue of our sins in our hands: and if the Holy Spirit does not assist in drawing it up, we shall omit a hundred times more than we set down.

Till we have a full belief and apprehension of the scripture doctrine of the remission of sins, we are under a kind of necessity of denying, extenuating, and explaining away the guilt of them; and this seals us up in blindness, impenitence, and hardness of heart.

If I acquiesce in the act of prayer, without

desiring to receive what I ask for, I never pray.

We are apt to acquiesce in the bare act of prayer, and can be well enough content all our lives to go without the spiritual good things we pray for.—The case is plain, we do not desire them.

I want to sink myself, in my own opinion, truly and sincerely, below other people; and I verily believe, that we can never have any clear sight and knowledge of ourselves and others, till we stand upon lower ground than we are naturally apt to do.

For a great part of my life I did not know that I was poor, and naked, and blind, and miserable. I have known it for some time, without feeling it. Thank God, I now begin to be pinched with it. Stand aside, Pride, for a moment, and let me see that ugly thing——myself.

I know and can tell my sins to God, but to very little purpose, as to any real abhorrence or forsaking of them, unless he is pleased to tell them to me.

I believe the damnableness of sin in others, but not in myself.

Could I bear to be the author of a treatise which should be the means of enlightening and converting thousands, and be without the credit of it, or see it all given to another?

What I stick to as a test, in point of duty or religious perfection, is this: Can I do it of myself? If I can, I conclude at once that it does not come up to what God requires of me.

I do not perceive that I have any real pity for the calamities of others: if they happen in an enemy's country, I rejoice at them, and wish they were greater. If this is not a diabolical temper, what is?

I can make a shift to cheat the world, but I can cheat myself no longer. The inward mask is taken off, at least in part, and I am uneasy till I see more of my own deformity.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, &c.” I had rather enter into the meaning of this saying, and be in full possession of the spirit of it, than be lord of the universe.

O my God! grant me not the turbulent, feverish transports of a sickly fancy, not the swellings of enthusiastic pride; but freedom from the detested rule of passion, and perpetual serenity from an humble, resigned, obedient frame of spirit!

I see and believe the reality and guilt of sin in Christ hanging upon the cross, and am convinced, with infallible certainty, that the scripture lays nothing to the charge of man's nature but what is true; but I cannot say that I feel and hate sin in myself, in any great degree.

I discern clearly, that, in all my dealings and conversations with others, I do not so much desire their salvation as esteem.

I see, very distinctly, that the will and power in me which unites with God, obeys, and loves, is not from myself.

I find, upon strict scrutiny into myself, that I am not so much influenced by a sense of reputation as to deny a persecuted truth: nevertheless, I plainly perceive that, if I could be instrumental in spreading it, the great motive to it would not be love of the truth of Christ, or the souls of men, and that my chief pleasure would arise from the credit of it.

Little children have but one appetite; know what they want, and can be quieted with nothing else. Would to God I were so.

Oh! how many thousands, at this hour, are worshipping God in spirit and truth, and labour-

ing to advance his kingdom! and I still stand idle, cold, and lifeless; tongue-tied and fearful; as fast bound to the world, and as averse to thorough work as ever.

It was not only Pontius Pilate and the Jews, but, my sins, I myself that condemned Christ, that scourged him, and spit upon him, that drove the nails into his hands and feet, and pierced his side, and forced him to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" He consented to all this once. What infinity of baseness, then, to crucify him afresh!

God sometimes gives me a taste of what he will do for me, and takes it away again, to let me see what I cannot do for myself.

Is my retiring to converse with God, a state of enjoyment, or an earnest seeking to him in trouble and self-abasement, from a sense of the greatest of all wants? Or, is it affectation, and a force upon nature, proceeding from no real desire, producing no effect? Or, is it sometimes one, sometimes the other of these, and sometimes a mixture of all three?

It is a blessed prayer, "Oh God! thou knowest that I am in trouble; that I want thee, and desire nothing but thee, and must be for ever miserable without thee."

Oh! when shall I sit down to the rich feast of inward tranquillity, from a settled state of meekness, lowliness, faithfulness to God, and independence on every thing but him.

I begin to have an intimate sense of God's presence, and to transact with him as near me. Blessed be God for it. May he continue and increase it.

Perhaps what I do see and acknowledge of myself, is not the worst by far.

The evil which scripture lays to the charge of

mankind, I feel in myself, and see plainly in others. I see, further, that it is the root and essence of misery; and that, without a real vital change, it is impossible I should ever be happy; and yet, notwithstanding this self-conviction, notwithstanding that scripture tells me that the consequence of an unregenerate nature will be eternal separation from God, I do not perceive that it comes with full weight upon my mind.

I have nothing to do, in my present circumstances, with any man, sect, or opinion. I am sick of a dangerous distemper, and must not stand reading books on the nature of diseases, but look out immediately for a cure, especially as I know of an infallible physician.

Do I bring myself to the touchstone of truth, or make myself the touchstone?

Oh! if the world knew, or I myself knew, what God knows of me, how should I then appear!

It is cause enough for humility, to know that we are not humble.

I find that the chief ingredient of duty, the one steady, invariable principle of true holiness, without which all I do is nothing, yea, no better than sin, has hitherto been much wanting, viz. a prevailing regard to the glory of God.

Many of our useful thoughts die away, without doing their office; vanishing, like bubbles, almost as soon as they appear.

I know I cannot, and if I might I would not, be happy in any other way than by the love of God and his perfections, conformity to his will, desire to enjoy him, and assimilation to him in a will to all goodness. Yet I do not pay a sacred supreme regard to the will of God; I do not set it up as the mark I am aiming at in every thought, word, and action; nor embrace it steadily, instantly, cheerfully; nor live upon it as the food of my soul. I know why I am not happy.

My sins brought Christ to me and me to Christ. O weeping love, O praying love, O working love! but, instead thereof, sloth, indifference, coldness, selfishness.

If God would leave me to my own choice, I know I should desire above all things to continue in his hands, and be wholly at his disposal.

I wear a mask to myself; and for my life cannot help fancying that I am what I would seem to be, and I know I am not.

If any man were to entrust me with a sum for the use of others, and I could secrete the whole or part of it, without it being known, my conscience would not let me do it; I could never be guilty of such baseness. I am sensible that God does so put talents into my hands, and knows to a farthing what I give or keep back; and yet I am not so scrupulous and exact with regard to him, nor anxious to keep a just account. What can be the meaning of this? And why is conscience so unfeeling and false to its office, where it is concerned? I cannot fathom the depth of this thought; I cannot estimate my guilt; I stand amazed at my contempt of God, and shrink back from myself with horror.

Aged 63.—I have made experiment what life is. The retrospect is very mortifying; and I should neither be able to bear up against it, nor endure the little time that is to come, without Jesus.

The dreadful and ever-memorable earthquake at Lisbon! It is man, and not God, that throws nature into convulsions. O, my soul, art thou an earth-shaker!

Every hour comes to us charged with duty; and the moment it is past, returns to heaven to register itself, how spent. My hours, how trifled, sauntered, dozed, sensualized, sinned away!

I should be sorry to have it known what I am,

how little I know, and what I have been doing in the world; and yet I am sure I swell with self-conceit, long for and expect applause, and catch greedily at it, where I know it is falsely given.—Horrid depravity and meanness of soul!

It is hard to sit down in the lowest room; not because I am bidden, or to save appearances, but because I know it to be my place.

I do not think of myself according to what I know of myself.

Would I choose that God should take me out of the world, to rescue me from a temptation which he sees would be too hard for me, and to prevent my falling into sin? If not, I am either fearless of sin, or immoderately fond of life, or both.

I am horribly proud without ground or pretence, and with great cause for humiliation. I know this, and still I am horribly proud.

I see in other sinners what I am; in Jesus what I should be.

Checked, because soon to pray, and for the ease of my own mind in the duty, more than from any pure principle, or steady sacred regard to God.

I have just enough to keep a sickly hope alive, but not the sense and enjoyment of spiritual health.

I can forgive others more easily than myself. But, query, whether this is not rather the effect of pride, to find I am no better, than real humiliation. For true compunction, repentance towards God by a work of the Spirit, is for sin as sin, and for all sin, secret as well as open. I have reason to think that I grieve and feel much more for a sin which is seen and observed, than for a greater which is not.

I should not care if all the world saw me in,

if I could be sure that God did not. And why do I dread his knowledge of me? Not so much from a general concern for having offended so gracious and good a Being, as fear of his punishment.

Whatever graces I pray for, whatever good I do, is too much with a view to self, for the ease and satisfaction of my mind, for reputation, to preserve my own good opinion, with too little regard to the glory of God, and the benefit of others.

If I had been less a sinner, I should probably have known less of Christ, and of my obligation to him than I do; and without the knowledge of Christ saving me from the curse and ruin of my sin, I am sure I should have been less concerned for it, and afraid of it, than I am.

I never was thankful as I ought, for the common blessings of providence, for health and abundance; and, behold! I am for pain, and think I could be so in want. Whose work is this?

I see the devil's hook, and yet cannot help nibbling at his bait.

I can be courteous, humane, beneficent, and abstain from outward sin with hard struggling; but who shall make me humble, charitable, and pure in heart?

I believe I am not what I should be; I believe I shall be what I am not; I believe in the power of God; I believe in my own weakness.

Inactive and silent, for fear of giving offence; for ease and quiet; for want of love and real concern for the spiritual good of others; and all from a root of unbelief.

The evil which I know and feel in myself, though not denied, causes no suitable dislike or self-abhorrence: what I see, or suppose to be in

others, I am too apt heartily to despise them for. What blindness, pride, and malevolence!

I can say truly, I have great need of Christ: thank God, I can say boldly, I have a great Christ for my need.

The world in my heart is a worse distemper than any that Christ cured. O Jesu!

What shall I do to live one day without sin?

Four things are a grief of heart to me: that I do not love God more; nor hate sin more; nor abhor myself more; and that the world generally thinks so much better of me, as a Christian, than I deserve.

“Mortify your members.” I have not had this end sufficiently in view, and hardly ever thought duly of any such thing.

At the age of sixty, I thought it humility enough to confess myself a threescore-year old sinner! little imagining that I must say the same if I lived to be fourscore.

Much forgiven, and little love: How is it?

Is there any thing in my heart or life displeasing to God? The question must be answered.

I am continually looking for the substantial ground, and adequate meritorious cause of justification in myself, whereas it is solely in Christ; and though I am answerable to him for the gratitude, fidelity, and loyalty of a pure heart, it is not the cause, but the effect and consequence of my salvation by him.

Jan. 23, 1765.—It was evident to me, that, for a worldly advantage, I could and would do and forbear what I do not for God and Heaven.

Feb. 15, 1765.—Is there, is there, O my soul, a call this day to God, to his obedience, to purity of heart, to love, to an humble hope of being owned by him, and living with him for ever?—There is.

If I knew that Christ died for me only, it would

not kindle in me one spark of love, without a divine operation on my soul. I have sufficient obligations to him, acknowledge the debt, and would fain pay some part of it from a feeling of gratitude, but find my heart is cold as a stone.

“ My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” So I said, *January 16, 17, 1767*, for one whole night and day, and thought I should never lose the experience; but, at the same time, the Song of Moses, for deliverance at the Red Sea, was presented to my mind: “ In three days they came to Marah.” In one day it was Marah with me; all was gone!

Christ has removed the burden of sin from my conscience a thousand times; and as often as he takes it off, I lay it on again.

Read and pray, think and pray, pray, and fear not. Lord God, thou knowest my prayer is for mercy, and strength to keep mercy; to believe and rejoice; to believe and adore; to believe and love; to believe and have no will but to please thee; to believe and die to the world: and thou knowest, that I prostrate myself before thee as a sinful, helpless, creature; placing no confidence in my own strength, attainments, willing or running, but trusting wholly in thy grace and power for the pardon of all my sins, and the supply of all my wants.

God help me! I am so foolish as to expect happiness, with a great remainder of sin about me, if not all I was born with.

So long as there is one speck of sin remaining, perfect happiness is impossible.

Well may I, who am so poor in love and peace-
ableness, polluted in heart, destitute of holy zeal,
be required to be poor in spirit, to mourn, to be
meek, to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Feb. 23, 1767.—A call was given me from the Spirit, to see sin in all its guilt, malignity, and curse; truly to abhor it; to have my very soul bent against it, and to dread it more than death.

No slave in Turkey ever wished for deliverance more than I do for Christ's freedom.

Oh! how happy should I be, what cause of rejoicing, what ground of adoration and thankfulness shall I have, when I perceive as clearly within myself that the love of God is uppermost in my heart, and takes place of all other loves, as I do that I love myself above any thing in the world.

I like Christ's work so well, that I do not care how long I live to do it, nor how soon I die, that I may know and serve him better.

If I do not devote myself to the obedience of God with full purpose of heart, and steady, sole regard to his will, no number of acts, religious or moral, will recommend me to his favour; my whole life is sin.

Let others boast of self-power and despise help, I have great need to pray.

Aug. 13, 1765.—I had for many hours a strong, lightsome, and overpowering sense of joy, without any preceding cause of reading, thought, meditation, or action of any kind, to be the ground of it; but found myself all on a sudden drawn to God, laid at the Redeemer's feet in faith, admiration, and thankfulness; desiring to be led by the Spirit, and making professions of love and obedience. I know such comforts are not to be lived upon, nor proofs of a high state of spirituality. Supposing them to be real influxes of the Spirit, they are to be considered as calls to greater sincerity, circumspection, and faithfulness, if not forerunners of trial and sufferings.

I should be better contented to be what I am,

a fallen, helpless creature, if my pride would let me.

I never was thrifty for myself; and if I had, I should have been covetous. Thrift for God shall now be thought of, and that will make me generous and free as air.

Though I have one foot in the grave, and am sensible that the world has left me, yet I do not find that I have left it; but still delude myself with a vain hope of some kind of enjoyment from it, and remain too much under the power of sensuality.

I had rather be cast into the burning fiery furnace, or the lions' den, than suffer sin to lie quietly in my heart.

I do not know the person whose good opinion I do not naturally love more than their soul.

I had a full conviction that I stand more in awe of P.L. than God.

I have conscience enough to make me uneasy in sin, but not enough to keep me from it.

In the case of others, I am apt to be angry with the sinner and not the sin; in my own, with the sin at most, but not the sinner.

I am strict and scrupulous in matters which do not much thwart my will, nor bear too hard upon flesh and blood. So pride thrives, and conscience is kept from being over-troublesome.

I am often thinking whether I renounce sin upon right grounds. Do I renounce it upon any?

The world may well excuse me for wearing a mask to hide my guiltiness from it. I put the same cheat full as much upon myself, am still in the attempt of painting and white-washing to God.

The world says of me, "a good sort of man, but a little too strict and precise." My real cha-

racter is rather, "he has not the fear of God before his eyes, neither doth he abhor any thing that is evil."

I can see nothing without the Spirit's eyes, but as it were in a mist. I am fully persuaded of the truth of scripture, and what it tells me of sin, myself, God, Christ, and eternity; but with little more effect and true feeling, than what I know and believe of some remote country in which I have no manner of concern.

If things and providences are not according to my mind, I can dissemble; but do what I will, cannot be pleased. Let the thought of my being displeased with God be ever so hard, it is better to know it.

I can truly say of every one I know, I hope they are better than myself.

I am continually looking at the clouds to know whether I should be pleased with God.

You tell me that the remembrance of sin should be accompanied with self-loathing, and a child-like ingenuous concern for having displeased God, rather than a slavish dread of punishment. I see the reason and excellence of such godly sorrow, but plainly perceive that if I was secure from all fear of punishment for my sins, I could easily be reconciled to myself for having committed them. Since this is the case with me, I have great cause to be thankful that I am not hidden from myself; and I am sure there is no other way of putting things upon a better footing with my soul, than knowing what I am. The Lord keep me close to this prayer in all sincerity; "Try me, O God, and search the ground of my heart."

Sin is still strong, with the grave opening, and ready to close upon me.

I could tear my heart out, for not being God's. I have been deceived all my life by sayings of

philosophers, scraps of verses, and most of all by the pride of my own heart, into an opinion of self-power, which the scripture plainly tells me, and I find by repeated fruitless efforts that I have not.

I have great cause to be sorry and ashamed, that any who have a much less income than myself, should be more contented; or that any who have more pains and sufferings, should bear them better.

I have sinned enough, and long enough; and, though I would give the world to sin no more, dare not say, I shall not.

I think so much of what others should do, that I cannot find time to bestow one thought of that kind upon myself.

If the devil could take Christ from me, I should be ready for any wickedness.

The more I am terrified with a sight and sense of sin, the more precious Christ is, and the faster I lay hold on him.

My apprehension of sin is faint, and chiefly speculative: if I had a true sense and feeling of it, I should be much more pained with it than I am with the stone, and gladly submit to any method of cure.

My death will be no more regarded by the world than that of a worm or a fly; but it is of infinite consequence to me.

If I could make myself patient, resigned, and thankful, I had rather that God should do it, as it would be a token and proof of his love, and favourable presence with me.

If I felt for the disorder and danger of my soul, as I do for my body in pain and sickness, I should look out every way for help; be a thousand times more anxious for its recovery than I am; submit to any method of cure, and say unfeignedly to

God, "ure, feri, seca;" that is, burn, strike, cut.

Whenever I do any good, instead of applauding myself, or supposing that Christ will place it to my account in a way of merit, I should consider what more I might have done, and have not.

When I am well, I think I can put myself into the hands of God, and be content to be at his disposal; when pains come, I had rather choose for myself, and am impatient to be at ease.

If a person whom I esteemed and loved, and absolutely depended on for my support and happiness, were to prescribe a rule of conduct to me, I should conform to it with pleasure, and hardly ever deviate from it, especially if I knew he had his eye always upon me. Why, then, am I not so affected towards God, but because I value his favour less, or stand less in awe of him, or judge the performance of his commands to be impossible, or trust unwarrantably in his mercy, and all from a prevalent corruption of heart and nature.

Lord, forgive my sins, and suffer me to keep them. Is this the meaning of my prayers?

I fly from myself to God, I appeal from myself to Christ.

How sad to find reason to say, I see God in every thing but myself.

I see and own my obligations to Christ, but have not near so lively a sense of them as I have of much inferior kindnesses received from another hand. Perhaps the reason may be, partly, that I consider his benefits as necessary emanations of divine goodness; partly, because he requires things which seem hard to me, taking up the cross, forsaking all, mortification of self, a change of nature and will; and this damps my grati-

tude to him, though in all reason it should increase it.

As earthly, sensual, devilish as ever, and worse than my former self by an accursed hypocrisy, Son of David have mercy upon me, and heal my soul!

All I do, is for self: reading, meditating, composing; all terminate in self-gratification, with hardly any view to usefulness or general benefit.

If it were put to my choice, whether I would go immediately to heaven, or stay longer in this world, I should choose the former; but then I believe it would be rather to avoid being thought a fool, and to be rid of the vexations I meet with here than in love to Christ, and desire of the company and delights of heaven.

I find it very difficult to conceive how God can show mercy to me, without showing it to all.

I should think myself undone, if I might not pray.

The will of God is so dear and sacred to me, as his will, in the love of God, and with a sincere desire to please him, that I would not oppose it, if he was not present or privy to my disobedience, or I knew certainly that he would not inflict any punishment upon me for it.

I do acts of love, without love. I do not perceive it to be a nature in me; and I am sure that if ever I am possessed of it, it must be by a supernatural change. Here is work for prayer.

October 26, 1766.—Come, my heart, draw nigh to God for remission and renovation, with fulness of desire for a full work: Come now, this moment, as also to Jesus, for all is cleansing, for washing in his blood, for love, for fidelity. Deliver thyself into his hands, and beg of him to purge his floor in thee, and make thee pure wheat, fit for his garner. And, O Spirit of holi-

ness, do thou bring me, in repentance and faith, to the blood of sprinkling; sanctify my spirit, soul, and body; and baptize me with thy fire unto obedience and love of the truth.

I puzzle myself about the prophecies, especially the Apocalypse; and am often prying into futurity, but do not advert enough to what I may certainly know without a prophecy,—what and where I shall be within a few years at the most, if I suffer sin to keep possession of me; if I do not abhor and cast it from me in the fear of God; if I do not pluck out the right-eye, and cut off the right-hand; if I do not humble myself deeply before God; cry earnestly for mercy, and yield myself to him unfeignedly, and with the utmost sincerity of intention for newness of heart and spirit.

I want forgiveness of one sin, and strength against it; but God wants to do more for me, and will forgive and deliver me from none till I make further search into myself, and bring my sins before him all together.

God hears my prayers for deliverance from one sin, by holding me under it till I discover more, and am led to the root of all sin in an evil heart and evil nature.

I cannot work repentance in myself, I cannot purify my heart, I cannot change my nature.

“The blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel;” crieth louder in the ears of God for mercy to mankind, than that of Abel did against Cain for vengeance. Why does it not cry as loud in my ears, and in the depth of my heart, for gratitude, for love, for faithful and true allegiance, for zeal and fidelity in the service of my Lord, for obedience to every command, and to all that is written in his book? Lord Jesus, thou knowest that can only be in a day of

power, when thou sayest, "Ephphatha," and speakest thyself into my heart. Oh! speak; come quickly to a sinner bound hand and foot, and lying at the point of death.

My prayers can only be answered in the way of a severe mortification, and I would have the business done without.

December 1, 1766.—It was suggested to my heart and conscience, as by a heavenly voice, that God's command is for an absolute, immediate renunciation of sin, and a perpetual, full obedience; and that every thing short of such a purpose, is prevarication, rebellion, misery, death.

The shame and disgrace of a certain error in life, though unattended with guilt, gives me more sensible compunction and sorrow of heart than all the sins I ever committed. I feel in this instance how I should be affected towards God on account of sin, and am not.

That error, seizing upon the mind as irretrievable, is a resemblance of hell; and, with the blessing of God, may be the means of keeping me out of it, by leading me to consider what other errors may be retrievable.

Shut up in self, like a toad in a hole, and as full of venom.

It is my own fault, if I do not profit by the defects of others, by taking occasion from them to prove and exercise my own virtue. The question should be, what kind of sentiment or behaviour does the case require.

What has the day done for me? Has it set me nearer heaven? Has it brought in an increase of knowledge and virtue? Has it been devoted to the service of God and man, or spent in sensuality and self-pleasing?

I am grievously offended with my parishioners, because they will not contribute to my reputa-

tion in the world, by being converted by me. Lord, let thy Spirit go with me into the depth of my heart, to show me more and more of its deceit and desperate wickedness.

I plainly perceive that I have horribly abused gospel-grace; if not to an allowance of sin, yet to make me less fearful of it, and keep off the Spirit's reproof.

In all the good I do, I have little thought but of pleasing and enjoying myself. The inquiry is, how shall I find my account in such an action, or course of life, in respect of ease and self-satisfaction; and if duty will not pay me something in hand, it is a hundred to one I baulk it. The point should be, not what will please myself, but God. The time and manner of enjoyment may be left to him. It appears also, from hence, that supposing virtue to be its own reward, is not the way to secure the interests of virtue, but destructive of Christian hope, and an unsteady, fallacious principle of action, which would oftener lead us from what is right than to it.

I shall never think I live, till I desire to live no longer.

Some fix their eyes so much upon the atonement of the cross, as to be blind to the example of it; others, so much upon the example, as to undervalue the atonement of it. It is a happy art, and the Christian's work to avoid both extremes: for my own part, I find I am more willing that Christ should take me unto himself for the communication of his benefits, than I am to take him into my heart with his pure commands, strict discipline, self-denial, and suffering spirit.

If proclaiming my life before men and angels, will be proclaiming the glory of saving grace, let it be done. I do not desire to have one sinful act, word, or thought concealed. Forgiveness

through the blood of Christ, will be to myself an endless spring of admiration, love, and thanksgiving; and the blessed company of heaven will join with me in praising God and the Lamb for it to all eternity.

CHAP. II.

THE SCRIPTURES.

I DREAMED I saw Christ curing a distempered person. I immediately applied to him for my own healing. He asked in what respect. I answered, I want spiritual healing and forgiveness of sins. He seemed to doubt whether I truly desired it. I fell upon my knees, and besought him earnestly; on which he said, with a gracious look, "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go, and sin no more." I was transported at the words, and wept tears of joy in great abundance. My reflection on waking, was, that I had as full assurance from the word of God of the remission of sins, and as plain a command to sin no more, as if it was spoken to me by a voice from heaven, or by Christ himself in person: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

St. Austin, in his Confessions, lib. 12. cap. 26. delivers himself to this purpose: "If I had been enjoined by God to write the book of Genesis, I should have chosen to have composed in it such a manner, for depth and eloquence, that they who did not understand creation, should nevertheless not be able to reject it for being above their

capacity; and that whatever different truths any man, or number of men might discover, or have discovered to them, should be contained in the conciseness of the text." This shows a vast reach of thought in St. Austin, and opens to us an amazing extent of truth in scripture, and seems to have been his real opinion of the book of Genesis.

The scripture is light and truth from God; a clew put into my hands by him, to guide me through the mazes of darkness and error; the instrument he works with in the destruction of sin and purification of my nature: and if I do but receive it as such, I am sure he will bless it to me in such ways as he knows to be best for me. My only prayer to the Father of mercies and God of all consolation, is, that he would give me a full conviction and certain apprehension of my faith and sincerity in the use of it; and all the rest, the measure of illumination, sensible comforts, and worldly accommodations, I leave cheerfully to him.

Some people lie at catch with scripture, for examples or expressions to countenance their corruption.

The design of the Christian religion is to change men's views, lives, and tempers. But how? By the superior excellence of its precepts? By the weight of its exhortations, or the promise of its rewards?—No; but by convincing men of their wretched guilt, blindness, and impotence; by inculcating the necessity of remission, supernatural light and assistance, and actually promising and conveying these blessings. And if it does not prove its divinity by its efficacy, let it be condemned as an imposture. This was one of its most operative convincing proofs at the beginning, and certainly is its greatest abiding proof.

The scripture sends me to my heart; and my heart, well known and considered, sends me back again to the scripture, with great advantage for the understanding of it.

It may be a dangerous snare to me, and I may go mourning all my life long, if I expect any thing from God that he has never promised.

Eve was sadly mistaken in Cain, when she said she had gotten the man Jehovah, (the promised seed) and had got no better than a murderer. Perhaps this is a common mistake; and men think they have Christ, when they have nothing in them but the spirit of Cain.

If we had a voice from heaven, it would reveal no new scripture to us; it would send us to the law and the testimony. Why, then, should we not adhere to the word, and make a diligent use of it without? We should, if we believed it.

The religion of most men is fixed from nature; that is, worldly ease and convenience, before they come to the reading of the scripture. The consequence is plain. In all points where it exceeds their standard, it will be pared away.

With what a mixture of fear, reverence, and holy joy, should we open the Bible! the book of truth and happiness! God's heart open to man! And yet the whole, and every part of it secreted from him, and hid under an impenetrable veil till he opens his heart to God.

Before the coming of Christ, the law and the gospel were in one; but the latter so hid under the former, that it was matter of some difficulty to discern it. After his coming, the gospel part of the law was taken out of it, and separated from it; and by being placed apart, in a conspicuous point of view, reflected back its own lustre upon the law, discovered plainly that it was in it, and gave it a strength and vigour which it never had before.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; consequently, the wisdom of God is foolishness with man. The consequence of both is plain: all who adhere to divine wisdom and illumination, must necessarily be fools in the eye of the world.

The scripture is unto us what the star was to the wise men; but if we spend all our time in gazing upon it, observing its motions, and admiring its splendour, without being led to Christ by it, the use of it will be lost to us.

Perhaps it may be a good rule, in the reading of scripture, not to run from one passage to another, or suppose it a duty to read a certain portion of it every day, but to dwell upon particular passages, till they have in some measure done their office.

Every one should apply scripture to himself, as if it was written for him only.

Scripture-reading is a feast indeed, when we find in ourselves a disposition to receive it in truth and simplicity.

“Son of man, can these dry bones live? Lord God, thou knowest.” Show me a thought so interesting, so profound, so impressive, and so well expressed in a pagan author.

Poison secretly conveyed into an antidote, must be fatal, because no further cure will be looked for. How many themselves poison their great antidote the Bible!

Look full at scripture, especially the beatitudes. Do not be afraid of it: it is a sovereign cure for a sick soul: but then it must not be adulterated, as it is, with the spurious mixtures of human reason.

We go to the commentators for the most part, because we are afraid to take Christ and his apostles upon their own word. If we had a

simple faith, we should seldom want others to explain their meaning.

It is an awful, dreadful thing to come full into the light of scripture, and be upon a foot of sincerity with God.

Our spiritual progress is greatly hindered by running from one thing to another. When any thought, discovery, or passage of scripture makes a strong impression, and, as it were, seizes upon the mind, consider it as of God, and give it time and opportunity to work its effect, by excluding every thing else for a season. It would be of infinite use to keep an exact history of such inward workings; their rise, continuance, declension, and revival: and the communication and comparison of many such histories, would not only afford matter of curious knowledge, great improvement, and mutual comfort; but, perhaps, be one of the strongest evidences of Christ's mission and the truth of scripture.

The scriptures are so darkened with expositions, and buried under such a heap of rubbish, that it is a kind of labour even for the Spirit of God to remove it. The minds of the poor, not being sophisticated by the false glosses which obscure the plain sense of scripture, are in a much better condition for understanding it than the learned.

It is no objection to the truth of scripture, that so many different sects find their own opinions in it; for, first, if they were all agreed in their sense of it, and submission to it, the testimony it brings against the blindness and corruption of mankind, would be weakened: secondly, it is no disparagement to a looking-glass, that all see something in it that is pleasing to themselves; the glass is true, the eye is partial.

It is said of Socrates, that when he believed he

was divinely admonished to do any thing, it was impossible to make him take a contrary resolution. How does this example shame those who pretend to receive and believe the scripture as a divine direction, and yet for the most part trample it under their feet!

It is the great design of the scripture to teach the best to despair of being self-saved; the worst not to despair of being saved by Christ, and to offer all the help they want.

The scripture was written to be transcribed into the heart; and it has its effect, when the heart is in such full consent and agreement therewith, that the scripture might have been copied from it.

It is impossible, from the nature of things, that so burdensome and expensive an institution, as that of Moses was, should ever have been received by the Jews, but upon sufficient evidence of its being divine. See *Stillingfleet's Orig. Sac.* vol. ii. cap. i. p. 116.

The design of revelation, is to inform mankind that they are in a state of ruin, and under the divine displeasure by reason of sin, and to propose the means of their recovery to the favour of God and the hope of eternal life, by faith in a Redeemer, and submission to his teaching and authority.

Setting aside St. Paul, I should think Mr. Law right in his notion of regeneration; but when I look into the scripture, I am sure he is wrong.

Many assent to the truth of scripture, and make use of it to paint their faces, but will not suffer it to get within them, nor come too near the heart.

How can I be discontented or low-spirited, want employment or enjoyment, when I have the scriptures to go to?

I have the writings of a most invaluable estate

in my hands, made over to me as my own property; and whenever I open the New Testament, and think of the unsearchable riches of Christ therein conveyed to every believer, I may look down with contempt on all earthly possessions, and deserve to forfeit my interest in the gospel-treasure if I do not.

There is but one kind of happiness in nature for intelligent creatures, viz. that by which God is happy: God is happy in his own will; therefore intelligent creatures can only be happy by their knowledge of, and conformity to, that will. The question, Where is this knowledge to be had? is easily answered; and the necessity of a revelation for this purpose, together with the helps it offers for bringing mankind to that conformity, appear at once.

CHAP. III.

GOD.

ALL spiritual happiness is in God, and inseparable from him; and there is no possibility of the creature's receiving any but by being in him. The gospel only teaches the necessity of this union, and the precious means and mystery of it by Christ.

The mercy of God, is the first article of every man's creed; but the different manner of understanding and applying it, makes an essential, infinite difference in the characters of men, and constitutes either religion or atheism.

I believe the universal immediate presence of

God; that he is the foundation, life, and essence of all creation, and of every part and particle of it; or, in St. Paul's words, that he is above all, and through all, and in all; but still he is absent, and infinitely removed from me, unless I find him in my own heart. The greatest knowledge of his being and attributes will avail me nothing, if I do not also know him as my Father in Christ: and, as such, favouring, loving, and blessing me, in time and to all eternity.

I do not think it is in the power of God to make any thing to be our happiness but himself.

The mercies of God refused, aggravate guilt, and draw on great ruin; but what then? Must not God, therefore, make a tender of his mercy; and must none be the better for it, because some will be the worse?

Nothing but love can unite with, and enjoy love. The nature of God must be in us before it can be a good to us.

All glory is so properly and solely God's, that none can belong to any other; and whatever creature, man, or angel, takes any to itself, in so doing, discovers the nature, and falls into the condemnation of the devil.

What do I ask of God? Happiness confusedly? Or himself as the only ground of it?

No rational creature can be truly happy in the enjoyment of any thing, so long as there is any thing better to be enjoyed. This thought, if true, leads directly to God.

The will of God is God; and to love one without the other, is impossible.

If we look only at our fellow-creatures, we shall find, or take but too many occasions of pride and self-exaltation.

The way to be humbled, is to look upwards to God. If we think greatly of his majesty, purity,

and infinity of all excellence, it will give us such a striking view of our vileness and absolute unworthiness, that we shall think it hardly possible for any to be lower than ourselves.

The angels are swallowed up in the will of God, as their centre of rest and full enjoyment, and have not one thought out of, or beyond it. If they should give their wills unto any thing else, but for a moment, they would lose their name, nature, and happiness.

Though God reveals his own character in his word, he reserves to himself the revelation of it to us by his word. Whenever he discovers himself effectually and savingly, the heart knows it is he, and not the mere word that hath done it.

I long to know more of that Being who made the world, and to whom I have so many obligations.

It is easy to say, Blessed be God in every thing; but where is the man that is always pleased with God?

How happy should we be, if we loved God but a little.

There is no possibility of happiness but in the will of God, and in the discovery of it as his goodness to mankind, and the only way in which he can communicate it.

“God and enough,” says B. The reason why we never have enough, or know not what we would have, is, because we neither have, nor desire to have, God.

If we had self-power, or could be self-saved, we should be gods to ourselves; and therefore God, for his own glory, and to preserve us from this cursed idolatry, keeps all power in his own hands.

With us, commonly, sin is no sooner past than forgotten. To God, it is alike present at all times,

and he always sees us in the very act of what we did fifty years ago.

Those who do not choose to be like God, will certainly make God like themselves; as regardless of sin, and as little concerned to punish it, as they think he should be.

God has made the only thing which constitutes our happiness,—resignation to, and love of, his will, common to all.

“Forgive me all my sin:”—An unreasonable and shameful petition to any but God; for though all sin is infinitely aggravated by being against God, yet the only hope of sinners is, that it is against God.

We dishonour God greatly, and deny his nature, by not expecting great things from him.

God keeps us from much evil, by the secret methods of his providence, or prudential considerations respecting our worldly interests or convenience, while in us there is no sanctification.

God sometimes suffers the temptation to be very great, as in the case of Adam and Eve, and the Prophet, 1 Kings xiii. but his command is sacred, and the consequence of breaking it is terrible.

God's punishments and favours, though delayed, are as certain in his own time and manner, as his eternal unchangeable justice and goodness.

The highest angels know that they are kept in being, and supported every moment in their state of rectitude, by the will and power of God; and this sense of their dependence is their glory, perfection, happiness, song of praise, and the ground of their love and adoration.

God manifests himself in all his works, benefits, and blessings, and hides himself again in his providential crosses and afflictions, and the pains and sorrows of life. All is just as it should be:

he tells us as plainly that we were not made for a happiness in this world, as he does that he made and governs it.

It is hard to say whether God manifests or hides himself more.

If God would give me all in heaven and earth, without himself, I should be extremely and for ever miserable.

I am bound to thank God for my being; for the continuance and support of my life; and for innumerable benefits respecting this world; but most of all for making me capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying him; calling me to this happiness, and qualifying me for it.

God is my maker, preserver, redeemer, sanctifier. Do I delight to consider him under these characters?

If I was to be assured that there is no God, or that he does not govern the world, nor regard what is doing in it, nor hear prayer, nor promise immortality and prepare us for it, how would it affect me? Should I think myself undone, as being deprived of all my hope and comfort, my best friend, and the dearest object of my heart?

God is my end, Christ is my way, the Spirit my guide.

God has the same knowledge, inspection, and care of every one, as if there was but one.

It is my duty to keep myself at an awful distance from God's natural attributes, and to approach as near as possible to his moral.

God gives his help, not by forcing, but secretly inclining and changing the will, and bringing it with freedom and full consent to a conformity with his own.

If I pleased God, I am sure he would please me.

I shall be a happy man when I cannot please myself without pleasing God.

He is God to govern his own world, and not I.

What God commands or ordains, is both the work and enjoyment of the day.

God is happy in his own will, and makes it known to us that we may be happy in it too.

If I am not happy in the will of God, I can be happy in nothing else; I shall be emphatically cursed with my own.

Instead of stretching our thoughts to the mystery of creation, and soaring above the stars when we think of God, which for the most part is setting him at a distance from us, it may be of great use to consider him as present in the room, or little spot where we are, and as it were circumscribed within it, in all his glory, majesty, and purity.

I need not envy any man his station, or wish for a better spot on earth than where I am to find God in: he is found only in the heart; and in the heart, every where, and wherever he is found, he makes a paradise.

It is the will of God that we should put him upon doing moral impossibilities, and till we do, we neither know God nor ourselves. Men judge of us by our actions, God by our motives.

How can we complain, or think hardly of God for any thing he does, or have the least doubt of his goodness, when he has given his Son to die for us.

God is no where to me, if he is not in my heart.

God denies us nothing, but with a design to give us something better: If he forbids a lust, it is to give himself. O wretched man! that ever the heart should be so blind, so hard, so long in choosing.

My greatest obligation to God, next to the gift of Jesus Christ and his Spirit, is for commanding me to love him with all the heart, &c.

Thank God for his restraint; thank God for laying it on the heart; thank God for the gospel motives and help to do his will.

Certainly God had some further design in giving me my life, and preserving it by continual miracles, within and without, than that I should eat, drink, and die.

If I could help myself, I should choose to have God do it. What less can be a ground of trust, dread, love?

What is rebellion in the state to rebellion against God?

We ourselves stint God in the measure of spiritual gifts. He has no measure.

I have always known that my happiness is in God's power, but I did not consider enough that he himself is that happiness.

God takes the same care of me, and I ought to have the same regard to him, as if there was no other being in nature, but him and myself.

He who sends the storm steers the vessel.

All creation, and every part of it, is, more or less, (and perhaps originally more than now) a copy or resemblance of God; a manifestation of his nature and operations; the instrument of his goodness; executioner of his justice; or a monitor of man's duty. The degenerate creature, man, in his present capability of the divine likeness; the several tribes of brutes, in their formation, qualities, acts, and instincts; the inanimate parts of the creation, in their attractions, processes, and offices; all are something, and speak something of God, in the universal language of nature. The sun, for instance, to say nothing of its nature as fire, is a lively emblem of God's universal operative presence: and our Saviour's saying, "how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," is an affecting

illustration of the divine **STORAGE**, and his own yearning compassion, in the fond workings of that creature. But who, in this dark state of things, can trace the thought in its full extent, or discover the resemblance, ends, and uses of but a few particulars? This will be the delightful employment of glorified Spirits, and the growing wonder of eternity.

How is it possible for God to make an intelligent creature to receive its happiness from any thing but himself; since this would not only be giving his glory to another, but in some sort an annihilation of himself: for whatever constitutes or confers our happiness, will, in the reason of the thing, be our God; and we cannot be persuaded to place our desires, or pay our homage any where else.

God offers himself in Christ to be our portion, possession, and happiness: and the man who can be contented with any thing less, is neither worthy to receive him, nor qualified to enjoy him.

When I consider the God who fills heaven and earth as intimately present with, and, as it were, circumscribed within my heart, I am seized with dread and astonishment. I dare not lie to him, nor prevaricate with him; I am afraid to speak, or even almost to think before him.

It is better to believe the goodness of God, notwithstanding the untowardness of some appearances in the state and nature of man, than to deny those appearances to be what they are, upon a supposition that they are not to be reconciled with the goodness of God.

CHAP. IV.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

WHO is there almost that does not wish God was less pure in his nature, less strict in his commands, less exact in his justice, less terrible in his vengeance, than he is? And is not this wishing that he was what he is not, and disliking what he is? And what is this, if the soul durst speak out the horrid truth, but even hating God?

Nothing in nature is more unknown to man than himself.

There are few men upon earth, so despised, disregarded, and forgotten, as God is by the generality of men. "The peace of God passeth all understanding;" and yet, when a few simple souls stand out, declaring boldly that they have it, but cannot explain it, all the rest of the world cries out upon them for fools and enthusiasts.

It is the common opinion with regard to natural evil, that it is sufficiently accounted for, if happiness prevails upon the whole; that this mixed state of things is unavoidable, and therefore no impeachment of the goodness of God; and that no man, or number of men, however miserable, have any right to complain, if happiness is the result of the general system. I do not understand this: it seems to me little less than blasphemy. How is it possible for so much as one conscious being to be miserable, but by its own fault?

If man is a sinner, why does he not believe it? And if he is not, why does he confess it? What a strange jumble of blindness and hypocrisy!

We confess what we do not really believe, and yet really are what we confess.

We aggravate the faults of others, to have a pretence for hating or despising them, and for the pleasure of self-comparison.

Striving against nature is like holding a weather-cock with one's hand; as soon as the force is taken off, it veers again with the wind.

Whoever thinks he can acquit himself to God, has wrong notions of God, of himself, of duty, of sin. Either he considers God only under the single idea of mercy, or he knows nothing of his own great corruption, or contracts duty into a narrow compass, or fixes the guilt of sin at a low rate.

The happiest and most envied life, taken from childhood to old age, will not bear a review. There is not a year, perhaps not a month, perhaps not an hour of it, which a wise man would choose to live over again.

All our happiness, as mere men, consists in forgetting ourselves. If we think, we are miserable.

A conscious reflecting being, eagerly coveting happiness, and seeking it every-where but in God, is the monster of the universe. God could no more make such a creature, than he can un-make himself.

We are as vain as if we were in full possession of our original perfection; and our being vain is a certain proof that we are not.

An impatient desire to know, and have more than is proper for us in our present state, often hinders us from using what we have, and knowing what we might; and is to many a source of great delusion.

The heart of man pants everlastingly after

distinction; and our pride only changes its appearance.

Mine, I find, is grown to a goodly size under the show of humility.

God may say to every self-righteous man, as he did in the case of Sodom: "show me ten; yea, one perfect good action, and for the sake of it I will not destroy."

The sour fruit that Adam ate, will be ever and anon arising upon our stomachs, even in our best estate.

So long as we think we are what we are not, and have what we have not, we can receive nothing at the hands of God; and reformation is impossible.

We can no more bear to be told of our faults by God than man; and if we durst think it, are in reality as much disgusted at the one as the other.

What is the reason of the frequent uneasiness betwixt man and wife; and of their sometimes giving full scope to their passions upon very trifling occasions; even amongst persons who behave with decency, calmness, and general good temper to all others? It is because they think their reputation safe in each other's hands, and therefore are not afraid to discover their natural sourness and malignity. This shows that neither love of rectitude, nor the fear of God is at the bottom of that poor thing we call virtue; since we exert it least where it is most due, and where it would be most serviceable to ourselves, only because we think we can do so without disgrace.

The boasted demonstration of a future state of rewards and punishments, from the unequal distribution of things in this life, is annihilated upon the Christian scheme, which supposes all to be sinners, and, as such, liable to condemnation;

and, therefore, whatever good we receive from God, in any period of our existence, is grace, and not retribution.

Charity does not oblige us to think any man good, because Christ says "there is none good."

Observe man's depravity in his punishment. In our present condition we can only relish earthly things, and they all conspire to disappoint our expectations. There must, therefore, of necessity be a change both in the faculty and the object, if ever we be happy: and our business here, is not to accumulate riches, or fly from the sight of ourselves to amusements; but to acquire a true taste for things that are excellent.

Words cannot express the tormenting consciousness of a soul separated from the gracious influxes of God, and abandoned for ever to its own poverty and impotence.

If we sought after truth, out of pure love to it, and for the pleasure of it, as is pretended, we should not fear the great teacher, Death, as we do.

Nothing shows the vanity of wealth, grandeur, and pleasure, in so strong a light, as the restless, ambitious spirit of princes. What do they want? and what would they have? Alas! the soul, conscious to itself of much higher pretensions, is not to be quieted with any thing these can give it.

It is the devil's master-piece to make us think well of ourselves.

Alas! who is humble? We disclaim perfection, and run down the preachers of it, from a general confused consciousness of our unworthiness, but cannot bear to be told of a trifling error in conduct. What management, gentle insinuation, and nice art of address, is necessary to prevent resentment in such cases, even from a friend!

We are sinners by the corruption of the heart; and it is a fatal mistake to suppose that we are so only by the commission of sin. Our guilt does not then begin to exist, when it is brought into action, but to appear; and what was always manifest to God, is now become so to ourselves and others.

We cannot go to the bottom of sin, without the convincing, searching Spirit of God. If the work is to be our own, we shall deal so very tenderly with ourselves, that nothing can ever come of it.

It is said that riches, power, and distinction are apt to corrupt the heart. The truth is, they find it corrupt, and all they do is to set men at liberty to act according to their nature, and thus add to the strength of it. But are not many persons humble, orderly, and well disposed in a low estate, who become insolent and insufferable in prosperity? They might be hypocrites in a low estate, and conceal their passions and tempers for various causes, but they never were humble or well disposed.

It would be a sad thing to think that we shall never be better than we are, or can make ourselves.

All men are naturally in a state of hostility with some, and ready upon occasion to be so with all, or any, wife or child not excepted.

The passions do not always torment us; we could not bear it: but, then, the malignity of them is rooted in the constitution, though it does not always appear. As persons subject to fits have the cause lurking within, though they have them not every day.

When we open ourselves to others, it is partially and hypocritically, with prevarication and great tenderness to ourselves, and with design to be admired and flattered by them, rather than

counselled and convinced. Alas! we do so to God more than we are aware of.

Man is ever at odds with God about the condition of his acceptance. He fancies he has some resources in himself, some worthiness of his own, that, with a few grains of allowance, will bear him out, and rejects the aids of the gospel; but the scripture is peremptory; he has none: "Without me ye can do nothing."

After the commission of sin, or any eruption of our inbred malignity, we quickly heal ourselves again, and reinstate ourselves in our own good opinion. How much better would it be to let our nature appear in its frightful nakedness, and to consider that the cursed root of all still remains, and that, if not here destroyed, in another world it can produce nothing but essential, uninterrupted misery, when we have no longer the joys and comforts, cares and amusements of this life to keep off the sight of ourselves.

If I bring my pride with me to the work of God, it will feed as sweetly upon it as upon any other distinction, and in the end fatally blast it.

We know we should be good, and therefore conclude at once that we are so; especially, if we can read, and abound with notions. Our pride asks for no proofs.

Our being in this world, given up to flesh and blood, is our fall. From the beginning it was not so. God and his angels see us where we are, with pity and concern. But man is positive that his present being, circumstanced as it is, was his original state; resolves to make the most of it; is almost equally fond of it, whether he laughs or howls out his time; never profits by his own or other men's perpetual disappointments; and, in consequence of his mistake, dies worse than a brute.

Man has the worst qualities of brutes, without their best.

The observations I make upon the pride and corruption of my nature, instead of humbling me, only give me a handle to value myself upon my penetration.

It is to be feared, that a secret wish to be saved without holiness, is the great bar to our progress towards perfection.

Most men's notion of sin is only this, That whatever it is, they themselves are not guilty of it. None are so absurd as to think that they do all they should do; or that they are guilty of no deviations from the rule of right: but that their state is sinful upon the whole, or that sin is damnable, they do not believe.

Our pride, as delicate as it is, can be content to feed upon that stench and corruption, which a little humility makes us nauseate.

The character of man is, proud sinner.

A creature made capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying God, and yet ignorant of him, and turned from him, or, which is all one, not turned to him in the bent of its will, desire, and affections, must necessarily be in a fallen state, and perverted from the end of its creation.

I do not want humanity, or social virtue. I can be honest and civil, and observe the law of kindness in my actions; but who shall give me humility, meekness, patience, inward purity, and the love of God?

Men do not want the devil now to tempt them into a belief, that they shall be as God's, knowing good and evil; they are but too well persuaded of their own ability.

“Wilt thou be made whole?” is a trying question, when it comes to be well considered.

If I grapple with sin in my own strength, the devil knows he may go to sleep.

What can show man's horrid corruption in a stronger light, than that war should be lawful, (if it be lawful) to prevent greater mischiefs?

All the difference between sin latent and breaking out into act, is, that man now sees what God saw before. And our compunction is generally for the discovery of it. We can feel sin in ourselves for years, and know that God sees it, with very little concern.

It is no uncommon instance of the deceitfulness of the heart, for men to venture upon the general contempt by becoming religious, and at the same time make all up to themselves by their own esteem, or the good opinion of a few. But to be universally despised, and to know certainly, by an inward feeling not to be evaded, that we deserve it, is not so common or so easy.

The appearance of religion only on Sundays, proves that it is only appearance.

It is not the least innocent kind of ambition, to seek after praise in the way of religious usefulness.

Never a day passes but the devil offers his service.

Mankind are perpetually at variance, by being all of one sect, viz. selfists.

We are undone by distinguishing time from eternity, and carrying on a separate interest for it. There are few who do not disobey God in the capital instance ordained for their trial. The obedience we compliment him with, generally speaking, costs us nothing.

Our state and being in this world, is our fall, and the loss of our paradise; and we may as well seek felicity in hell, as here.

Who can value money at a higher rate, or pay

dearer for it, than the man who gets and keeps it in opposition to the light of conscience.

Human nature is like a bad clock. It may go right now and then, or be made to strike the hour, but its inward frame is to go wrong.

Our natural proneness to resentment, hatred, malice, never fails to show itself upon what we call a proper occasion; that is, when we can make a shift to flatter ourselves that we shall have the world on our side, and never more (O shame!) than in the cause of God and religion. The misfortune is, in thinking that there ever can be any such occasion; and that we should ever think so, is sufficient proof of our corruption and unfitness by nature for our proper happiness.

It is strange we should not see the folly of putting ourselves in the power of others, for much the greatest part of our happiness; though we cannot help knowing that naturally they are more disposed to counteract it, and want to be pleased and humoured themselves as much as we do.

Certainly, in a general way, the best mere moral characters are only what any one may be, and all prudent persons at all times would be, if Christ had never come into the world.

Where is man's boasted rectitude, when he neither knows what he is, nor will accept of it when he does?

Flying with horror from the thought that we are unfit to die, if God should take us this day and hour out of the world, keeps off the discovery of our true state, more than any thing else, and fatally hinders our preparation for it.

We are often so much concerned about the appearance of happiness, as never to cast one thought toward the reality of it.

Human virtue works no cure, gives no peace.

working of pride, can love them again. It is for the same reason that we love God so little, notwithstanding his superabundant goodness to us in Christ; because it lays us low, strips us of all excellence, and can only be received in a deep sense of our own unworthiness.

We are often more ashamed than grieved and humbled for our sins. Our own consciousness of them, and of God's being privy to them, does not pain us near so much as it would to have them known to others. See, therefore, whether what you call your penitence, is not more pride than any thing else.

Why does the present hour come loaded with disgust, and lie heavy upon our hands, but because we know not what to do in it; or resolve to do any thing but what we should!

Not one in a thousand, forms his plan of life, and pursues it steadily from principle and regard to the will of God: if we did, there would hardly be an unhappy man in the world.

"God be merciful to me a sinner," said the publican. If I was to hear you wishing to be the man, I should hope well of your case: if you say you are, it is a hundred to one you are mistaken.

If you would know what your root is, consider how your virtues are in exercise towards God. You abhor the imputation of ingratitude: the meaning is, you would not have the world think that you are ungrateful; for, perhaps, you have not one spark of gratitude to your great Benefactor, your God and Father. You would not be false to the marriage-bed; but where is your fidelity to Jesus, the Lord and Husband of every Christian? And as to the point of justice, a most sacred virtue, and very high in your esteem; why must every creature have its due from you, and not

God; and why do you think so little of what is his due? You honour the command of a man like yourself; but why are so many of God's commands slighted?

Learned men, and inquirers into nature, are bent upon knowing a great deal in this world, where we can hardly know any thing; and too often neglect the means of knowing every thing in another!

Wretched mankind! who, in your natural state can only be happy in opposition to the will of God.

Every natural man's aim, in all he says and does, is, first to gain his own good opinion, and then to appear better to others than he does to himself. The scripture doctrine of the fall and universal depravity of mankind, though not denied, has but little effect, because every man has a good opinion of one, and sees corruption only in others.

It is a full vindication of Providence, that every man may choose God for his friend and portion, if he pleases; and that so few do, is a full proof of the blindness, corruption, and degeneracy of mankind.

It is the great dispute of the world, and of every man naturally with himself, whether happiness consists in the commission or forbearance of sin; and most of those who declare for the latter, contradict themselves by their courses.

No one can boast of what he does, or ever think of bringing it to account, who considers what he does not do.

Not to sin may be a bitter cross. To sin is hell.

In respect of sin, I am where the plague is, see many sick of it, and in continual danger myself.

A wrathful, passionate man, is as mount Vesuvius,—hollow, and stored with combustible

matter, which is every now and then breaking out, to the terror and anguish of all about him.

God can save us by his own power only, for his glory, merely in a way of grace and favour, solely by Christ, to the end we may love, adore, and praise him; and yet the wish and will of man, notwithstanding the peculiar discoveries of the Christian religion, and the fullest conviction of infinite defect, is to be independent and self-saved.

I would gladly believe that the nature of mankind is not so bad as mine; and yet, when I observe the defects of the best of men, I find there is but little ground for any such hope.

One great mistake of the world, and the greatest bar to the happiness and well-being of mankind, rich and poor, is, thinking that all the money we are possessed of, is our own.

Perhaps many who think themselves high in Christ's school, have not yet begun with his A, B, C.

I fear nothing so much, and there is nothing I have so much reason to fear, as myself.

If sin had not brought death into the world, and Christ to the cross, we should never have known so much of the goodness of God as we do.

Sinners is so much a nature, and so closely wrought into the constitution of man, that I can scarcely form a conception of existence without it.

I can no more root out the evil qualities of my soul, by any volition, resolution, or efforts of my own, than I can think the stone out of my body.

Oh! that I longed for the time of perfect deliverance, both of soul and body!

O that sigh! Do happy people ever sigh? I find I want something which God will not suffer me to have; and till we are of the same mind, life can be nothing at bottom but one perpetual sigh.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

We can take reproof patiently from a book, but not from a tongue. The book hurts not our pride, the living reprover does; and we cannot bear to have our faults seen by others.

We confess our emptiness to God in very strong terms; and when we have done praying, are apt to depend altogether upon ourselves.

It is a vain and impious thought, to imagine that I can do any thing by my own strength. Dependence on God, in every single act of thinking and willing, is both my duty and security.

It may justly be questioned, whether self-power can be communicated to a creature.

It is much easier to join one's self to a sect than to God.

The soul is naturally frightened, and shrinks from the thought of living only upon God, and to God.

Submitting to the Spirit's operation, is like being laid naked upon a table to be cut for the stone.—Mortification carries death to the enemy of it, and is a stab at the heart. Nature's conclusion is, "therefore not to-day."

It is a sore trial to the soul, which knows any thing of itself, to come close up to God: He is light and truth, all love and purity; the soul dark, selfish, and sin-polluted.

The reason why we should draw nigh to God, and keep a continual intercourse with him, is the reason why we do not: we want his light and help; and this want is the very thing which makes us averse to him, and keeps us from him.

Man would be intolerable to himself, and look out every way for help, if it was not for his pride.

There is in the heart of man a deep-rooted covetousness; a subtle worldly spirit, suggesting diabolical, murderous thoughts, for its own ends.

If God did not take us to himself, few would go to him of their own accord.

“Why callest thou me good?” O man! why callest thou thyself good?

We see and know enough of ourselves, to dread the thought of being seen and known by others; and knowing that God sees us, and looking on ourselves without pain, self-condemnation, or one mortifying reflection, is a fatal symptom, and full proof of our spiritual deadness.

We get a glimpse of true wisdom, and know how we should live, perhaps an hour before we die.

If we seek our happiness in any thing besides the peace of God and a good conscience, we shall as certainly be unhappy, as that every thing in the world is uncertain.

Parting with sin is harder than parting with my wife—she was bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; sin is in the bone and in the flesh, and twisted about every fibre of the heart.

Religious truths, and religious employments are not so much our choice for the sake of their own excellence, as a force upon nature, and what we fly to as some kind of relief from the vanity and insufficiency of every thing else.

If we might be easy and satisfied in and from the world, perhaps we should look no where else for happiness.

Though nature is dying, and as to the strength and vigour of it almost gone, corruption is strong as ever; and herein is full proof that it does not die with the body.

To unregenerate men, it may be less painful to suffer than to do the will of God.

It is justly said, that sin must be hated and abhorred for its own sake, apart from consequences; but who almost would not sin, in one respect or

other, if they were equally sure of heaven, sin or not?

The more I attempt to murder time, the more life it has to murder me, soul and body: if I put my time in my pocket, it is no excuse to say that I do not carry it to the play-house.

Time waits upon the soul early every morning, and says, What wilt thou have me to do to-day? It is a shame to say what the answer is, but will one day be known.

I would willingly go to Siberia for the remainder of my life, if I could leave myself behind me.

The soul is not self-sufficient, cannot be independent, must have some prop; unhappily, it chooses such as shrink under it.

We do not set the mark of holiness high enough; we do not raise our desire up to the scripture standard of it; we do not trust and pray enough.

What should I be, if I had talents to be proud of, when I am so proud of nothing?

I cannot take the dimensions of Christ's love, without a proper knowledge of my own sin.

Strictly speaking, there is no difference of characters with God, in point of real excellence and exact conformity to his law.

Sin keeps no sabbaths.

The folly of irreligion is either desiring that last which we most want, or presuming that we can do every thing for ourselves, and so never apply to God.

A full sight of the corruption of human nature, if we exempt ourselves from it in whole or in part, will certainly be followed with a splenetic contempt of others, approaching to misanthropy.

The deformity of present sin is hidden, or very much lessened by its concomitant pleasure; past

sin, the pleasure of it being gone, appears to be what it is.

God's pity will hold me up, and carry me through; my own, with all the reason I can put to it, and all the efforts I can make, is nothing.

How sad, during life, to have conscience only a tormentor!

My corruption is strong, and bondage to sin evident, when I am so long in making what I know to be a right and necessary choice.

I see my sin in every person I meet.

If the heart is not filled with a pure love, by a divine change, its nature is corruption, and it can be nothing but a sink of iniquity, whatever disguises it may put on to deceive both the world and itself.

It would be great self-ignorance and presumption in me to say, I will not sin to-day.

Men love only those who love them; hardly any without a view to some advantage of their own; and never those who are enemies, or thwart their interest and inclinations: God loves man purely and disinterestedly, notwithstanding his vileness, aversion, and enmity to him.

People never tell more lies than in their prayers.

I should not have had the stone in my bladder or kidneys, or both, if I had not first had a stone in my heart.

Sinning is putting poison into the sting of death.

The great dependance through life, with most men, is on to-morrow, and to-morrow is still before, while it will never be overtaken.

It is the hardest thing in the world to call out in earnest for help against one's self, and yet all depends upon it.

Though I have used myself to think meanly of the human heart, and have great reason so to do

from the knowledge I have of my own, yet I am sensible that it is an unknown depth.

We never turn to God as our centre of rest, supreme delight, and sovereign good, till we have tried every thing else.

Gataker, supposing that the practice of Marcus Antoninus was conformed to his sentiments, confesses with shame how far he came short of so great a pattern: but this very thing shows the superior excellence of the Christian: no Heathen philosopher ever made such a confession. With all their knowledge, they did not know themselves.

It is a real but most horrible truth, that the bulk of mankind are not in charity with God.

It is wonderful to consider how naturally we all lean to the law for salvation, without observing that we are as naturally averse to the practice of it as inclined to lean to it, and that it is impossible to answer its demands.

If I could do for myself what I ask of God, I should be a god to myself; I should have little dependence upon or regard to the God who made heaven and earth: I should hardly believe there is such a God.

Sin, by a natural right, demands execution of its curse at God's hands.

One reason why the world is not reformed, is, because every man would have others make a beginning, and never thinks of himself.

If I was to think daily and hourly, and think of nothing else for a thousand years but how to cleanse my heart, or root one vice out of it in my own strength, I should be no nearer to it at the end than I was at the beginning.

There may be horrid pride in confessing and aggravating our sins:—"That ever I should do this!"—Why, who are you! Do you not see that you are making yourself somebody with God?

Instead of making religious exercises a step of approach to God, seeking God by them, and pressing to God through them, there is danger of making them a pretence for keeping ourselves from him, and a means of quieting conscience without him.

It is a great point of religion to know the heart. I see but a very small part of its deceit, hypocrisy, and desperate wickedness.

We have commonly one master-sin, and are so blinded with it, as not to see others as great, and more dangerous, because they are hidden.

With what reluctance should we submit to sleep, if this present period of our existence was thoroughly happy; as it is not, it is a mercy that we are under a necessity of sleeping out so considerable a part of it; and this very necessity is also a proof and conviction, that we neither are, nor intended to be, perfectly happy in this present life. Whenever the happiness of man is complete, God, the author of it, will not suffer it to admit of any interruption: "they rest not day nor night, crying holy, &c." Rev. iv. 8.

Our whole behaviour by nature, is a perpetual disguise. The mischief of this is, that we take ourselves not only for what we appear to be, but for what we would be thought to be; and continue strangers to the corruption of our hearts, and deaf to the word of God; the great purpose of which is, to discover and make known that corruption, the method of cure, and the necessity of complying with it.

Nature shrinks from the ghastly apparition of its own corruption; will not believe it in good earnest; thinks it may be retained (in part at least) with impunity; flies from the sight to sensuality and vain amusements. It is a dreadful thing for man, captivated as he is by the spirit of

the world, to be told that he must die to it by a deep abhorrence of his state. This shows the necessity of that divine touch upon our spirits, called faith; and the effect wherever it is produced, proves the reality of it.

1 Sam. xii. 21. "And turn ye not aside, for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver;" together with Isa. xlv. 20, 21. Jer. xvi. 19, 20. See here the mischief and venom of idolatry. Man is in a fallen state; wants deliverance; cannot help himself; and yet, by a strange perverseness in his will and understanding, turns from the only Being that can help him, to things confessedly more impotent than himself. Sad proof of his degeneracy, and of the blind subjection he is in to evil spirits!

This world is confessedly not the region of happiness; all is uncertainty, disappointment, and delusion. One would think, therefore, that those at least who pretend not to love it, and to dread its snares, should be glad to be removed out of it into a place of safety and happiness; but, generally speaking, they wish to be excused, and there are very few who really desire it. Alas! it is to be feared, that even those who are called, and think themselves, Christians, are sadly insincere, and little known, either to themselves or others.

I believe the highest angels are the humblest of all creatures. They neither glory in their rank, nor ascribe their state and continuance in it to their obedience and readiness to do the will of God; but cast their crowns down before the throne, as knowing they are what they are by continual influxes from thence: and yet, vile man thinks it hard that he may not make some

reckoning of his works and services, even in his polluted, unregenerate state.

It is the nature of man to wrangle, fight, and shed blood. So long as men are men, there can be no such thing as peace, national, civil, or ecclesiastical.

The concealment of our good actions may proceed from pride, and without due care and reflection will increase it to a dangerous height. We shall be apt to make ourselves amends at home for our self-denial abroad, and pay ourselves to the full that applause which we think we so justly deserve. And, O! how we hug the dear idol of self-complacency, when it is tinselled over with a show of humility!

The carnal mind is the life of sense; by which is not meant gross sensuality, or immorality, but acquiescence in our state as such, without any thought or desire of a change; loving and adhering to the world; a full relish of earthly enjoyments, and a fondness of earthly comforts, and the means of procuring them. If this is the prevailing habit and temper of the mind, God is fatally excluded, let a man think what he will of himself, or what fair pretences soever he may make to religion. But say some, "How must we know when this is our case?" Never, till the doctrine of the cross is in good earnest attended to, and we come to understand the contrary of such a state to the will of God, and consider it as our absolute unfitness for the kingdom of heaven. But then, this is not the whole of the carnal mind: to bring it further into view, let us take our rise from scripture: "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees," that is, of mere men, though ever so learned, "ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven;" for the scribes and pharisees

here represent the great doctors and rationalists, so called, of all ages and places: and it does not appear from scripture that they were scandalously defective in point of morals, or what is commonly called virtue. What, then, should be the reason that Christ, all mild and gracious as he was, ever speaks to and of them, with a sharpness that seems to need an apology? It was because they were foremost in a fatal error, and would be apt to lead others into it, viz. that of self-justification, and the reality and merit of human virtue, which at the best is infinitely defective, generally founded upon rotten principles, and can never stand the judgment of God. This our Saviour shows plainly in the remainder of the chapter; and, indeed, in his whole sermon upon the mount, as well as in other places of the gospel.

What an astonishing thing is sin, which makes the God of love and Father of mercies an enemy to his creatures, and which could only be purged by the blood of the Son of God! Though all must believe this who believe the Bible, yet the exceeding sinfulness of sin, is but weakly apprehended by those who have the deepest sense of it, and will never be fully known in this world.

“Their heart is far from me.” Some time ago this text was strong upon my mind, but soon neglected and forgotten. Supposing it to be suggested and presented by the Spirit for present use to no purpose, we may conceive the manner of the Spirit’s working, and how it is quenched by man’s resistance or inattention.

The devil has great advantage from nature, pushing down-hill, and sometimes from the top to the bottom in a moment. The Spirit’s work is up-hill: it is by the greatest of miracles that any soul is ever brought to God.

How astonishing is the quantity of misery in

the world! How many thousands are rending the air with the cry of pain or wretchedness! Strange that ever there should be so much; that there should be any suffering in the creation of a good God! Doubtless there is a cause for it; and if Moses had not told us what it is, we should be for ever in the dark. O Adam! what hast thou done! O man! what art thou always doing! O Jesu! what hast thou not done to relieve guilt and pain; to sweeten adversity; to blunt the sting of death; to restore happiness in some degree to the earth, and ensure it in eternity!

Sin is against my retirements, against my prayers, against the sacrament, against the bowels and wounds of Christ, against my possession and enjoyment of him, against peace in life and comfort in death, against time, against eternity, against all my hopes.

I am sure, both from scripture, and long experience of my weakness, that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do; and yet my self-sufficient efforts towards a better state, are a practical denial of this belief: instead of leaving it to God to verify his word, and execute his own promises, I would fain do all, by a willing and working of my own.

A person may be high in saintship, and yet dumb to the question, Do you not break every one of the commandments?

It is the general opinion of mankind, and what the fathers, Chrysostom and others, flourish much upon with great confidence, that the will is free. I do not find it so. The captivity of my will is my misery, and great complaint before God; nor do I think that if it was in equilibrio, that any man upon earth would choose evil. The scripture affirms, that the imagination of man's heart is evil continually; and it is a great point

gained, and directs to a necessary subject of prayer, to know that the will is bound, and that none but God can set it free.

If God should do any thing but what he does, in any the minutest instance; send one drop of rain more or less; diminish one pain; heighten one enjoyment; add or take away one moment of life; the consequence might be very bad: and yet what is almost all the praying in the world for, but to tell him that we are displeas'd with his will, and desire him to change it!

When sin is to be renounced as sin, and consequently all sin, the resistance of nature is incredible.

If hypocrisy is taking up more reputation than we can answer in real worth, who is not a hypocrite?

Nothing is a greater proof of man's folly and corruption, than that if he was left to choose his own happiness, and order all events for himself and others, he would certainly ruin both himself and them.

Sin is the sole cause of all the evil that is in the world, either as produced by it, or the punishment of it.

Forbearing sin, because I am to pray at such an hour, or receive the sacrament such a day, is only putting it off to a more convenient time.

While the veil is upon the heart, the veil is upon every thing.

Whenever I spy a fault in another, I am determin'd to look for two in myself, and they will not be far to seek.

As meanly as I think of mankind, I still find myself inordinately pursuing their applause, and am apt to fear their censure more than the displeasure of God.

Every natural man has one or more good qua-

lities, by which alone he estimates his worth and character, and lives and dies an infidel to his bad ones.

Whatever we see without the Spirit's eyes, can have no other effect than to fill us with conceit of a knowledge which we have not, and seal us up in carnal security.

Hell is being given up to the full knowledge and essential malignity of sin; the scriptures say without hope, and for ever; and it does not appear to me that any criticism has yet explained away the precise meaning of it.

Opposition to the will of God, is the essence and sole cause of all our misery. There is no possibility of happiness, but in compliance with it; and yet there can be none in a forced conformity to it. It must of all necessity be the great object of the soul, its rest and centre, and every thing must be sacrificed to it, cheerfully and with delight. Who shall bring us to this? For if it is not my nature, I see at once that I can no more make myself so, than I could make myself at the first.

The understanding discerns, in most cases, as truly and immediately what is right, as the eye does light and colours; and why then does not the will always comply with the dictates of reason and judgment? It would, if it was free.

Sin is the only thing which God hates, and almost the only thing that man loves.

There is not an outward sin but we can resolve against and abstain from, to avoid shame and the censure of the world. Two things follow from hence: first, that natural weakness, in respect of sin, is not so great as is pretended: the other is dreadful to think of, and dreadfully plain, viz. that if we do not resolve against, and avoid all sin

for God's sake, from whom we know nothing is hid, we do not fear him.

Sin must be resisted, and the outward act of any sin may be avoided; but we cannot cast it out of the heart.

Sensible fear and love of God, or dread of his displeasure, and an habitual, steady resolution to secure his favour, is the work and proof of regeneration by a divine power; for, naturally, we neither have this disposition, nor ability to acquire it.

When reason is convinced, and duty evident, still the will is bound, and no power of man can set it free.

The generality think of nothing but getting to heaven by a lie; either that they have little or no sin, or that sin hath little or no harm in it.

We tell God that we are sinners, miserable and helpless, but cannot bear to be told so by others.

Think not what you are to have, but what you should be and are not, and then be proud if you can.

Christ says, "Sit down in the lowest room;" but the lowest, according to St. Paul, is so very low, that hardly a single man will sit down in it. Read Rev. iii. 17, 18. Gal. v. 19, 21. Tit. iii. 3.

With respect to a man's character, he had better be guilty of almost any sin, than what the world calls too much religion.

Man is fallen into a deplorable state of blindness, impotence, and corruption; will not believe it in good earnest; prides himself in his own abilities; will stand or fall by the light of what he calls his reason; and rejects his only remedy, which is, dying to his state and nature, his own works, will, and wisdom, that Christ may live in him, and be all in all to him, wisdom, righteous-

ness, and sanctification, and, by these, redemption.

It is a rare thing for people to think themselves fools now: it is esteemed humility enough to think they have been so.

We could never have so goodly a conceit of ourselves, if we had not first an undue opinion of self-power; that is to say, unless we were proud, and full of a spirit of independency. It seems to be the most general opinion, that this was the cause of the angels' and of Adam's fall; and, if so, it is the greatest bar to the recovery of the soul.

Whatever was the sin of Lucifer, it is probable the sin of Adam was the same. It is natural to suppose the devil would tempt him to transgress in the same way that he himself did, as well knowing the sad effects of it.

Virtue is chiefly considered by us as necessary for the peace and welfare of society; and this is generally pretty well secured by that spurious thing which has the name of it, viz. convenience, ease, and a sense of reputation. If our behaviour is but calculated to answer these ends, we look no further; and, perhaps, wonder in the pride of our hearts, why God does not, as he easily might, interpose to prevent the mischiefs occasioned by the perverseness of a few: but then, He himself is ever and anon troubling the order of the world and the repose of individuals, by terrible afflictions. The consequence is plain; we are ignorant of our state, and live in a perpetual mistake. God does not make so great reckoning of this life as we do. He aims at the reformation of the heart; and the severe methods he takes to bring it about, prove the necessity of such a reformation.

What further proof can we need of the wretched

perverseness and corruption of man's heart, than that he should desire, esteem, and love the things which are confessedly unable to make him happy, and that what can, should be the only thing he does not desire.

The man who knows himself to be a devil, is in a fair way to be a saint. Rom. iii. 9—18.

It is no uncommon thing for men to do good without virtue, give without charity, and pray without religion.

It is difficult to keep self from mingling with the work of salvation. We think it hard that we may not be allowed to pay something towards the price of it; to contribute some work or fancied worthiness of our own; that is to say, (shocking thought!) we would put something of our own into the scale with the blood of Christ, to make it full weight.

There is something odd happens in the mixing of Paganism with Christianity. The appearance of Christianity remains, the substance evaporates; the appearance of Paganism vanishes, the substance remains.

If we were left to nature to choose a God and a heaven for ourselves, it would not be the God that made the heavens and the earth, nor our heaven that where he dwelleth.

Reading is for the most part only a more refined species of sensuality, and answers man's purpose of shuffling off his great work with God and himself, as well as a ball or a masquerade.

Man is an errant bungler at God's work: he spoils all, if he does but touch it with a finger. What a terrible mortification! to think that the business of his salvation cannot go forward, unless he is separated from himself; and, as it were, outlawed as a mischievous person, or thrown into a corner as a piece of useless lumber.

Business, amusements, company, a general relish of life, and a confused hope of mercy in God, or of future amendment, keep the soul tolerably quiet here: but how dreadfully amazing is it to think of its being consigned to a state of eternal reprobation, without one single object to divert its attention from its own frightful nakedness!

It may not be improper to consider every person we happen to be in company with, in three respects, let his station or circumstances be what they will: 1st. As having a high opinion of himself;—2d. As one for whom Christ died;—and 3d. As naturally lying under great disadvantages with regard to his spiritual concerns. The first will be a caution to us not to affront or offend him;—the 2d, will engage us to promote his salvation;—the 3d, to pity his infirmities.

The greatest want of all, is a want of the sense of our wants. This is the root of infidelity.

The generality of those who lead regular moral lives, and think themselves settled upon a good bottom, for having been baptized, &c. are but the more confirmed in a natural, unconverted state by what they call their virtue. It is evident, from a hundred things they say and do, that the root of the matter is not in them.

Upon little occasions, and for mere trifles, I can become a hell to myself. What should I do with this accursed nature, if I had no other company but devils, who would take a malicious pleasure in goading and stinging me into their own torments?

Every man naturally turns upon his own centre, and is as much a detached system from every other man, as one fixed star is from another: what regard he has for the species, or connexion

with it, arises solely out of this very selfishness or individualship.

If we were but half Christians, the world would be at peace with us.

What is generally meant by a moral man, is one who does not govern himself by the fear of God or the ten commandments, but by a law of his own making.

It is a matter of great self-abasement, and full proof of our depravity, that sin, the only thing which God hates, we should hate so little.

Did the sight of your own deformity never make you start?

We were made to live in God as our element, and are not in it. If this is not a fall, ruin, and death, what is?

The devil will suffer us, nay, if it were possible, he would help us to put away every sin but one, if he could be sure we would keep that one.

“God lives through all life,”—the soul of man not excepted, which is no more self-sufficient than self-existent, but the most helpless of all beings, though it proudly challenges independence.

The world is not altered since the time of Socrates. Ask one by one, and see who is not mistaken as to the quantity of his wisdom and goodness.

If we were naked and open to all the world as we are to God, and in some measure to ourselves, how loathsome and abominable, what monsters should we appear!

It is time to have done with future prospects, or a vain imagination that we shall be happy, or more at ease, when such a point is gained, or such an impediment removed; whereas nothing is more certain than that every period of life, and every day will bring its own burden along with it; and that there is no possibility of happiness, but in bearing it according to the will of God.

CHAP. V.

REPENTANCE.

THE repentance which precedes faith, consists chiefly of a sense of danger and a fear of punishment; but when we come to have a lively apprehension of pardoning love, and our adoption in Christ, it is genuine, filial sorrow for having offended God.

Generally speaking, it is to be feared we do not dread sin, but the punishment of it; and yet till we hate sin, as such, and feel our misery under it, it is in vain to talk of repentance.

Till we are so convinced of sin, as fully to pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon ourselves, we shall not receive mercy, as mercy, but consider it as a debt.

So long as we are joined to the world; acting in the main for worldly ends; attached to its interest; oppressed with its cares, or devoted to its pleasures; we must either totally reject, or explain away the gospel.

The law is not satisfied by an outward observation of it, but by the inward disposition of the heart: we break it as much by a bare outward keeping of it only, as by living in avowed neglect of it. Perhaps the best of men may find, upon consideration, that they never performed one act of true and pure obedience in all their lives. What conviction is here! and what a terrible blow is this to our pride!

Humility is a true sense of our state, and must necessarily go before a cure; but then where is the virtue or merit of it? A man full of noisome, stinking sores, would be a madman, if he did not

look out for a remedy, whenever he came to be sensible of his condition; but more so, if he took any merit to himself for knowing that he was thus diseased.

When once we can bear to know the truth of ourselves, we shall be little concerned who else knows it.

It is the vainest of all vanities, and pride in perfection, to pretend to separate ourselves from the world outwardly, before we are separated from it inwardly.

Corruption is strong; evil predominant; my state is wavering; my soul in danger; Christ does not reign; I am in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, till I fully resolve not to sin.

No man has the least glimpse of the inside of truth, till all conceit of merit and self-power is annihilated, and he is pierced through and through with a sense of his vileness and unworthiness.

How happy are we when we can say truly, "Lord, thou knowest all my desire;" and much more, when we can sigh and groan, mourn and weep before God!

As God looks principally at the heart, so it is there he carries on his saving work.

We may polish our outward man, but what shall we do by it, but to get the name of whited sepulchres?

Must I always be humbling myself, and going over the same track of repentance? Yes, till I have no sin; and to the end that the same thoughts and words may take fast hold of me, and become a habit by repetition.

I should consider the Ethiopian's skin, and the Leopard's spots more than I do, that I may pray

more feelingly, and cast myself wholly upon divine power.

Is there any such thing as regeneration, or a change of nature, from sensuality to purity of heart, from flesh to spirit, from sin to holiness, from the world to God? So the scripture says, and that nothing less is being Christian.

I endeavour to take a measure of sin, that I may know my obligations to Christ; and the necessity of his death, for sin helps me to take a measure of it. I hardly know which is first in the order of thinking, but all is well when they act reciprocally upon each other.

It is the Spirit's office to convince of sin, because he only has the power; nothing that others can say, or I can think, will bring me to a true sense and feeling of it without him.

Till we know sin, and feel the burden of it in some degree, we shall be blind to every thing else in scripture, whether of nature or grace; we shall pray with great reserve, and never mean half of what we say.

Rather than be ignorant of my sin, Lord, speak to me in pain, sickness, loss of earthly comforts, or any affliction thou chooseth.

I am all astonishment when I think of the number and greatness of my sins, and how long my life has been spared that I might repent.

There may be an abiding consciousness of sin, with self-condemnation, where there is not the least degree of self-indignation or self-abhorrence. Humility is knowing that we are not humble.

There is a vast difference between knowing and feeling sin, and spiritual things. We may know of ourselves, or, by teaching, may be well-principled and abound in notions; but it is the Spirit only that makes us feel.

If we would put doing in the place of thinking, knowing, and wishing, we should understand the meaning of Rom. vii. and be convinced of the want of a better righteousness than our own.

Pride is seeing the defects of others, and overlooking our own. Humility is seeing, feeling, and lamenting sin in ourselves; not only past, but present sin; not only actual sin, but the root of it in an evil nature, and all sin without disguise or extenuation, in all its guilt and malignity.

No man is humbled or sincere with God, till he is willing to know the worst of himself.

The Spirit's coming into the heart, is the touch of Ithuriel's spear, and it starts up a devil.

If I see myself bad enough for Christ, he sees me good enough.

If my nature, heart, will, and affections must be changed, God must do it; for I can no more change them than I could make myself. God commands to strike at the root of sin; Christ puts the axe, sharpened with his blood, into the hands of all who are willing; and the Spirit gives strength to the blow.

Angels fell from a state of distinguished excellence, and man rises into their place through vileness and emptiness. O the depth!

God never makes any man what he should be, without first making him know what he is. O God! take the veil from my heart, take the world, take pride, take self out of my heart, and write there all thy laws, I beseech thee.

It is a hard thing, and a sore conflict, to renounce all sin, as sin, fully, finally, irrevocably; and, probably, many of those who think they do, never tried it, and are hidden from themselves.

Whenever I sin in thought, word, or deed, or whatever sin I commit, the penalty of death is

incurred; the thing is done and past, and all the world cannot reverse the sentence. The right spiritual understanding and conviction of this is the beginning of faith, and throws us upon Christ.

Legal repentance is before the cross of Christ, and brings us up to it: evangelical is after, and begins from it. The latter only is genuine, effectual, and lasting.

Is the evil I feel in myself painful and a burden to nature as sin? Or could I be content, and perhaps better pleased with it, if I was sure God would never lay it to my charge?

I had rather know a work of the Spirit in mourning for sin, as displeasing to God, in love to Christ, and because it pierced him, than be at the top of worldly joy.

There is no possibility of enjoyment but in following the natural bent; for which reason, virtue, to be happiness, must not be only from principle, and as it were forced upon us by teaching, but the genuine result and feeling of a nature. And how can that be but by a new birth.

Whenever I know but a tenth part of my sin, I shall know that I am not beholden to Christ for nothing.

If God did not lay the burden of sin upon us, no man would lay it upon himself. How few ever feel it!

Repentance is forsaking sin for God, for his favour, his blessing, and will.

I believe it will be found, that the repentance of most men is not so much sorrow for sin, as sin, or real hatred of it, as sullen sorrow that they are not allowed to sin.

It is fatal trifling with our souls, and horrid delusion to see sin less, or condemn it less in

ourselves than we do in others; but who can deal freely with himself in this point, without conviction from the spirit of God?

I have no proper idea of the horrible cursed nature of sin as represented in the cross of Christ; but if it is so seen as to be avoided, it is enough.

Seeing and condemning sin in ourselves, as we do in others, without showing it mercy, is repentance; and then who almost repents?

Every sin when newly committed, amazes and terrifies the soul, though the sense of it soon wears off. How shall we be able to bear the anguish of all our sins together, when conscience, which forgets and extenuates none, brings them to our remembrance.

We may be fully convinced, that spiritual things are incomparably the most worthy of our esteem, without giving them the preference in our affections. The former is a degree of illumination, the latter only is conversion.

A work of grace is carried on in a way of our own thoughts, and with the consent of the will; but this concurrence does not effect the work, and is no more a proof of self-power, than the earth's fertility, which is wholly owing to a blessing from the clouds.

The moment we sin, there is an absolute forfeiture of life incurred: nothing but mercy can now relieve us, and we must always see ourselves in the light of condemned malefactors; for no future amendment can undo what is past.

Till we see sin, we can never see it taken away; but merely seeing and feeling the plague of sin, is not repenting of it; it is seen and felt in hell.

No man ever turns to God for help, believes in Christ, or prays for the Spirit till he is frightened at himself; and we need not know the worst of ourselves to be heartily frightened.

One sin fully known, and pressing home upon the conscience in all its guilt and malignity, leads to the discovery of more, for there is a fatal connexion.

There may be a consciousness and conviction of sin, without hatred of it; real humility, self-abhorrence, or the extinction of one spark of pride.

Finding that I am destitute of Christian graces and holy tempers, the question is, How must I get myself possessed of them? And I am convinced at once I can no more introduce a new set of affections into my nature, than I could make myself at the first. If the scripture had not told us that this change can be effected by nothing less than a divine power, the thing speaks for itself. Show me a man of whom it can be truly said, that he loves what he hated, and hates what he loved, and I will pronounce him to be God's workmanship.

I see less malignity in sin, and can more easily forgive it, because I consider it not chiefly as sin against God, but against myself, my own ease, reputation, and interest: in this point, and a leading one it is, scriptural knowledge differs totally from natural. The repentance which brings us to Christ, is toward God.

Lopping off the branches of sin, is labour in vain, and always to be renewed; there is no way but laying the axe to the root.

Sin should set heavier on the soul, and cut deeper into the heart, than the loss of a first-born. Blessed are they that mourn; and who has not cause for it?

Till a man feels sin as poison in his blood, and finds that he cannot get rid of it in this world, he will never think in good earnest of another.

No man has any warrant from scripture to be-

lieve that his sins are forgiven, unless he repents of them; that is, is heartily sorry for them, and earnestly desires to be delivered from the power of evil habits, and an evil nature.

It cannot be expected that any man, not a gross sinner, should repent; that is, charge himself with guilt and folly, and desire a change of his state, till he is convinced of the universal, total depravity of human nature. If he is persuaded that there is any excellence, dignity, rectitude, or good belonging to the species, he will compliment himself with it all.

It is impossible for any man to know Christ to be a Saviour, till he knows himself to be a sinner.

Man is never in God's way in spirituals, till he quits himself and his own way. And this I take to be the most natural meaning of the words, "except ye be converted, and become as little children," who are confessedly helpless, incapable of acting for, and governing themselves, "ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

It would be thought monstrous arrogance, blasphemy, and invasion of God's prerogative, for any one to pretend to make the soul and body of a man. And yet, perhaps, it is no less presumption to pretend to any share in the creation of the spiritual man in Christ. How is it possible I should form the image of God in myself, when I do not know what it is, nor ever shall, till it is actually produced in me? It is well for us, that the want of such a previous idea, is no hinderance to our reception of it; and for this we have St. Paul's word, who says, that what God worketh in us is exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. This deserves to be considered by the narrowers in all sects and parties.

Justification by faith can never be received, desired, sought after, or even understood, till the soul has been well disciplined and broken under the pressure of the law, and brought to a full sight and experience of its inability to answer the demands of it. And our acceptance of the free grace of God in Christ, will always necessarily be more or less sincere, more or less fruitful in good works, in proportion to our sense of the want of it.

Those who have felt the misery of an evil conscience, and laid groaning with anguish of spirit under a heavy sense of God's wrath, are comparatively in little danger of returning to such a state, after they have once been delivered from it.

I cannot get within myself, and yet all depends upon it. It is not enough to know that God sees me, unless I see myself in my own frightful nakedness.

There is nothing like being pinched, and sore galled with a sense of guilt. Redemption by Christ will then be viewed in its proper point of light; the glad tidings of the gospel eagerly embraced by the disconsolate fainting soul. It is impossible for those who never felt the trouble and uneasiness of a wounded conscience, to desire, or believe, or value the peace of God. It is by a miracle that any man repents. Many see the folly of their conduct, and are sorry for the inconveniences they have brought upon themselves and others by it; but to be convinced of guilt before God, to have a sight and sense of our vileness, and a hearty detestation of ourselves for it, is what I believe never happens but under the working and influence of God's Spirit.

God will have his grace acknowledged in the

free pardon of our sins. But this can never be, till we feel and know in good earnest that we are sinners. God brings us under the bond of the law, that his mercy may be magnified in releasing us from the terror, curse, and punishment of it. The end of this procedure, is to show man his obligation to the performance of law, his demerit in the breach of it, and God's love in our forgiveness. And, in our present circumstances, there is no other method of introducing into the soul a sincere love of God; for, naturally, we do not love him.

When God calls to us in our hiding-place, and says, "Where art thou?" the stoutest heart will be afraid, notwithstanding its covering of fig-leaves.

The knowledge of ourselves, and of our sinful condition by the fall, is one main point in religion; but then it is often a long time before we are enough pinched with a sense of it, to pray in good earnest.

When we find out our sin in one instance, it should convince us of the guilt of more yet undiscovered, and lead us to the accursed root of all.

All is delusion and sad mistake, till we know Christ inwardly and experimentally by the spirit, as applying his whole salvation and every part of it to the soul.—1st. In his sore judgments, convincing us of the greatness and damnableness of sin, and of our own sin in particular.—2nd. In his comforts, raising us to a clear sense of, and cheerful confidence in God, as a reconciled Father.—3d. In his cleansing operations, turning the strong man out of possession, and enabling us to say triumphantly, "Behold all things are become new." The great danger of miscarrying in this work, is by passing too cursorily over the first step,

healing our wounds slightly, and justifying ourselves too hastily.

We are never so near heaven as when we find ourselves almost in hell. We cannot stay long there.

It is impossible we should ever be upon a footing of truth and sincerity with others, till we know how to speak the truth to ourselves.

CHAP. VI.

JESUS CHRIST.

CHRI^ST comes with a blessing in each hand: forgiveness in one, and holiness in the other; and never gives either to any who will not take both.

Christ's forgiveness of all sins is complete at once, because less would not do us good: his holiness is dispensed by degrees; and to none wholly in this life, lest we should slight his forgiveness.

I owe it to Jesus that I have a moment's quiet.

The love of God springs from the knowledge of Christ, and seems impossible to man in any other way.

I owe Christ a heart, a will, a life.

The Lord Christ is the soul's joy, support, and confidence, in all states and conditions; riches in poverty, comfort in trouble, ease in pain, health in sickness, life in death.

I see the glory and blessedness of God in giving his Son to die for such sinners as I am, and would give the world to have a lively gratitude and burning love to him in my heart; but can

have no peace but in thinking he died for my ingratitude.

Christ's riches, as in himself, are unsearchable; in us they are soon told.

The salvation of man is as much the gift of God, and the work of Christ, as his life and being.

Christ never comes into the soul unattended: he brings the Holy Spirit with him, and the Spirit his train of gifts and graces. Lay the foundation in him, and leave it to him to raise God's building upon it.

Christ obeyed and suffered for me, that his obedience and sufferings might be imputed to me; and because no obedience or sufferings of mine could answer the demands of divine justice, or be effectual to my purification. A maintainer of this opinion, at the same time affirms it is no argument for the presumption, impenitence, or lukewarmness of man; but an operative, and most efficacious principle of obedience, and a sacred bond of gratitude upon his soul, to do and suffer in his turn, according to the measure and capacity of a creature, and to press to every height of virtue after the example of so kind a conductor, in obedience to the commands of so gracious a Master, in confidence of the assistance of so powerful a Saviour, who died for him upon earth, intercedes for and succours him from heaven, and hath taken him into himself by a mysterious union, that he might accept him to the reward of his own spotless holiness.

It has been the general opinion of Christians, in all times and places, that Christ suffered instead of sinners, and that we have remission of sins through faith in his blood-shedding: but the opinion of an imputed righteousness is far from being general; though a substitution is every whit as intelligible, and perhaps as much

wanted in one case as the other; and the same reasons that hold for the rejecting of one, will equally hold for the rejecting of both.

The righteousness of Christ is never imputed to any man who does not desire and endeavour to be so completely righteous, as not to stand in need of it.

Let him who rejects the righteousness of Christ, consider well what ground he stands upon, and what he has to trust to.

The righteousness of Christ imputed, and applied by faith, becomes such a reality as is not at all for an impenitent sinner's purpose. If he knows what it is, and for what end it is given, he does not desire it; nor do I think it possible for an impenitent person to believe it, let him pretend what he will. Christ is the glass in which we see God and ourselves; and if we attempt to see either ourselves or him through any other medium, we shall fall into infinite mistakes.

Christ still manifests his Messiahship by his presence, and says to the desiring soul, as he did to the woman of Samaria, "I that speak unto thee am he."

To comprehend the breadth and length, and depth and height of the love of Christ, we must first take the dimensions of our own sin.

I know so much of Christ, as not to be afraid to look my sins in the face.

Christ was Christ to a believing Jew before his coming, as well as now to a Christian: nay, the faith of the Jew seems to have been of a more excellent kind, as it had a thicker veil to penetrate through.

Christ says, "Take up the cross;" and very evident it is, that some of his commands, literally taken, have the cross in them. Take this out, and then wherein does he differ from other legis-

lators? Or, what remains but a bare religion of nature? which we may be sure will never bear too hard upon flesh and blood.

All the power and love of God is in the man Christ.

Christ is God, stooping to the senses, and speaking to the heart of man.

Christ brings down God to the capacity of man, and raises man to the nature of God.

Christ stands between the wrath of God and the sin of man, intercepting the one, and purging the other.

Nothing in nature is life, light, and truth, but Christ, and therefore nothing else can be so to the soul.

Christ saw and felt every sin of mine distinctly, when he sweat great drops of blood in the garden, and cried out upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

God will come near to us to judgment, and be a swift witness against us, whenever we dare present ourselves at his bar in our own name.

Christ had most amazing love, and a piercing sight of the danger and misery of mankind, when the pain of the cross could not hinder him from saying, "Father, forgive them." A lively apprehension in us of what he then saw and knew, sets us at work in good earnest for ourselves and others.

I want the outward sun to cherish my body, and invigorate the animal life; much more the warmth, light, and healing rays of the sun of righteousness to comfort my soul.

When we had lost all by one father, God gave us another, to recover it to us with advantage; and our life is now safe in Christ's keeping.

We come from God through the loins of the

first Adam, and return to him through the bowels of the second.

Christ can be nothing but himself in every soul where he comes, loving his own life, doing his own works, rejecting all sin, and seeking only to please God.

It must be so for Christ's sake; there must be a sincere renunciation of all sin for his love who died for me, and because I hope to see his face in heaven to whom I have so great obligations.

Christ's peace is his peace altogether, dearly purchased by him, and given to sinners standing in need of it. If it is to be of my own procuring, and I can have none but by entire freedom from sin, I am undone.

I owe Christ ten thousand thousand times more than I can pay; and all he requires of me is to accept a discharge, and settle my love upon him; not as any part of payment, but because he knows I cannot otherwise be happy.

If ever we get to heaven, we shall know that we do not sing praises to the Lamb for nothing.

"Who has abolished death" and damnation, by his death and resurrection, and "brought life and immortality to light by the gospel;" revealing, offering, and conveying it to all that believe and accept it as God's gift, live for it, and rejoice in it as their portion and inheritance from the Lord?

Christ, by taking our sin upon himself, took it clean away from us; banished it out of the creation, and eternally annihilated it to every believer, who is as far from the charge of it before God, as if there never had been any such thing in the world. And if he did not do this for us, he did nothing: if we have one sin remaining that he did not expiate, we are still under a sentence of death.

The two main pillars of Christ's religion are

the depth of sin, and the height of righteousness; and none but he could atone for the one, and perform the other.

A thousand saints with all their fortitude, patience, and united efforts, could not bear the burden of one sin. What, then, did Christ endure, when all the sins of the world were laid upon him.

“Herein is love,”—superlative, inconceivable, infinite;—“that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,”—without exception of any sins or sinners. Why do I not steadily believe it? Why do I harbour a doubt of it? Why do I ever forget it? Why am I not always rejoicing in the happy assurance of it?

Some look unto Christ with godly sorrow, gratitude, love, and a purpose of obedience: some with horrid presumption, and the deceitfulness of a desperately wicked heart, to make him a cover for carnal indulgence: the generality with great coldness and indifference.

Christ says to man, “live:” not for any good he sees in any man; but when he is, and because he is lying in his blood. He can enlighten the dark heart; he can purge the defiled heart; he can bend the stubborn heart; he can fix the inconstant heart; he can quicken the dead heart; he can spiritualize the earthly heart; he can universalize the selfish heart; he can comfort the sorrowful heart,—all cold and icy as it is, he can make it a heart of pure love; he can be himself in the heart. Blessed be his name.

O Jesus! my Lord, and my God! my Saviour by thyself, from myself! how wonderful art thou! What should I do but for Christ? Another question completes the character of the Christian, What shall I do for Christ?

God testifies to me, to my soul, that Christ has

risen from the dead, and I with him, by an indisputable, abiding matter of fact, viz. his sending the Holy Ghost into my heart.

Christ in me will be the same God-devoted, sin-hating, soul-loving, self-denying, suffering, labouring Christ, that he is in himself.

Nothing but the blood of Christ can wash out the foul stains of my life; and that will do it. As sure as sin is death, Christ is life.

Without Christ we should never have known what sin is; without the knowledge of sin we should never have known what Christ is. O my soul, magnify the Lord, and rejoice in God thy Saviour!

CHAP. VII.

FAITH.

FAITH does not consist in thinking that my sins are comparatively little, and therefore may be forgiven; but in knowing that they are very great, and believing that, though they are ever so many and great, past or present, Christ's blood is above them all.

Nothing but Christ's blood, taking away, and as it were annihilating sin, can quiet an awakened conscience. Repentance implies an abiding self-dislike and self-abhorrence; and can neither destroy the existence, nor extinguish the remembrance, nor heal the smart of past sin: the torment of it can never die, but with a conviction that Christ took it all upon himself.

My sins are many and great, and continually rising up against me; but I must not, I must not make God a liar, deny the Saviour, and grieve the Spirit, by refusing his comfort. I may have more joy of Christ than I could have had of innocence or any sanctity of my own. Oh Adam! what hast thou done! O Jesus! what hast thou not done!

The man who has no doubts and fears, has no faith.

Perfect obedience being impossible, it is necessary that all should have some reserve at hand, in the want of it; something to support their hope, and give peace to their consciences; sincerity or Christ. But the former can no more be pleaded than perfect obedience; and if faith on Christ, suffering in our stead what we should have suffered, and doing for us what we cannot do, is not our appointed relief, the case of mankind is desperate.

If Christ will take my sins, I may well give him every thing else.

“*Fides Christum mihi donat, charitas ex fide me proximo.*” *Luther.* That is, Faith gives me Christ, and love from faith give me to my neighbour.

God grants me forgiveness; not because I have so much repentance, or so much obedience to bring him as the price of it, but of his free goodness, because I want it, and must be undone without it; and because he knows, whether I do or not, that I have only one thing to say to him, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

The scripture bids us do every thing, and at the same time tells us that we can do nothing: the conclusion is, that what is commanded must be done, and cannot be done without help.

Christ crucified for our sins is the chief thing

In our religion we should know, and almost the only thing which the generality of the church of England do not know.

Christ came into the world to take away my sin, by taking it upon himself; and if I go to him with it, my comfort is, that it cannot be too great for him.

The experience and possession of divine pity is better than bodily ease, freedom from trouble, or the greatest worldly prosperity.

What has not God given me, in giving me a will to pray! All the rest is his work; and I am as sure, as his word and promise can make me, that not one prayer will be lost.

I shall obey when I have the will, and none can set it free but God: it is the mountain which faith has to remove. Thinking we have most power where we have the least, is the great error of the world, and has been mine all my life.

What a mercy above all miracles that I, who am a sinner, a threescore-years old rebel, and have done that every day of my life which lost Adam his Paradise, and brought death into the world, should have my abode on earth prolonged; that if it be possible I may not come short of my birth-right; that I may leave off sinning, and say before I die, "Lo, I come to do thy will!"

When I think what the devil can do in conjunction with my nature, what I have been, am, and shall be, it is transporting news to be told that there is such a thing as believing unto righteousness, and that salvation is wholly in and by a substitute. This is a hard point; and yet if God is always the same, there can be no other possible hope for a creature always sinful.

I am as sure, on the word and promise of God, that my sins are done away in Christ, as if an angel were to bring me a release in writing, or I

was now in heaven out of all danger. Shall I not be at God's bidding for this, and put myself into his hands for the further mercies of gratitude, love, obedience, a willing heart, and heavenly affections?

The angels do not work for life or reward, because they are already possessed of it, penetrated with a lively sense of God's love to them in their happiness, and therefore all on fire to do his will; so should we, if we would but enter more into the knowledge and present possession of our happiness, by faith in Christ.

From the depth of my sin, and most astonishing evil, I raise some faint conception of God's love in Christ. Well might he say, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts," &c. Isa. lv. 8.

Christ came to teach a pure morality, and assert the necessity of a perfect law-keeping, but does not expect to find it in us; he therefore wrought it for us.

No security till Christ puts his wedding-ring upon my heart.

Power to conform the understanding, will, and heart to scripture, is as much a gift from heaven as scripture itself.

By poring continually upon my sins, and setting them as it were in battle array against the blood of Christ, I hold off my remedy, make little account of the word of God, and must thank myself if I never know peace.

In another man's case, I should certainly think one drop of the blood of Christ sufficient for all his sins, though ever so many and great. In my own, I cannot think so for my life, with any degree of steadfastness.

What I speak, think, invent, write, as of myself, puffs me up with conceit, and is a sweet morsel for pride. Thinking it to be from God, would

humble me, as every thing does which we know to be purely a gift, let it come from whom it will.

No music like Aaron's bells. Mercy and propitiation through our great High-Priest, sound sweetly to the purged ear.

At home with God; satisfied and rejoicing only in the sense of his favour, in my heart's choice of him, in the privilege of presenting myself before him in faith, and longing for his promises.

The man who comes to Christ, without any desire or expectation of being created in him unto good works, and having his nature renewed in holiness, is a fool, or an infidel. He neither knows nor believes one tittle of the gospel.

We need not be afraid to look upon our own deformity, great and ugly as it is. Christ died for the sins of the whole world; and, therefore, if I had all the sins of the whole world in my own person, I would not doubt of forgiveness.

The remission of sins, apprehended by faith, is the dissolution or ending of Satan's kingdom in us, and the beginning, foundation, and principle of a new nature, state, and life in God through Christ.

I cannot give myself to Christ; he must give himself to me.

God does not offer me health, long life, plenty of worldly accommodations, respect, distinction, principalities, universal empire; but, O! unutterable grace! himself. The greatness of the thing, so infinitely transcending all that we can deserve, hope for, or conceive, overwhelms the understanding, and is apt to stifle our belief of it.

Let God work—my own efforts, by being trusted in, having a tendency to exclude him and hinder his progress.

The scripture speaks in vain, if God does not speak it again in the heart. Knowing is not willing, though it is generally mistaken for it.

To have God hold the great burning glass in his hand, to bring all my sins to a point, how dreadful! and what a glory is then to be seen in Christ!

If I had not sinned as I have, I should never have prayed as I do.

My work is my pleasure, and joyous happy state. I find in it all I want; and do not stretch my thoughts beyond it for more satisfaction from any thing else.

Make no more resolutions to do what you never will; but know your weakness; trust and pray.

Unbelief, or doubting of the power and will of God to convert others, though ever so illiterate or obstinate, self-righteous or wicked, is the same want of faith as it would be in my own case: the obstacles may, or may not be greater, but nothing is too hard for God. If we cannot help ourselves to the graces we want, let us not pretend to it, nor make vain efforts in our own strength, but wait patiently upon God, and be as clay in the hands of the potter.

Nothing greater can be said of faith, than that it is the only thing which can bid defiance to the accusations of conscience.

Faith supposes that there is sin in every one to be forgiven, and that God is glorified by the forgiveness of it. Deny either, and you lose Christ.

Faith can do more than remove mountains: it can still a clamorous conscience; make a bad conscience good; soften a hard heart; bend a stubborn will; and bring God and man together.

If sin was ten thousand times worse than it is,

and I had ten thousand times more sin than I have, I would look beyond them all to Christ.

The Christian is happy in Christ's forgiveness, Christ's righteousness, and Christ's beatitudes; but chiefly so in the two first, and only unhappy because he is imperfect in the last.

In Christ we are as innocent and clear of all blame before God, as Adam was at his creation. This is the great mystery, great truth, and great comfort of the gospel; and if it is not true, all scripture is false, or comparatively little worth.

My sins and wants threw me upon Christ when I knew much less of him, and of my need of him than I do now.

I believe for the remission of sins; I believe for Christ's righteousness; I believe for power to love God and man; I believe for belief; and, God knows, I had rather be a believer than a king.

Christ must have died for me, if there had not been another man in the world; and I believe as much that he died for me, as if there never had been another.

Christ says, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Giving me to understand that he must do it; and therefore I will never attempt to make myself whole. I would do something for Christ, but I can do nothing for myself, and he knowing this, did all for me.

I have been many years endeavouring to come to peace by a conquest of sin, instead of going first to Christ for the pardon of it.

Christ's peace is not freedom from sin, but the forgiveness of it; and it cannot consist with the love of sin.

If one man had all the graces and good actions that ever were in the world to plead for himself,

they would not justify him to God; and if the sins of all the world were to meet in the person of one man, the blood of Christ would infinitely outweigh them.

If it was not for Christ, conscience would tear me in pieces. Conscience is the most positive, teasing, tormenting thing in the world; and nothing can silence it but faith. Conscience is the viper on Paul's hand; and its nature is to sting, inflame, and kill. Why, then, do not I swell, or fall down dead? I know.

I know my sins are a vast heap, and more in number than the hairs of my head, but I will think no more of them (save to deny and try myself) for the remainder of my life: I will look only unto Jesus; and if a better obedience does not spring from this faith and looking, I shall for ever despair of attaining to it. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

It is unbelief altogether, and absolute denial of the work, satisfaction, and merits of Christ, to think that I have one sin about me unforgiven, or belonging to me.

Thank God for Christ; Christ for a clean conscience; and the Spirit for giving me a sight of it as clean.

Believe that you are a sinner under condemnation, and that Christ released you from it by his death, and then deny him any thing if you can.

As bad as I am, I should be worse if it was not for my belief of the cross.

If I had not God in Christ to think of and speak to, to make me wiser and better, and happier than I am, and to go to when I die, I should think myself undone.

I find it difficult to believe that God can forgive me, because I cannot forgive myself. There is great comfort in Isa. lv. 7, 8. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his

thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon: for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

God does not expect to be loved and praised by us but for his benefits, as proofs and tokens of the riches of his nature; and, as weak, dependent creatures, we must look up to him for the communications of his goodness, and think ourselves more happy in receiving from him what we want, than if we could give it to ourselves.

He who, with a consciousness and acknowledgment of great imperfection, trusts in the righteousness of Christ, is a better Christian than a more perfect man who trusts in his own.

He who does not rejoice in the Lord, and feel God's peace as a cordial at his heart, is a Christian of a low form, and hardly a believer. Why are we so often lumpish, heavy, and almost at our wit's end, but because we look for comfort in ourselves more than in Christ, and do not charge it enough upon our souls to rejoice purely, simply, and only in him.

When we have received nothing from God, we think we have enough of our own, and are sufficiently proud of it. What we receive from him, in answer to prayer, under a sense of our poverty, is all placed to the account of Grace, and humbles us in the dust.

October 4, 1771.—I had a most lively sense in a dream, of a full dependence upon God for help in time of distress, far beyond any thing I ever conceived, or can retain when I am awake.

Look forward to increasing weakness; decay of intellect, sense, and memory; certain pain, sickness, and death; without a wish for past

enjoyments, and with a hope full of immortality.

The mercy of God is above all my sins and all my fears; and when I perceive it in my own mind and conscience to be so, see the necessity of mercy, and joyfully embrace the offer of it, "the Spirit beareth witness with my spirit;" and the witness is good without and before works, and faith perceives itself by its own light. O Father, sweet is thy mercy! O Jesu, sweet is thy love! sweet, O blessed Spirit, is thy testimony to the soul!

I see nothing but sin in myself; in God nothing but mercy.

God put the yoke of the law upon the necks of the Jews; the devil puts it on the necks of Christians.

I would not be without direction, restraint, and assistance from God, if I might. Dependence on him is my security, happiness, and great glory: he can do all things well; I am sure I cannot. And how will my soul exult in his goodness, glow with gratitude, bless and adhere to him, when I know I am not overlooked, and that he has heard and helped me in the very thing I asked of him! I question whether any man ever truly loves and praises God, till he has been so helped.

I will remember my sins, every one if possible, with all their aggravations; but while there is a Bible in the world, they shall not terrify me.

Christ took up all my sins, and bare them in his own body on the cross; and God cannot punish twice, nor demand a second satisfaction to his justice. Take this comfort from me, and you may take the Bible.

If the blood of Christ, as applied for remission, is my remedy in case of sin, first and always, it is death to make use of any other.

God never pardons one sin but he pardons all; and we dishonour him more by not trusting in him for complete forgiveness, than ever we did by sinning against him.

When sin, past and present, appears in its true shape, with all its horrid malignity, and desert of damnation, then is the time for a full sight of Christ. And oh! how gloriously does "the sun of righteousness arise," to the benighted, sin-burdened soul, "with healing in his wings!" How sweet is mercy! How precious the name Jesus, and how dear his blood to the awakened, guilty conscience! Let it ever be remembered how great the obligation!

With one eye upon Christ, I can look my past sins in the face with the other, and be upon my guard against all sin for the time to come. Self, in its very best state, is no ground of confidence towards God, nor of despair in its worst.

It is the will of God, and well-pleasing to God, that I should rejoice continually before him in the acceptance and possession of his grace in Christ, as made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

"Nothing can pacify an offended conscience, but that which satisfied an offended God," says Henry; and well may that which satisfied an offended God, pacify an offended conscience.

I, N. N. take thee, Jesus, to my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for thy love, for thy crosses, for thy work, for thy comforts; to love, honour, and obey so long as I shall live, assuredly believing that death will not part us. Lord Jesus say, Amen.

What a fool am I, to be always laying the weight of my salvation upon myself, instead of Christ!

I should be inexpressibly miserable, if I did

not know that God forgives me more easily than I can myself.

I may still look at the brazen serpent, I may look at Christ.

What hope could I have, if God does not forgive what I am, as well as what I have been?

Whenever I feel corruption stirring, and sincerely lament it, but have not strength against it; then is the time to fly to Christ, and rejoice in him; then may I have enough to bless God for, and may well bear with myself.

Remembrance of sin, and sense of redeeming mercy, will be the ground of praise and thanksgiving to God and the Lamb for ever in heaven. Why should it not be so now? Seeing I have as good warrant, from the word of God, to believe that my sin is wholly taken away, as if I was actually in heaven.

We are apt foolishly and impiously to harden ourselves against the comfort of scripture, by poring continually upon our sins. Why, man, it is as true, that Christ died for sin, as that the wages of sin is death, and full as dangerous to disbelieve one as the other.

Those who will not believe the remission of sins on the warrant of scripture, till it is inwardly spoken, or confirmed to them by a personal grant, make no account of God's word, and declare plainly that they will not trust him without his bond.

If I rightly understood, and truly valued God's gift of Christ, I could not possibly be displeased with him for any thing else.

It is disowning my belief, wronging my soul, and giving the lie to God, to think but for a moment, that his mercy in Christ is not above all my sins.

Some sins I have forgot; many I remember,

and these so heinous, that I cannot forgive myself for them: it is well for me that God, who forgets none, forgives all.

It is the great miracle, peculiar glory, and most endearing blessed excellence of Christ's religion, that conscience, of all things in the world the most severe and inexorable, should ever be pacified by it, and made good, as it were, in spite of itself.

Only God can bring light out of that darkness which I myself am. I can no more do it myself than I can say as he did at the creation, "Let there be light, &c."

The belief of Christ's atonement and imputed righteousness, seems to be God's way for our attaining any degree of righteousness of our own, or all the inherent and infused righteousness we ever shall be capable of; and if this method is of God's appointing, it is dangerous trusting to any other.

The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and that springing from a good conscience; that is, a conscience purged from the sense of guilt by faith unfeigned. Christ is in this way the wisdom of God, and the power of God, though it seem ever so absurd to the reason of man.

The gospel is a powerful engine for raising the fallen nature of man; but then God must have the working of it.

The remission of sins, apprehended and applied by faith, opens a new kind of intercourse between God and the soul: the veil is rent that barred its entrance into the most holy place; and it now stands continually before God, to receive advice, instruction, and all manner of gracious, sanctifying influences.

The peculiar doctrines of the gospel, justifica-

tion by faith, &c. must not only be revealed to us but in us; and God, therefore, reveals them to us, that we may go to him to have them revealed in us.

When we are wearied and quite spent with working out a righteousness of our own, we cast ourselves with great advantage upon Christ for his; and there is then little danger of our being hurt by this doctrine. The sense of such a relief in our time of need, will be instead of a thousand arguments to make us press on to the utmost perfection of holiness we are capable of.

In the presence of temptation, and the stirrings of lust and corruption, what should hinder me from saying, "Christ died for the sins of the whole world;" and, therefore, for mine, if they were ten thousand times more and greater than they are; and even for those very motions and workings of sin, which I feel this moment in myself. This is not strengthening, or yielding to the temptation, but a confession of my impotence, and inviting the Holy Spirit to flow in upon me, and acquiescing in Christ's method for my deliverance; and it is in this sense and belief only, that I desire to receive remission of my sins, and an imputed righteousness from his hands.

Lord have mercy upon me, and help me: I am surrounded with enemies, which I cannot resist but in thy strength, and must fall a prey to them without thy assistance. Suffer not thy name to be dishonoured in the destruction of thy poor creature, and the triumph of the powers of darkness over the promise for my salvation. Let the confession of my weakness, and of my dependance upon thee, prevail with thee in Christ to stand up in my defence: and do thou get the victory, and be glorified in thyself, and in thy own goodness. Amen.

When faith in Christ, for the remission of sins and the imputation of his righteousness, is God's work in the soul, it operates to holiness, and renews his image in us; when it is man's, it is weak at the best, often delusive, and fixes us in corruption.

That is the best kind of faith which is productive of the greatest holiness. If man was left to himself, he would be apt to choose that which is productive of the least.

The doctrine of imputed righteousness, is founded upon the supposition of non-perfection. If we stay for peace of mind and a quiet conscience, till we have earned it by our works, we may stay till doomsday.

We may read, think, reason, be convinced, and willing and glad to acquiesce; but, after all, it is hard for any man to believe for the remission of sins, in good earnest, till it is given him of God.

Every thing in religion is God's gift. It is better on all accounts it should be so than otherwise.

Our own attainments are poor at the best, and can yield us but little comfort; but the soul, which closes heartily with God's operations, makes a swift progress under them, and rejoices over them exceedingly as evidences of his favour.

The renovation of the heart by the Spirit, the new man in Christ, charity, &c. is not the ground, cause, or condition of our acceptance and reward. Itself is our reward, at least in part, and therefore cannot be the cause of itself. Thus Abraham's having a son, was the consequence of his faith; an additional superabundant grace, or favour of God to him; the thing indeed he wanted, but surely not on the footing of merit. If St. Paul had said that all the services and shining qualities of the highest angels were of no value, and would profit

them nothing without charity; would this imply that their having it was their title to God's favour, and to their high rank in the order of creation? It would be the ornament of their nature, and a necessary qualification for their proper happiness; but still the gift of God, and no more their merit than their being is. I believe we see at once the horrid presumption of such a claim in them. And yet wretched man is not to be driven from the plea of his own merit. Man will do something, if not all, for himself; he will earn his salvation, either in whole or in part. It is the great gospel-mystery to acquaint us that the attempt is vain, and that if ever we are saved, it must be by grace.

Those who deny salvation by faith alone, do not pretend to say that it is by works alone; but partly by faith and partly by works, and they will accept of Christ to make good deficiencies. But they might as well make sure work of it, and take him for all. For their very best works, it is to be feared, will make but a sorry appearance; and, consequently, their own persons, when tried in the balance, be found miserably wanting.

There is no more absurdity in trusting wholly to Christ, than there is in trusting to him only in part: to his atonement and righteousness, than to his atonement only; or his atonement and righteousness in part. Man wants him in all his offices and benefits: divided, he can be of no service to us; and he will never be content to go halves with our pride.

Faith is the means of attending to the Spirit, and the Spirit is the spring of our power and possibility of working. Faith in this view, and embraced for this end, will stand its ground against all opposition. There can be no pre-

tence for decrying it as an enemy to good works.

The mystery of the gospel, as distinguished from the law, consists in changing the order of two words: one says "do and live;" the other says, "live and do."

One would think, that a poor labourer, sweating out his term of threescore years and ten, to half-starve a hungry family, though as ignorant of spirituals, and as unconcerned about them as a brute, was better employed, and in a higher state of purgation than a monk at his offices. Nevertheless, the scripture makes no allowances, when it says, "this is eternal life to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And if reason was allowed to bring in its exceptions, they would be endless.

It is impossible for a considerate person to think himself safe upon the foundation of his own works. The consequence is plain: We have then nothing to trust to but an act of grace from God, or something that is not our own. And yet, by a strange perverseness, when the only proper relief is proposed to us, we naturally reject it, either in whole or in part.

The law, not performed, drives us to Christ for remission; and Christ received, brings us back again to the law, with all possible advantage for performance; for he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.

If we knew the gospel to be what it is, and what the angels, who must know, said it was, viz. "glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, goodwill towards men;" or, a full discharge from all guilt and blame, and from the bond of the law, as a covenant, we should be apt to say of it, "it is too good news to be true."

The mercy of God, in the forgiveness of our

sins, can never be understood or believed, can be no motive of love, gratitude, and obedience, till we know the extent of our obligation in a full conviction of our demerits. But this can never be so long as we pride ourselves on the rectitude of our nature, and stand upon the false bottom of a few moral performances.

We believe, in order to be holy; and, therefore, need not to be holy, in order to our believing. It is a denial of the gospel to suppose that we must be changed from sin to holiness, before we may venture upon Christ for salvation. Then faith is unnecessary, and no longer the foundation of holiness. And if we can thus change ourselves, we can do all without Christ and his Spirit. Horace's "sunt verba et voces, &c." is a vain boast; Cicero's Offices and the divine Plato can do me no good. Christ "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," is the religion I want.

I cannot love my neighbour as myself, till I love God with all my heart. I cannot love God but from a sense of his love to me in the forgiveness of my sins; and I cannot receive forgiveness from him as a benefit till I know my want of it.

To say that we are justified by works, is saying that we are justified by sin. Put the good actions of the best men into one scale, and their bad into another, and see whether the latter will not preponderate. And, if so, the result is sin.

It is to be supposed that those who talk of being justified by works, separate all imperfection, and alloy of evil from their good ones, and leave the bad quite out of the account.

I am convinced, with the greatest fulness of assurance, and by an inward feeling above all demonstration, that nothing can help me in my spiritual recovery but God. And my recovery,

in any tolerable degree, will be as full a proof to me of his help as the world is of his being. This is the sensibility I wish for; and if I can acquiesce in any thing less, all other marks will be fallacious.

Whenever I die, I die a sinner; but, by the grace of God, penitent, and, I trust, accepted in the Beloved.

I have some degree of power over my outward man, but little over my inward. I can make a shift to be just, do acts of kindness and humility, and put on a show of courtesy and civility; but the bent of my heart is still the same. I can no more love God with all my heart, or come up to St. Paul's description of charity, than I can reach heaven with my hands. In this point of view, what a seasonable aid is gospel power! and how exactly is the religion of the Bible suited to the wants of mankind, in its offers of forgiveness and renovation!

That same law which we cannot bear as a yoke upon our necks, we survey with pleasure, and take up willingly when it lies at our feet.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone, could never stand its ground long at a time. This is to me a proof of its truth and excellent tendency. It is not at all for the purpose of a corrupt world; and therefore it is no wonder it should be rejected, as often as it makes its appearance.

Sinful man, saved in Christ, always was, and always will be a mystery. But where is the mystery of our being saved by an inherent righteousness? O! why does sinful man for ever dispute against his remedy, and return to the beggarly elements of the world, the flesh, and the powers of nature, when the mercy of God is so plainly declared, and so fully made over to him, as his only help and comfort? St. Paul told the Jews

of his day, that justification was by faith only, and not by the works of the law. Suppose, now, they had understood this assertion of the ceremonial law, as many have done since, might they not very justly have said, "neither do we look to be justified, or accepted with God for our observation of the ceremonial part of the law, but for our obedience to the whole law, and especially the moral?" It is plain, therefore, that St. Paul, in speaking of this matter, always means the whole law, *rotundè*, as Martin Luther says; or else the dispute between them would soon have been at an end. He would only have affirmed what they never denied.

Did Christ die for small matters? for trifling frailties? Few are willing to charge themselves with more. Or, is St. Paul's representation of human nature true? And if it is, where are the believers? and what a blot does our pride make of the whole gospel!

We must either think of God as a reconciled Father, or groundlessly presume upon his mercy, or be under continual dread of his justice. The first of these is the Christian state; the second is a state of dangerous security; the last is a slavish state, full of fears and terrors, and, if we think of God at all, will destroy the comfort of our lives.

Redemption by the blood of Christ, (mark it well, O my soul!) is the ground-work of the majestic triumphant song of praise in heaven, Rev. v. 9. and a disposition to join in it, our chief capacity for, and actual happiness in time and eternity.

Dung and prune a bad tree to all eternity, it can bring forth no other than fruit of its own kind. Understanding this, is understanding the gospel.

We are justified all at once; without law, and

in spite of law; and for no other reason but because Christ died for us. When we are settled in this belief, law and conscience are upon good terms again.

Christ saves us from the sentence of condemnation we pronounce upon ourselves: if we leave it to him to pronounce, nothing can save us.

If ever we come to Christ, it must be conscious of our own blindness, and with all our distempers about us: he is not so absurd as to bid us first heal ourselves, and then come to him for a cure. Staying till we can bring some kind of fitness or worthiness of our own along with us, is gross misapprehension, if not total unbelief, and hinders many from ever coming to him at all.

If I was to live to the world's end, and do all the good that man can do, I must still cry, "mercy!" Why, then, should I be unwilling, or afraid to die this moment, with a sense of God's pardoning love, when I can have no other claim to salvation, if I was to live for ever?

One would think it is but tolerably modest to say that God knows the way to heaven better than we do, and that it is lawful for him to prescribe to us the terms of our admission into it; and yet there is no proposition more generally ridiculed.

The knowledge of my sin, and of God's love in the forgiveness of it, is my preparation for loving and obeying him. Why, then, should I be afraid to take the measure of my sin, since it is to be the measure of my love and activity?

When we come to understand the nature and extent of Christian morals, we see at once the necessity of remission and of divine help: these are two material points of difference betwixt Christianity and all the sects of paganism. The

Stoics, who spoke excellently of virtue, and were the most incontroverted sect, were withal self-sufficient.

Conscious of my weakness, or rather deadness, I offer myself to God to be his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works: but finding that I can never have a righteousness of my own so complete, as to be worthy of his acceptance, I offer up Jesus Christ daily and hourly upon the altar of my heart, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; beseeching God that it may be in the true fire of repentance and faith kindled by the eternal Spirit.

What makes a happy life? Knowing that we can smile upon death.

Human perfection is reality of desire, and sincerity of endeavour, and that in Christ is accepted: perfect righteousness was attained only by Christ, and that is imputed: these are two joyful truths of our religion; and I know of no other that can quiet the soul, or carry it on with so swift a progress towards real holiness.

The righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. is no kind or degree of our own, however acquired, either before or after faith and the new birth; but that which God bestows in and with Christ. The righteousness of God, according to the terms, must be absolutely and every way complete; but who can think this of his own, in the highest and best state of it.

I am sure God will not put me into a great fire, if a little one will do.

It is the property of faith, first to empty the soul, and then fill it with comfort, and strengthen it for duty: at the same time that I see sin in the shape of a fury, I see it nailed to the cross.

If God sees me in Christ, I cannot be in full

possession of the truth, without seeing myself there.

All my earthly happiness, quietness, and assurance, is from the knowledge and belief of Jesus and hope of his salvation; but I have not a thousandth part of the joy I should have, if I delighted in him, and loved him in some proportion to his excellence, benefits, and love to me, and lived wholly for him.

I am as far off as ever, by resolving and attempting in my own strength, to do what I cannot. All depends upon prayer, patient waiting, and receiving. Psal. cxxxi.

I go to Christ with faith for faith.

One touch of Christ makes him mine, with all he has and is: in him I am well beloved, clear of all blame, and perfectly righteous. All comes with this faith; love, fidelity, gratitude, pure obedience: without it, nothing.

It is a most reviving, transporting thought, that faith makes me as clean from all spot of sin, as pure and perfectly white as a saint in heaven: and if I do not believe in Christ chiefly for this, what do I believe in him for?

What have I to do on the peril of my soul, but to take God at his word; to lay all my sins down at the foot of the cross; and then prostrate myself there in humble adoration, pure love, and the most sincere professions of fidelity to my crucified Saviour?

He who has already done so much for me, will leave nothing undone.

Cordial, perfect closing with the will of God, from a root of faith, and lively sense of Christ's peace, to do whatever he commands, to avoid what he forbids, to suffer what he ordains, will be a step unto heaven; and I shall then know

upon what plan life should have been conducted, and what happiness I have lost.

“The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die:” the Lord speaks this to me as much as he did to David; and though I do not always apprehend it with the same degree of clearness, or height of assurance, yet the scripture always says it for me; and I ought never to disbelieve the word of God so much as for a moment.

The love of God in Christ, apprehended by faith, will give me an understanding, a heart, a tongue. Man’s sin is God’s glory in the forgiveness of it by Christ; and God’s forgiveness is man’s eternal shame, if he continues to sin against it.

Forgiveness of sin by the death of Christ, is a reason why we should never forgive ourselves.

Every man is, what he once was, and always will be, a condemned sinner, notwithstanding any repentance or future obedience, without an interest in Christ.

It is the joy of my heart that I am freed from guilt, and the desire of my heart to be freed from sin.

I see plainly that such a one has better qualities than I have. But if I am more a believer, I have a much better righteousness than any man can have in himself.

“No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” I do say that Jesus is the Lord; therefore, I say it by the Holy Ghost. This reasoning would set a world of souls at ease, who are perplexed about the reality of their faith. They cannot deny the second member of the syllogism, but will not be persuaded that they have a faith of the Spirit’s operation, because it has not been given them in some sensible manner, or because it is sometimes assaulted with doubts,

or because they cannot prove it by a higher measure of holiness. Query, What is that measure of holiness which must prove our faith? and whether any thing can prove it but itself?

Either there is such a thing as predestination to life, accompanied with a perfect renovation of heart, mind, and will, and then I do not find that I am of the number of the elect, as having no such experience; or I may hereafter attain to the perfection of the predestinated; or Christ apprehended by faith is a safe ground of hope, with imperfection, a great remainder of sin, and low degrees of holiness in himself. In the last only I have comfort; and a blessed hope it is, if I do not make it a pretence for sloth, or acquiescence in my present state.

Faith is trust in the promises of God for eternity.

CHAP. VIII.

GOOD WORKS.

IT is the hardest thing in the world not to think our good works better than they are, and to make the very best keep their distance in the office of justification. Though we must be judged by and according to our actions, yet we shall not be saved for them.

Doubtless, God takes care to qualify his faithful servants for the happiness he intends for them; which is, the enjoyment of himself. And there can be no other possible qualification for this

happiness, or a capacity of receiving and enjoying it, but holiness; that is to say, a full bent of soul towards God, and a hearty love and liking of all that he is, does, wills, and ordains. But then we must not pretend to bring this holiness to account, as the ground of our acceptance. A person, who is continually receiving favours from another, may as well reckon the last to be the procuring cause of the first, as we make our holiness, whatever it is, to be in any sense the cause or ground of our acceptance with God. When we have done all we ever shall do, the very best state we ever shall arrive at, will be so far from meriting a reward, that it will need a pardon.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone, is our fitness, advantage, and encouragement for the practice of good works, and can never be made a handle for sloth or licentiousness, when it is preceded by repentance, as, if received in faith, it necessarily must be. Whoever entertains it as a pretence or excuse for not working, or doing his best, is still impenitent and unbelieving, let him think what he will.

God makes himself a debtor to man, for his own goodness in man.

He that has once felt the peace of God, in the remission of sins, will hardly stop short, or make it a handle for sloth or licentiousness. This would be as if a man was travelling to a certain country, and having by some means or other got a taste of its excellent fruits, should make it a pretence for going no further, or turning back again.

It is well said, that though faith justifies us, yet works must justify our faith.

Justification by sanctification, is man's way to heaven; and it is odds but he will make a little serve the turn. Sanctification by justification, is God's, and he fills the soul with his own fulness.

The maintainers of imputed righteousness must be content to undergo the mortification of being thought opposers or discouragers of good works: though they constantly plead for them, and for their own doctrine as the best, if not the only sure way of attaining to them; do not come a whit behind their adversaries in the performance of them, and perform them more freely and sincerely, and upon more generous principles of love, gratitude, and obedience, than those who venture all upon their own actions, and make them the ground of their acceptance.

I trust to Christ for sanctification, and not to sanctification for Christ. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But, then, holiness is not the foundation of our reward. It is itself God's gift to us, in order to qualify us for our proper happiness, and as the grand means of enjoying him; and, therefore, cannot in any sense be the procuring meritorious cause of it. But nevertheless, it is, by this kind of reasoning, every way as necessary as if it was.

God pardons in order to cleanse. Whoever expects forgiveness without any thought or desire of being cleansed, cannot receive it. It is impossible for God to forgive an unrepenting sinner; and he does not repent, who does not purpose and wish to be changed.

I know and believe that all I am, have, or can be, without charity, is nothing: but I do not believe in charity for my acceptance with God.

Every other faith but that which apprehends Christ as a purifier, as well as our atonement and righteousness, is false and hypocritical. He can only be received into the soul, when he is desired for his goodness; and when he is there, he will not sit down idle.

We are accepted in Christ in the performance of good works, and not for them.

What motive to goodness is there in all nature, so forcible as the love of God in the forgiveness of our sins? And what fitness can any one possibly have in himself for works or working, on whom it will not operate?

It is next to impossible to do good actions, merely because they are good, till we are in possession of that principle so strenuously asserted by Martin Luther, viz. That our salvation is wholly of faith; and that good works are only a ground of comfort, as proofs of our faith, but signify nothing to our acceptance with God. And what a glorious recommendation of faith is this, that it is the only thing that makes way for the truth of obedience, from a pure motive of love! Our own interest in all the good we do, according to this notion, being quite out of the question.

It is impossible for a proud man to have so much as one virtue: he wants the very essence of all virtue, viz. disinterestedness and a pure love of rectitude.

A person who believes in the righteousness of Christ, may truly say, "Lord, what love have I unto thy law!" The law is necessary as a rule, and amiable as a free service, and performable in the power of faith; but, as exacting strict obedience under the penalty of death, it is a heavy load upon the conscience; and, in that sense, abolished to make way for a better dispensation.

A virtue wrought out of the stock of our own ideas, in our own strength, that is, merely human or pagan, is without foundation, has no reality, and can contribute nothing to our happiness. What, for instance, is the greatest affability and condescension, without a root of true humility;

forbearance of the outward act, without inward purity; patience without thankfulness; beneficence without love; and, especially, what is zeal for religion, or exactness in a form, if it does not spring from a heart devoted to God, and relinquishing all for communion with him? But I am sensible, and know, with the utmost certainty, that I can no more give these qualities to myself, in their inward deep ground, than I could make a world.

Christ's cross, truly believed, will have two seemingly different effects: it will put me upon being as good as ever I can; and make me sensible that I am altogether vile.

There can be no true religion without love, no love of man without love of God, nor love of God without the knowledge and love of Christ.

All virtue which does not spring from the cross of Christ, is defective in some respect or other; and most horribly in over-rating itself.

It is the duty of every Christian to aim at perfection, and be going on to it; but he is a very ill-informed Christian, if not a downright unbeliever, who depends upon it for salvation.

Faith goes before salvation, and works follow it; not to be made the ground of our justification, but as the necessary concomitants, and proper fruits of faith: and whenever obedience puts itself in the place of faith, St. Paul's words may fitly be applied to it: "Know that thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." Why, then, are works to be the great subject of inquiry at the day of judgment? Because they are the visible effects of faith, and only good as aspiring from a root of faith; so that the want of them proves of course the want of faith.

The life of faith can only spring from faith, as

trees and plants do from their proper seeds. The generality know better what their work is, than where to begin it.

If I have faith in Christ, I shall love him; if I love him, I shall keep his commandments; if I do not keep his commandments, I do not love him; if I do not love him, I do not believe in him.

A believer does not do good works to be saved by them, but in love to others, from a root of faith, and because he is saved. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Love of Christ for what he is, as made known unto us by what he has done and suffered for us, is first; and keeping the commandments is not for salvation, but because we are saved by him. Whatever we do on this ground, is well pleasing to God, and will have its reward; but it is an abomination in his sight, if we would obtrude it upon him as perfect in itself, and full satisfaction to the demands of his law.

It would be a great abuse of the doctrine of salvation by faith, and a state of dangerous security, to say, if it pleases God to advance me to a higher or the highest degree of holiness, I should have great cause of thankfulness, and it would be the very joy of my heart; but, nevertheless, I can do without it, as being safe in Christ; whereas there is no safety without an entire submission to the will of God.

CHAP. XI.

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

THE great mistake of life, and the cause of all the wickedness and misery in the world, is looking for happiness here, and especially in externals, where it never will be found. If we were in a state of diligent preparation and patient waiting for it in another life, we should have nothing to scramble or quarrel for, nor ever be disappointed; we should be freed at once from all vain anxiety, bear crosses, help one another in love, rejoice in hope, and welcome death.

The things which God hath prepared for them that love him, ~~are~~, according to the revelation of his nature and will, in Jesus Christ. In this belief study to know him more and more; make him your treasure and portion; and long for the everlasting enjoyment of him.

In heaven we shall have a perfect knowledge of sin, far beyond any thing we now conceive of it, in conjunction with the greatness of our deliverance; and the glory of redeeming mercy will be the eternal ground of our love and admiration. On earth it is the great exercise of faith, and one of the hardest things in the world, to see sin and Christ at the same time, or to be penetrated with a lively sense of our desert, and absolute freedom from condemnation: but the more we know of both, the nearer approach we shall make to the state of heaven; and are our own greatest enemies, if, together with the fullest comprehension of sin, and the deepest humiliation for it, we do not look unto Jesus, and see it taken away by the Lamb of God.

He is the greatest saint upon earth, who feels his poverty most in the want of perfect holiness, and longs with the greatest earnestness for the time when he shall be put in full possession of it.

Before you do any thing pleasing to the flesh, be sure that you have God's leave; and whatever he commands, though ever so unpleasant to the flesh, be sure to do it. Make a grievance of nothing but sin.

Christ will accept nothing at my hands, till I give him my heart; and when I do, I shall not give him mites, though one will be well taken.

Nothing can be happiness to us but what we think so; and, yet, thinking any thing to be happiness, does not make it so. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to us to be well informed in the matter.

Repent, and believe; believe, and love; love, and obey; obey in love; and be as happy as you can be in this world.

Temptations are not sins, but means of perfection, or causes of strengthening the will, and thrown in our way that we may resist them in the fear of God, conquer in his help, and increase our reward.

If I prefer any thing in my heart to God and his will, my whole state and being, every thought, word, and work, is sinful.

God's coming and presence in the soul, is best understood by the power of it in the change it works in us.

It is a day lost indeed, in which I lose ground of heaven. When my will is united to God's, I shall always have what I want. What hinders me from being thus religious and happy?

I have had but little thought or purpose of employing the talents which God has given me solely to his glory. Whenever I do this with a

single eye to please him, I need not be concerned what they are, one or ten, and shall be indifferent about the esteem of the world.

What has God for me to do to-day? I am not to live to myself. So I should have thought all my life, and every day of my life; doing my work faithfully, praising God for appointing it, and desiring no other happiness.

He who is Christ's free-man, is made such by Christian faith and obedience; he is heaven-taught; Spirit-led; has a single desire to know and please God better; is aiming at perfection, and grieving for nothing so much as the want of it.

A Christian is strong in resolution, fervent in his desire of holiness, and makes the most violent efforts to attain it; but, at the same time, knows that it is absolutely out of his own power; and therefore depends upon God for support, keeps close to him in prayer for constant supplies of light, grace, and comfort.

If God says thou shalt not, a child of God says, at once, I will not, in spite of strength of inclination, or violence of temptation. If God says, thou shalt, he says, in spite of custom, difficulty, or danger, I will. This is freedom; this is happiness; this is life and power from God; of which we may be as sure as that we did not make ourselves.

Enjoy the day in the day, without stretching your thoughts to some future time, and live to-day so as to enjoy to-morrow; but do not deceive yourselves with hopes of much enjoyment from any day.

God's design is to bring us happily to himself in another world, and he will leave no means unessayed for this purpose. If we have the same end in view, and look up to him, as carrying it

on steadily for us, we may be happy both here and hereafter. If we have not, the consequence must necessarily be despondency, vexation, and fretfulness at the ways of Providence.

The will of God is my pole-star, and, with my eye constantly upon it, I shall be carried safely through all storms and tempests.

I am not sure of the present hour: I am sure I have nothing to do with any thing else.

Bearing with thyself in the want of spiritual strength, or absence of spiritual comfort, is neither more nor less than bearing with God, and the effect of no common grace.

Without the enjoyment of conscience, I can have no other.

The spirit in the children of God, is like an organ: one man is one stop; another, another; the sound is different, the instrument the same, but music in all.

Whatever opposes God in my heart, or keeps him out of it, must be abhorred and cast out: the opposition is strong, and the work difficult; and we see, at once, that it can only be done with divine help. It is the excellence of scripture to offer this help, and call us to make use of it.

Head-knowledge is our own, and can polish only the outside; heart-knowledge is the Spirit's work, and makes all glorious within. Nothing is well done in our spiritual building, but what is done with prayer and God's help. Fight and pray. Fly and pray.

Thank God for laying his command on my heart, and for disposing my heart to delight in it.

When we feel no burden, and complain of no want but that of entire sanctification, life will be a continual dying, and death welcome.

When we obey the will of God from the heart, we stand before him, as the angels do, in the

original glory and full blessing of our natures; and so far as we come short of this, we come short of happiness.

Is this a dying thought?—All think they mean well; and, by an egregious piece of self-flattery, they take it for granted, that our defect of good lies not in the will but the ability. Just the reverse. If the will is good, we are good.

Purity of heart, mind, and conscience, does not consist in freedom from temptation or total insensibility, but in abstinence from the outward act of sin, and suppression of all inward motions and tendencies to it, in the fear of God, and with a steady choice of his will. I shall be a happy man, and possess consciousness of help from above in answer to prayer, when I am determined at all events for the will of God. Show me where the will of God is, I know where pleasure is. Sensuality will not do, gross or refined. Nothing can support my spirits, or enable me to pass through the world with any degree of constant satisfaction, but walking with God, in the faith of Christ, as a reconciled Father, doing his will, under his eye, with his help; acquiescing in this state of mind; looking no farther; desiring no other riches; living for no other end.

If we long truly for God, he has given us a great deal in that longing; and if he makes us wait now, he will make us full amends hereafter. O Jesus, call me to God by thy cross, thy love, thy spirit, and then call me home.

Oh! for a steady will to think and do all with a sole regard to the eye of God, and with great indifference for the esteem or censure of any man living.

In case of sin allowed, or weakly resisted, the conscience will not be quieted with hopes and promises; no, nor with the blood of Christ.

The more faith, the less conscience of sin and less servile fear; the less conscience of sin, the more consciousness and lively sensibility of its odious, cursed nature.

Time flies fast, but conscience should keep pace with it.

December 28, 1763.—Press on in the name and strength of God to an assured victory.

The heart is due to God. O! what joy, ease, and freedom, when I can say it is God's for his love, for Christ's sake, by the Spirit's power; no enjoyment but in God or God's work. O! for the pure heart and the single eye!

It is a hard thing for a real Christian, fearing and striving against all sin, to be patient with it, in submission to the Divine will; but what can we do, if God is pleased to suffer it in us, as he does for wise purposes; to humble us, to convince us of our dependence; to keep us close to Christ: so St. Paul exulted in the grace of God, and could defy remaining corruption to condemn him, Rom. vii. The moment we think that we have no sin, we shall desert Christ.

We may know by our affection to the Sabbath, whether eternity will be forced upon us.

If it pleases God to endue me with spiritual wisdom, I shall from henceforth pay a greater regard to the teaching of my Lord, and have no treasure but in heaven, no heart but for heaven.

The great mistake of life is self-pleasing, or looking for a state of rest and satisfaction here, not only in sensual gratification, but even in the way of religion, instead of taking up the cross, labour in duty, and submission to the will of heaven, with a renunciation of all worldly schemes of happiness, and patient waiting for death to put us in possession of it. The only happiness

of this world, is preparing for it in another, and being content without it till death.

To think and act, to be as much disengaged in respect of N. N. and as necessarily drawn to seek happiness elsewhere, as if there was no such person in the world:—the work is great, and the time is short; but what cannot God do?

I never was happy till I knew that I could not be happy in this world, and consented to wait for it till God's time and place. This thought will keep me from all self-pleasing in forbidden ways; reconcile me to sufferings, crosses, injuries, mortifications, and put a smile on the face of death.

Religion does not consist in a point. The soul that has entered into the true spirit of it, is never satisfied with its attainments, but continually presses on to greater heights; and notwithstanding the greatest abundance of graces received, is still craving, thinks itself poor, and utterly unworthy of any reward. This is humility and poverty of spirit. Pride will carry a man to heaven's gate, but nothing but humility will find admission.

“He that is not with me,” says our Saviour, “is against me.” Mere indifference to good, is evil.

The truest mortifications, and the surest test of a real disposition to be mortified, are those which we receive from others and from God. Self-mortification, or crosses of our own choosing, are often only a more refined species of pride and self-will.

The world slides into our hearts by the avenues of sense, in cases we little think of. There may be danger in giving ourselves up fully to a warm sunshine, or the pleasures of a beautiful landscape. This may be thought morose, indeed; but let the militant soul be upon its guard.

I may cheat myself and others, with a counterfeit appearance of virtue; or, rather, keep under the contrary appearance by continual acts of violence; but the reality of it, and of all our graces, can only spring from a *nature*. Consciousness of our want of this nature, and sensible concern for it, is the beginning of religion, or repentance; patient waiting upon God for it, according to Christ, is the progress of religion, or faith and hope; and the actual receiving of it, is the end of religion or charity. The man who has the Spirit of God, and of Christ, is spiritual, redeemed, a Christian, the child of God, and has in him the nature and life of heaven and eternity. The man who has no other spirit than his own, though ever so learned, rational, and regular in his behaviour, is carnal, sensual, earthly, the child of death, and stands in the kingdom of darkness: the tree is corrupt, and the fruit corrupt, though they appear ever so beautiful. This doctrine is of the very essence and life-blood of Christianity, and nothing can be plainer, or more full to the purpose than St. Paul's assertion, Rom. viii. 9. But it is a terrible mystery to fleshly wisdom, and will for ever be the subject of debate and contradiction.

Sanctification is a gift; and the business of man is to desire, receive, and use it. But he can by no act or effort of his own, produce it in himself. Grace can do every thing; nature nothing.

When my appetite is weak, squeamish, or vitiated, I know it is a symptom of decay and bodily disorder. And is the want or deprivation of spiritual appetite the same indication of debility and great disorder in the soul?

In temporals, riches is power; in spirituals, poverty.

It is a terrible mortification to a serious man, to

find the evil spirit still in possession, after he had thought it entirely gone: but withal it affords a happy conviction of our importance as well as inbred corruption; and will lead, in time, with hearty repentance and true faith, to that friendly power from whence cometh our help.

It is with the soul as with the stomach; there must be a healthy constitution of both, to digest and assimilate their respective food.

Meekness of wisdom compels where reason cannot persuade.

When we quit our hold of the creature, and of earthly enjoyments, what is there left for us to stay upon? What can make us amends for the want of them? Is there any thing else beside, that we can feel, relish, and feed upon, with delight? Yes; faith, hope, and charity. These are a blessed resource to the soul; and it is the choice and possession of these, that constitute a Christian, and the Christian happiness.

When we once come to know and believe in good earnest, that there is a peace with God to be had, and that it is the very thing we want, it will make us cool in all other pursuits.

There is great folly and presumption in comparing ourselves with others, or despising any man. We may be worse than others, when we think ourselves better: possibly, we neither know them nor ourselves. If we are really better, the difference is not from ourselves; and, whatever they may be, our own want of humility is certainly a most terrible defect.

I desire the Spirit of God above and beyond all other possessions, interests, satisfactions, or enjoyments; both as a controlling principle, discernible in its effects, and enabling me to command myself and all my powers for God; and as a distinct inward feeling or consciousness, and

foretaste of the heavenly happiness. I think both are held forth in scripture; and the one can hardly be without the other in any heart.

There is no possibility of happiness but in the possession of our own choice, will, and desire; and the will of man, in his present condition, stands bent against the order and will of God. What is to be done? And whose will must be changed? The concurrence of our wills, with the will of God, is our rectitude and happiness: their opposition, our corruption and misery.

The first man fell by withdrawing his will from the will of God. By nature we stand in the same state of separation, and are perpetually acting his revolt over again, and can only be restored by the reduction of our wills to the order of God's.

Peace with God, and peace with all the world, and with all nature.—See Hos. ii. 18. and the parallel places.

How happy is the soul that has got above the prevalence of earthly hopes and fears, desires and relishes, and can, upon good grounds, consider itself as a child of God's family and kingdom; promoting interests; partaking of its blessings; only influenced by its expectations; and waiting for death as the door of admission to all its enjoyments!

If I give myself to the creature in any such way as I know to be forbidden, I must not think that I can approach God, or that he will meet me in prayer, &c. Every attempt of that kind, is an act of self-deceit and hypocrisy.

Abstaining from evil is nothing, without an actual turning to God in Christ, and tending to him with the bent of my will and desire, as the rest, centre, and life of my spirit. This change constitutes the idea of religion, is the great work

we have to transact with God, and should be the basis of all our prayers.

When once I am in Christ, as a living member of his body, and so joined to him as to be one spirit, I am (in a qualified sense) what he was; have the benefit of what he did; and shall be what he is.

Nothing but a persuasion of our title to God's favour, and consequently to a happy eternity, can make us desire and seek after it in good earnest, and order all our affairs with a view to it. It is the great design of the Christian religion, and the peculiar tendency of its distinguishing doctrines, to possess and fill our minds with this persuasion.

Religion is seeking after the gracious presence of God in the soul; and finding him there, is salvation or heaven begun. Those who have experienced the two states of nature and grace, know the difference to be as great as between heaven and earth.

With regard to what I read or think, the question should be, Is it really interesting? Will such a speculation improve me in religious knowledge, or bring me nearer to God? If it will not, discard it at once.

Holiness is happiness. They are to each other as cause and effect, and one necessarily produces the other; at least, more than any thing else can do. But what passes in the world for virtue, is an errant counterfeit. And I believe very few of those who pretend to it, either expect or desire to be any better for it inwardly.

Christ would be loved for all he did, and for all he is; and we cannot love him for one, without loving him for the other. The sense of his benefits will be in proportion to the sense we have of our own sinfulness; which cannot be

without an importunate desire to be delivered from it.

Seeking after God for himself, is the renewed mind, the single eye, the pure heart, the birth of the Spirit: Seeking after him for any thing but himself, is not seeking him sincerely.

True goodness is universal and uniform, when it is God's life and nature in us; like God, without partiality or respect of persons. No virtue, merely human, can stand this test.

He who can say, "I am so weary of sin, as to be weary of life, and even long to put off that flesh which is the seat of it," says a great deal, though he may still labour under many imperfections.

Never turn aside from any command, for the cross that is in it; for that is the very thing that makes it a blessing, and the means of spiritual improvement. The Holy Ghost is most, if not only, a comforter, in the absence or contempt of worldly comforts. It seems better to take the measure of our state from a real change of desires, and continual progress towards perfection, than any sensible communications, joyous feelings, or high raptures. When men are taught to expect these, as the great marks and seals of their adoption, the pride of some will soon help them to a competent share of them; whilst others, less bold, and not willing to outrun their own experience, will be thrown into grievous perplexities.

The new birth is our being received by the will of God into a new state of being; to the remission of sins by faith; to a participation of Christ's perfect righteousness; to a renovation of will by the Holy Ghost. And this life proves itself, as every other kind of life does, by its natural and proper acts; by contrition; by prayer; by love; and by a continual progress in

holiness. Spiritual comforts, if eagerly desired, and rested in, may keep us from God as well as earthly ones.

We greatly deceive ourselves, by thinking we are, and have what we know, or that we can be made wise and holy by other men's words and notions. Whereas all divine wisdom and real sanctity arises from within; from the Spirit of God working at the root; and is by evolution, as a plant from its seed. Every step we take higher in the kingdom of grace, we necessarily sink so much lower in our own esteem.

When I can bear opposition, calumny, contempt, hatred, and all manner of ill usage, as infinitely less than my desert, I may possibly be meek; but not before. The religion of the gospel is conversion by the power of God; therefore, whatever is mere nature, or the effect of natural power, necessarily comes short of it.

If we took but the same care of our inward dispositions, from a sense of God's presence, as we do of our outward deportment before an earthly superior, we should soon be prepared for his most searching operations.

If I resign myself to the Spirit, it must be with a full resolution to do and suffer a great deal. He will not take me in hand upon any other terms.

Nothing can make life pleasant, but some kind of acquiescence in the present hour; from a consciousness that we are in it according to the order of God, either doing or suffering his will, or at least not acting contrary to it.

It seems to be the great controversy among the better sort of people at all times, whether a decent moral life, together with a profession of faith in Christ, and regularity of outward worship, is the religion of the gospel, or a heart devoted to

God, sensible of his communications, and inwardly changed in the bent of its desires and affections; or, in other words, whether true religion is not altogether a work of God upon the soul, distinctly known and felt in its several stages of repentance, faith, and charity. The latter opinion is commonly called enthusiasm; but the former certainly is so, as being a false ground of trust in God: but no man ever was deceived in the main by the other. He is, and has, all that religion requires of him, even though he should be mistaken in ascribing too much to inward sensations and divine experiences.

One credible person steadily bearing testimony to the power of divine grace, in his own conversion, will have a greater effect in converting others, than the most learned and eloquent declaration of the same truth from a thousand unconverted preachers. 1 John i. 1.

It is the worst kind and highest form of pride, to think of being a Christian, or spiritual in any other way, or by any other means, than the poorest and most illiterate man upon earth is made such, *viz.* by the sole power of the Holy Ghost.

It will be a blessed time, when I can go into all companies with the simplicity of a man in Christ; speaking the truth in love, undauntedly, and yet fearful of offending.

Christian morals, or rather renovation, is a glorious idea; and it fills one with rapture to think it is promised, and attainable, though not fully in this life.

What is misfortune? Whatever separates us from God. What a blessing? Every means of approximation to him. No right opinions, clearness of comprehension, or fulness of belief in religious matters, signify any thing to our conversion and establishment, unless they are from God.

The crosses and mortifications we meet with from others, are a precious means of humbling, instructing, and improving us; we should be undone without them. Madam Guyon carries this so far as to say, that if we had nobody about us to plague and vex us, God would send an angel from heaven to do it.

With the help of God, I will neither suffer the devil to lurk behind the cross, nor hide it from me.

What will it profit me to be always thinking of Christ, and forming acts of resignation to him, but never doing any thing for him?

The Spirit does not only confer and increase ability, and so leave us to ourselves in the use of it; but every single act of spiritual life is the Spirit's own act in us.

I am resolved, with the grace of God, to forgive every body every thing, and myself nothing.

Is what I know and feel of spiritual things the result of a new nature, or of the old only under a different form, and feeding upon different comforts?

O! what shifts, what multiplicity of miserable inventions, to quiet the poor soul, and create to ourselves the paradise we have lost, in some kind or other of a worldly life! When it can only be regained in God, and in the full restoration of the heart to him in love and obedience through Christ.

We can never arrive at any true settlement, by propping ourselves up with the opinions or experiences of others. Rest must be the result of our own fellowship with God. Our religion, for the most part, is nothing but the prophet Jeremiah's stolen words. Jer. xxiii. 30.

"Thou art my portion, O Lord!" Behold here the test of rectitude, of happiness, of a

Christian. Speak this truly, O my heart, and all that is within me, or I am undone for ever.

Whenever I learn of Christ to be meek and lowly in heart, surely I shall say, "whence is this to me, that my Lord should come to me!"

Passion costs me too much, to bestow it upon every trifle.

Be it ever remembered, as the ground of all true conversion, a truth of the utmost importance in religion, necessary to cause us to aim our endeavours aright, and fix us in faith, humility, and dependence on God, that the essence of happiness is not actions, but affections. Actions will follow affections, but without them are wholly insignificant to our cure. Consider well, Matt. v. 3—10. Rom. ii. 28, 29. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 3. I have a very distinct feeling and apprehension how the mental vices of pride, envy, and wrath, war against the soul; and that so long as they are predominant, it must necessarily be in a sickly, self-tormented state: but then I have not the same consciousness with regard to some kinds of sensual indulgence. God knows how they would hurt me, though I may not. Here reason is at a stand, and faith must do its office. Perhaps 1 Cor. vi. 13—20. would help me to a right understanding of this matter, if I could come at the meaning of it.

Every man should be a sun in his little sphere; merely a creature of divine goodness, manifesting God's glory, and shining without merit.

Christian holiness, that which God requires of us, and offers to us, is health to the soul, and would do us good: the virtue we generally acquiesce in, and prefer to it, is a poor thing, and leaves us just where it finds us, in point of happiness.

I can never be in union with God, till I stand

before him without guile, according to the truth of my state: if it is bad, in confession and humiliation; if good, in thankfulness, desire of improvement, and humiliation still for the imperfection of it.

God deliver me from sin, and give me the desire of perfect purity, and let happiness come when it may! Peace outstripping real attainments, is dangerous presumption. The truly humble man is humble in secret; it is a pain to him to have his humility seen and observed; and whenever he has occasion to confess his defects, it is for no other end but to take shame to himself.

Let us put ourselves fully into the hands of God once for all; not only conscious of our weakness, and so submitting to his power, because we cannot help it; but choosing and preferring to receive all our strength of him, rather than to have it in and of ourselves, if we might; to have the root of our spiritual life in him, to be actuated by his power, and blessed with his happiness. Methinks we may see something of the fall of Lucifer, and the sin of the first man, in the contrary disposition. The creature is not fit to be trusted with self-ability: pride is inseparable from it, and puffs it up sufficiently, even with a derived power, seen and acknowledged to be such. The great St. Paul wanted a thorn in the flesh.

If we were at peace within, external things would have but little power to hurt us.

If God gives internal comfort, it is not that we may live upon it, but to support and animate us to some further end.

Have I a distinct inward consciousness of a real desire to be with God; of such a preference of the heavenly to the earthly state, and such a fitness for it, as that if it was offered to my choice

this moment, I should find myself carried thither by a centripetal force, and rush into it with joy and transport?

Let others think as ill of me as they please, provided I do not think too well of myself.

We should conceive of Time and Eternity as different periods of the same state, or different degrees of the same kind of life, requiring the same dispositions, but always improving; and not as separated by a great gulph and quite different from each other in their interests, pleasures, and employments. This would be running time into eternity, and bringing eternity down to time: we should then think and act like eternal beings, and live here as we are to do in heaven. Let the whole world, therefore, be divided into two great sects, viz. *Timists* and *Eternalists*.

To-day's duty is no discharge for to-morrow: every day has its own peremptory demand upon us, not only for repetition but advancement. It is a saying of St. Basil, that the soul would starve, as well as the body, without a continual renewal of its proper food; and St. Paul's motto in the midst of such a course of labour and activity as would quite have sunk the spirits of another man, was FORWARD.

I can never bear to be found fault with, or thought meanly of by others, unless I am beforehand with them in thinking meanly of myself.

I find I owe meekness, tranquillity, patience, &c. to my body as well as to my soul.

We expect submission and amendment from the wrong person: we should expect them from ourselves.

Have a work to do daily, with a will to it, and a prayer upon it, and let that work be God's.

Submission to the will of God once for all,

and then I shall have my own, every day and hour of my life.

There can be no true peace with God, without faithfulness in duty, and a resolute abhorrence of all sin.

Whatever good qualities you have, desire not to have them seen, unless it be for the benefit of others, and to bring glory to the Author of them. Be as good, and do as much good as ever you can, and give the pride of it to the devil.

Time can only be made happy, as eternity will be, by our living for and with God; not grudgingly, or barely from a sense of duty in obedience to a command; but freely and with delight, as the very thing we choose, and are carried to with the bent of our nature.

I am resolved to receive my virtue from God as a gift, instead of presenting him with a spurious kind of my own.

Till we do our duty to God, we can never do it to man. And what we do to others, will be more from spurious motives than sense of duty or religion in the heart.

“The meek shall inherit the earth.” Whatever other sense the words may have, they are certainly true in this, that the meek have much more enjoyment of themselves, and pass more quietly through the world, whatever is their lot in it, than other men. What would the greatest affluence signify to a man's happiness, if he had it with this condition, to receive one or more wounds with a sword every day of his life? Pride and passion are that sword.

I am under a strict bond to Jesus, to receive the rule of right from him in all cases, and act agreeably to it.

The heart can only be happy according to its bent, and in the possession and enjoyment of

what it loves. All, therefore, depends upon the choice it makes of its object; and there is but one we can think of, which, for power, fulness, and continuance, is sufficient for its happiness.

I would not exchange the little faint efforts I can make towards praising God, for all worldly comforts.

A tender conscience is an inestimable blessing; that is, a conscience not only quick to discern what is evil, but instantly to shun it as the eyelid closes itself against a mote.

A lively sense of God's mercy in Christ, and love in the heart; is not this the Spirit's baptism of fire? And what have I to do in the world but to get and keep it?

What God commands, I will do; what he forbids, I will not do. This may be hard work, and a cross to self; but if I am not thus disposed and resolved once for all, where is my obedience, and what less than this can be called sincerity.

God has only one way of bringing all to himself; viz. by martyrdom, or the crucifixion of our wills.

So long as the animal sensual nature is predominant, we can only amuse ourselves with one opinion after another, but never come to the truth.

I did not know how much I was given up to earthly comforts, till they were taken from me, and I was reduced to the necessity of living upon God.

Now for a single eye and a pure heart! now there seems to be an opening to the happy time of forsaking all! It is only a glimpse; but if I keep my attention fixed upon it, it will bring me full into the light.

There is a kind of almightiness in the will, to

reject sin whenever it is pleased to do its office ; as it infallibly always would, if it was so free as is commonly imagined. It seems to me that the great change which the scripture calls regeneration, or renewal to the image of God, is setting the will at liberty to execute the commands of him who gave it us, and who does nothing without it.

The Spirit plies his office with great assiduity and divine art; pressing to be heard, waiting for the favourable season, and always ready to improve it.

A fall is God's advantage as well as the devil's; and as we incline to one or the other, we may rise higher from it, or fall still lower.

The more I increase in notions only, the more guilt of knowledge and pride of heart.

It will be well with me when perfection is the great purpose of my life, ruling passion and wish of my heart, and I direct my efforts towards it, and grieve as much for coming short of it, as natural or worldly men do when they are perpetually crossed and hindered in the darling object of their pursuit.

There is no happiness but in perfection, consequently, not in this world; for the nearer we come to it, the more we grieve for coming short of it.

God made us for eternity; and his aim in all he does, is to bring us happily to it. Hence the necessity of pain, sickness, crosses, to break the strong chain which binds us to the world, and force us to take part with God in his grand design.

Every man might be more useful and happy than he is, if he would be contented to be employed about one thing.

Better give my heart to God late than never;

better by force, or the loss of earthly comforts, than not at all.

If I was to give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned, Christ would say to me: "This is not the sacrifice I want. Give up that darling lust; give up every sin; give up thy will; sacrifice thyself to be as a whole burnt-offering in the fire of love, and for the joy of my salvation."

The "poor in spirit,"—are those who desire no earthly distinction, covet no earthly riches, are thankful for what they have, and think it more than they deserve.

Desired to pay my subscription to the county hospital. God's demand is upon the heart, for love, for cheerfulness in giving, for activity in doing good, for a great deal more than I do, for singleness and purity in all things, and all for Christ's sake.

When frames are high, self is high, pride is high, and faith often at the lowest. When frames are low, faith is not therefore high; for self may be as strong as ever, and only restless and troubled for the want of its sole support.

The will of God is my life, and dearer to me than life. If I do not stand to this, I am undone.

Conversion is, when the longing of the soul is no longer to sensual gratifications, or worldly abundance, but simply and purely to heavenly things; so that when the question is asked, wherein do I seek for rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment, the heart can answer at once,—in communion with God, through Christ, by the Spirit.

We are perfect, not by arriving at a certain point of perfection, but by always going on; as a traveller is equally perfect in every step of his

journey, who knows his way, and proceeds in it without stopping.

One sensible, experimental proof of Christ's power and presence in time of conflict, of danger, or temptation, will hardly ever be forgotten, and binds the soul to him in trust and affiance more than a thousand arguments.

God cannot be enjoyed but as he is loved, nor loved but as he is known, nor known but by Christ, nor by Christ but as revealed to the heart by the Spirit.

Actions, affections, passions, flowing from religion as a *nature*, are a source of happiness to ourselves and others; but the contrary, when religion is submitted to as a task, and no love and purity in the heart.

We have time enough to prepare for eternity, and should be thankful that we have none to spare.

We cannot enjoy both God and sin. It is the curse of nature and horrible corruption, to choose the latter.

I see plainly why I am no better; it is because I do not live more upon Christ. The more I possess and enjoy his love, the more I shall study to please and be like him.

The journey through life is as Peter's walking on the water; and if Christ does not reach out his hand, we are every moment in danger of sinking.

He is a happy man who is never angry; next to him is he whose anger immediately recoils upon himself for being angry.

He who is heartily troubled for his anger in godly repentance, and earnestly striving against it, is, perhaps, a more virtuous man, than he who, from natural meekness of temper, is seldom or never angry.

Nature says, if I may not sin, let me die; Grace says, let me die rather than sin.

The Christian draws nigh to God as a reconciled father in the faith of Christ; presses on to a complete victory over sin, and the glory of the inward man in a pure and perfect heart. God to-day; and what to-morrow? God.

Thankful for Christ, thankful for every thing, and always in a serene quiet state of mind.

It is a great paradox, but glorious truth of Christianity, that a good conscience may consist with a consciousness of evil.

The gospel precepts, or morality, are not regulated in the manner of Socrates, Plato, &c. but delivered to us on the authority of God: and receiving them as so delivered, is not only a better security against mistake than reason can be in its most improved state; but is our rectitude in the sight of God, and perhaps the highest excellence of which the soul of man is capable, as being the test of its obedience and submission to the sovereign and only perfect will.

“No man when he hath lighted a candle putteth it under a bushel.” “From him that hath not, shall be taken even that which he hath.” Let me not think that God hath given me abilities which he hath not, or be unthankful for what he does give, or suffer them to lie dead upon my hands, or take the glory of them to myself, or envy others for having more, or despise any for having less.

I should be as thankful for every morsel I eat, as if I was perishing with hunger, and it was brought to me by a miracle; thus, indeed, it is by a great many.

I shall be as happy as it is possible to be on this side the grave, when I have a clear perception that divine things are preferred in my esteem

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION, &c.

to all others, and have taken such possession of my soul, that I settle upon them with full acquiescence; not looking for rest and satisfaction from sensual gratifications, worldly prospects, or comforts of any kind; but solely in communion with God, and enjoy myself day by day in doing his work, in the relish I have for spiritual exercises, and a diligent preparation for eternity. O blessed Spirit! clear up this idea to my mind, and by thy effectual operation make it life and power in my heart.

The earth would be still a paradise, if we had the art of enjoying it, and did not turn it into a curse to ourselves by our sins and passions.

It is hardly worth while to be happy for the short time of life. If you must needs be at pains about it, let your first efforts be to find out the men who can tell you what happiness is. He is the least unhappy, who makes least account of happiness in this world, puts himself in God's way to it, patiently waits his time for it, and can see a smile on the face of death.

The best thing we can do in the want of love, is to endeavour, under a sense of duty, to do as nearly as possible what love would.

Christ's service, and the appertinents of God's worship, are the enjoyment of the day, the seasoning of life, the soul's feast and proper nourishment.

No compensation, commutation, or substitute of any kind will be allowed instead of a renewed will and an unreserved obedience from a pure heart. Be entire with God, O my soul! come full into the joy of a pure heart, an obedient will, and upright conscience. Never set a foot forward without making it a step to the New Jerusalem. I shall have brought all to a happy conclusion, when God has full possession of my heart.

A person who has taken gospel truths into his mind and heart, and can think, with well-grounded hope and pleasing expectation, on the joys of believers, will have but little relish for Homer, Virgil, Horace, Tully, &c.

If you would be humble, and know what you want Christ for, never think how much you have done, but how much you have left undone. On the other hand, make not what Christ has done for you a pretence for doing less than you might.

Happiness is not here: it cannot be found in the way of nature, sadly corrupt and disordered; and nature will have its share of the man, in spite of all his efforts to dispossess it.

The heart is to the soul what the stomach is to the body; a good or bad constitution resulting to and from each respectively.

In all events and occurrences, trials and crosses, I would go to Christ for advice, and power to act according to it.

On earth, prayer, improvement, waiting; in heaven, praise, perfection, happiness.

Live with God now, as you expect and wish to live with him for ever, in holy fear, pure love, and the perfection of an obedient will. It is an awful thing to die, more or less as we make it an awful thing to live.

Those who magnify the present comforts of religion, and embrace it chiefly as a means of happiness in this world, are only sensualists in disguise, and sure to be disappointed.

A good man loves goodness in the abstract, for its own sake, in others as well as himself, in God transcendently.

God will not suffer the world to smile upon his servants, lest they should fall in love with it. The man who knows his business in the world,

and has his eye fixed upon his best interests, can welcome pain, crosses, passion, hatred.

When shall I be pleased with myself? Never, till I am pleased with God.

“Followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” If we are Christians, we shall believe, desire, and long for the promises; and as surely as we desire them, we shall prepare for them in God’s way.

Engaging in religion merely for the present comfort and satisfaction of it, or because it is the happiest kind of life, is doing it upon a mistaken motive; and if our expectations are not answered to the full, we shall grow weary of it, and fly to something else. It should be for eternity; and then we shall be set free from worldly desires, supported with hope, refuse no hardships, wait patiently, and continue steadfast to the end.

Every spiritual person, at times, is lively, and feels a glow at his heart, in the exercise of faith, prayer, meditation, and reading the scripture; but though he has the same will and desire, yet, in spite of all his efforts, is oftener dull, cold, and unaffected. I can account for this no way, but by the Spirit’s agency and presence at one time more than another; because in other intellectual acts and appearances it is not so. Whatever science a man is in pursuit of, the mind is ready at his call, though not always with the same vigour, yet with very little variation or interruption.

It is something to make the thought of Christ’s presence a check to every thought, word, and deed; but still it is only being an eye-servant. Would I do and forbear the same things for his sake, and out of pure love to his commands, if I knew he did not see me?

When time is devoted to God, we shall have enough for all other uses.

“Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;”—abstracted from the world, its interests and pleasures; singly and purely devoted to God, and the pursuit of heavenly things; determined for all duty and against all sin. “That Christ may dwell in my heart by faith;”—the joy and the Lord of my heart; the sweetness and the drawing of my heart; the cordial and the life of my heart; so lovely and so beloved, that I had rather die than displease him. “My heart is fixed:”—to have no temptation, or evil lusting, I cannot say; not to yield to it, or fall by it, I must say.

I am sensible that the Spirit will bring me under a severe discipline, and carry on his work according to the rule of scripture, without allowance of one sin, or dispensing with any one command. Am I in his hands for such a work as this, and does he say amen to it in my heart?

If desire of regeneration, and preserving prayer for it, is not a proof of faith, it will be hard to find a man who can give a better.

Get a step towards heaven; endeavour to master some evil temper, and break loose from some worldly tie every day. Victory over one sin upon right grounds, will pave the way to an easy conquest of all.

If I was to begin my life again, what would I do? Live to God, or myself? Do I not see the amiableness, excellence, and necessity of such a disposition? What, then, is my present determination?

What does it signify where I am? or what can I want, if I advert always to the presence of God; see him in every thing; find him in my heart;

and have no design in the world but of living to his will; nor expectation of rest and enjoyment but in communion with him?

My rest is not here, either in respect of outward things, or the inward state of my mind.

If I do not enjoy the will of God, I shall have no enjoyment of any thing else. I may have comfort for the remainder of life, if I can but come to a resolution of giving up all other comforts and enjoyments for the will of God.

Conquest of temptation, deliverance from the power of evil habits, and a ready compliance with the will of God, in answer to prayer, is a much better proof of his favourable presence than joyous feelings. The latter may be mistaken; but the former are as sure a mark of the divine operation and blessing, as that a plentiful crop of corn has had the benefit of rain and sunshine.

Sensible communications may be, and are often withheld from the best of men: the better they are, the more they desire perfect conformity to the will of God as their portion and happiness.

Happy man, when that hallelujah is the experience of my soul,—“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!”

My cure is in the hands of God, and I must not set him a time, but pray earnestly, and wait patiently for its coming.

God helps us in the way of our own wills, and we are never helped internally, till they are in union with the commandment. It is a glorious state, and happy proof of our renovation, when we stand firm on God's side against temptation.

How happy shall I be in the full desire—O! how happy in the full experience of the grace and power of Christ!

“As yet hardenest thou thyself against me,

that thou wilt not let sin go?" See the history of Pharaoh.

The soul cannot possibly be in a state of indifference; it must have a prevailing, supreme regard to some object or other as its support. The great interesting question is, God or sensuality. If there is not a clear, positive determination for the former, the latter is proved upon us at once.

We miscarry sadly in our religious progress, by attempting the hardest things first. It is our duty to praise God, and happy is the soul that can do it; but it is a vain thing in the mouths of those who have not yet learned to have patience with him.

A plant must be set in the earth, and have rain and sunshine. This is the very case of the soul's implantation into Christ, and growth by him.

We could be well enough content to be rid of some particular spiritual disorders, and perhaps may be earnest in prayer for it; but this is wretched tampering with a mortal disease, and in this way we shall be always unhelped. Christ's method of healing is, to strike at the constitution of sin, by going to the root of the distemper; and we never can persuade him to begin his work at the wrong end.

Communion with God can only be upon God's terms, by a perfect surrender of myself, all I have and am; my understanding, heart, will, conscience, affections, state, and life; to know, do, suffer, and be whatever he pleases. God's victory is in and over the heart. Being good is a different thing from doing good, and much harder.

That any man's thoughts are raised heavenwards, and his affections set on things above, is as much from the Spirit's agency, and by as great a miracle, as if his body was to rise up into the air.

A little further from sin, and a little nearer to God, day by day.

The comfort of the Holy Ghost is, first, his establishing us in the faith of Jesus Christ; that through him we have forgiveness of sins, and in him are made the righteousness of God, and heirs of everlasting life: and, secondly, his working repentance, uniting us to the will of God, and renewing us to his image in love. The first is our chief comfort here; the latter is only a begun state, and will be our glory and never-ending happiness in heaven.

Grieve for nothing but sin, and for not grieving for it enough. Rejoice only in Christ's victory over it, recovery to God by him, and pure devotion to him. Oh! that I may from henceforth think with horror, astonishment of soul, and the most perfect detestation, of indulging a wish, or keeping any thing in my heart that would keep God out of it. I hope I shall make a choice; and I know what it must be, God and his will, Christ and his work, the Spirit and his baptism of fire. 1 Sam. vi. 12. "And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shelesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went; and turned not aside to the right-hand or to the left." Just so I should do, go straight forward, against nature, by divine impulse into God's land.

Every temptation is an opportunity of getting nearer to God.

Cleave to the will of God, and turn with it constantly, as the weathercock does with the wind.

What is the great single object, the sole end I live for, and keep constantly in view? Is it heaven, in the way of duty and labour, whatever it cost; or a scheme of some kind or other for present gratification, terminating in this world; that is, in St. Paul's words, "making provision for the

flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof," no matter how decently and reputably?

The soul is like the earth, sometimes green and springing, at other times dry and withering; both powerless in themselves, and neither of them fruitful without a proper cultivation on the part of man.

The Christian says, Wherever I see the will of God, my own is determined at once: I account all hardships light for the joy I have in it, and opposition to it, hell.

I never look upon a dead corpse, and yet my soul, perhaps, must one day behold my own. What an awful moment! How happy will be the sight, if soul and body have lived together for eternity! How dreadful, if they have not! And what a call is there in this thought, to make sure of rejoicing then!

When my nature is renewed, I shall be in renewed nature; see the world, and every thing belonging to it, in a new light; and have one foot in Paradise restored.

Confess your sins and pray, as if it was to be the last time.

I shall never be any thing till I know I am nothing; leave it to God to make what he pleases; and seek no praise or worldly advantages inordinately for myself. If I am in union with the will of God, I shall see it, and advert to his presence in every thing, and bless him for every thing, wind and weather, crosses, sickness, death; and, what is the hardest of all, I shall do it in health and prosperity.

If I was told that I must be ten feet high to get to heaven, what should I do? Use means, and strive hard to stretch myself up to the measure, or pray? The holiness required of me is as much out of my power, and as much the work

of another hand. Men may counterfeit it, but to be real, it must be infused or created. In this point we grievously mistake, or overlook both scripture and experience.

Life has its enjoyments, and is not the contemptible thing we make it; but heaven upon earth, when it is conducted upon right principles, directed to a right end, and devoted to the will of God. What would we have more, when the way to heaven is through heaven, if quiet passions, regular desires, contented minds, pure wills, well-grounded hopes, holy longings, happy foretastes, communion with God, and reconciliation to death can make it so?

“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,”—by adverting continually to his presence with reverence and godly fear; considering him as always looking upon the heart; trusting on his Almighty protection; believing in him as a holy, sin-hating God, and reconciled to sinners of mankind only in Jesus Christ; valuing his favour above all the world, and making it the settled sole aim of our lives to approve ourselves to his pure eyes.

If I was in union with the will of God, I should see whatever befalls me as stamped with it, and be always in a state of enjoyment, as having the very thing I desire.

“He that forsaketh not all that he hath;” all he desires, loves, and is by nature; all his worldly possessions and enjoyments, so as to be separated from them in heart and affection, and clearly resolved to follow Christ, cost what it will; renouncing his reason, powers, and tendencies, as truly insufficient to make his peace with God, and conduct him to happiness, “cannot,” says Christ, “be my disciple.”

We do not so much as *purpose* to do the will of God, till we purpose to do it fully. Obedience is

doing the will of God, because it is his will, and not only so far as I see the fitness of it, or as it falls in with my own way of pleasing myself.

Paul said, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection:"—if the word *soul* was put instead of body, it would suit the generality much better.

God is the Lord of my will, not sin, not the world, not the flesh, not the devil; God is the great object of my affections; the joy of my life; the portion and strength of my heart; the centre and rest of my soul, to whom all my desires tend, and with whom only I am at home. Lord, give me power to say this, and deal with me as thou pleasest.

Begin the Christian race from the cross; and, whenever you faint or grow weary, look back to it.

O for the Spirit's sense of sin! the Spirit's sight of Christ! the Spirit's work of obedience!

It is a great thing to say, "My will is God's;" but greater to say, "My heart is God's:" Lord, have mercy on me, and help me in both; for it is only by thee that I can obey and love.

Be sure that you are in God's hands to deal with you as he pleases; and then desire nothing, either in temporals or spirituals, but what he orders.

One great mistake of life is looking to the clouds for happiness, instead of looking above them. The moment I forget God, or cease adverting to his presence, I forget myself.

When I fear the displeasure of God, seek his favour, set him always before me, delight in his presence, love his will, and make the eternal enjoyment of him the hope and great wish of my soul, I shall know as certainly that my nature is changed by power from above, as that I did not make myself.

I read that such a one “renounced the errors of popery at such a time and place:”—Have I renounced the errors of a sinful life, and all sin as sin?

Mens sana in corpore sano, that is, “a sound mind in a healthy body,” was a good pagan prayer; but the Christian’s wish is, a right mind, let it fare with the body how it will.

We are never so near sitting down in the lowest room, as when we know assuredly that we are not in it.

CHAP. X.

CHARITY.

I MUST love and honour all men, notwithstanding their vileness and corruption; and though I have reason to think, from what I know of myself, that they are much worse than they seem to be.

To leave off sinning, is charity of the best kind to my neighbours.

If you would come any thing nearer happiness upon earth, endeavour to live with all mankind in a state of as pure love as you will in heaven. Dr. Young says, “to have no one to whom we heartily wish well, and for whom we are warmly concerned, is a deplorable state:”—but to have a universal tender feeling of love for mankind, as Christ had; and to regard every man as a brother, with the meekness of real affection, as Christians are exhorted to do, is certainly much better than a state of natural partial love to some

few particulars. Is this possible? Will it be granted to prayer?

We cannot love others in a right manner, without first loving God.

If my substance increase, wo be to me if all who have a claim upon me are not the richer for it.

Never rebuke any man without praying for him.

No faith, no quickening, no renovation, no liking of Christ, without the love of souls.

If I hate any one, I love none truly.

Look upon every person you meet or converse with, as one for whom Christ died. This will not only keep you from all injury, but engage you to all acts and endeavours of love to the souls and bodies of all.

The way never to speak of any with contempt, is never to think of any with contempt.

The further a man advances in Christianity, the more he sees of the ignorance, selfish baseness, and corruption of mankind; and yet the more he loves them. The wisdom from above can account for this seeming impossibility.

If I aim at the real spiritual improvement of those I converse with, I shall never say any thing to irritate or vex them, but keep a constant guard upon myself; and if it shall please God to work mightily upon this passionate haughty spirit of mine, I shall be gentle towards all men, notwithstanding the greatest provocations.

It is a great fault, even of good men, to expect that others should be convinced of, and brought to own the truth all at once, and perhaps to be angry if they are not: neither considering how difficult it is for so blind and proud a creature as man to see the truth and own his mistakes; nor by what slow degrees they arrived at it themselves. Little good comes by disputing. Pride

is generally at the bottom of it, and not charity, or the love of truth; and it is seldom managed with decency and candour enough to produce any good effect. Let fall a word in season, and wait in patience till the rain drops upon it from heaven.

Though St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xiii. describes charity only by its effects, as exerted towards men; yet the essence of charity, and the root and cause of these effects is, and must be, the love of God. Man in his natural state may love some few particulars, and those perhaps not disinterestedly; but he cannot love man as such, or the human nature in general, till he himself is transformed into the divine.

If we are truly foremost in the Christian course, there will be no triumphing, or carrying ourselves aloft upon it; we shall be heartily sorry to see others so far behind us.

I do not know that any pagan writer ever mentions or recommends, what Christ calls the first and great commandment, viz. the love of God: and yet this is the grand duty of man to his Maker; the basis and essence of virtue; and the grand means of happiness. When this is wanting, all our performances, how specious soever, are not only uncomfortable and unacceptable, but sinful.

It is a matter of no small difficulty to be silent with reason on our side. And yet for peace sake, and the preservation of decorum, or what is more essential, of charity and tranquillity, it is for the most part necessary to acquiesce, even in things of some consequence; how much more in trifles and matters of ordinary conversation.

When any one is discomposed, and peevish for nothing, or mere trifles, I see immediately the odiousness of such a temper, and the weakness

of mind it proceeds from. Perhaps it will be my turn to-morrow. Let it be a rule with me, upon such occasions, to do all I can to heal and soften, and never to irritate; and especially to guard against the infection of the disorder, and hatred of the person.

Liking and esteeming others merely for their agreement with us in religion, opinion, and manner of living, is only a less offensive kind of self-adoration.

Speaking ill of others at all, unless it be to prevent mischief to religion or our neighbour, is only for the sake of tickling ourselves, and those that hear us, with a comparison; proceeds from pride; and has no other tendency but to increase it.

I can love nothing as I ought, till I love every thing in God.

In case of peevishness, ill-nature, and unreasonable passion in others, if it is possible, be unmoved, be gentle and compassionate; give place to wrath; do not irritate; try to soften; and sympathize not at any rate.

Love will fill up and sweeten all our time.

A true Christian cannot bear the thought of going to heaven alone.

The strictest observation of the law, from slavish fear, or other spurious motives, never worked any man one jot nearer to heaven. Without a true hearty principle of love and obedience to God, we are as much out of his way of happiness, as utterly unqualified for it, and as destitute of real goodness, as if we lived in the known continual breach of all the commandments.

Must no one hope for the favour of God, till he has attained to the perfection of charity, as described by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii.? Or does he set charity before us in its full dimensions, to

humble us, to show us the greatness of our imperfection; to send us to Christ for remission, and the gift of the Spirit; to lay in us the foundation of that divine grace which must be begun here, but can only be perfected hereafter? *Martin Luther* is positive for the latter, *ad Gal.* p. 833.

If any man take a tenth, or a fifth part from his stock, to give to the poor, the remainder will be a weightier seed for producing an increase, than if the whole had been untouched. But then this is a delicate affair. To give, chiefly with an expectation of the increase, is traffic, and not charity.

Self neither can, nor perhaps ought to be totally excluded from religion; but where it is the great motive, can there be any religion?

If I had no other end in view in advising or speaking my sentiments, than merely the good of others, I should never do it with any degree of passion.

The desire and love of God is in proportion to the greatness and reality of it, the extinction of all false desires, and consequently of disobedience.

The love of God and man, which is the sum of goodness, and without which nothing else is so, is but a sneaking virtue in the eyes of the humanly virtuous and worldly prudent, if not totally disregarded in their account of virtue.

Religious persons cannot help giving offence, and are bound to it; but if they are truly such, they will never do it but for the sake of religion.

O! how I long to be received into the universal system of love, and to embrace every occasion of doing good, as food to an appetite, and the refreshment of nature!

If an injury is done me, why should I do myself a much greater, by resenting it! We do not quarrel with our stomachs for being sick, or with

our bodies for giving us pain; still we have no desire but to gratify and put them in order again. Thus we should be affected towards all mankind, and study only their good, let them do what they will to us.

I bless and praise the Author of my being, for giving me a nature capable of love, for showing me the excellence of it, inflaming my desires after it, and promising to give it in Christ Jesus, my Lord.

Love all mankind so well as to love God only better. Anger, spite, ill-nature, &c. are sure to vex *one*, viz. the subject. The surest way to keep others in temper, is to keep ourselves so. Love all, help all, bear with all, condescend to all; but depend on none.

No one can desire to make others Christians, who is not so himself; and a true Christian cannot but desire it.

Disinterested, impartial, universal love of mankind, is the temper of happiness in us, and essential to it; but love of any thing as our happiness besides God in Christ, is our curse and misery. Acts of beneficence contribute nothing to our happiness, but swell us with conceit; blind and corrupt us, if they are not acts of love.

Let me direct all my studies chiefly to the great end of serving others in love; and not merely with a view to the pleasure of knowing; much less to self-applause, or the good opinion of the world.

When others are unreasonably cross to us, we little think, 1st. That the devil works upon, and is setting himself against us by their tempers, and that now is the time for conflict and manful opposition; nor, 2nd, What pity is due to those who are thus influenced by him. Let others be what they will, I must love them at my peril.

Why then should I lay the greatest obstacle in the way of it, by aggravating their faults, or being forward to suspect any ill of them?

- How glorious and happy to say truly in case of injury, "The author of it only hurts me by hurting himself!" Before you resent a thing, take time, a twelvemonth at least, to consider whether there be any real cause for it; and if you find there is, do not deliberate a moment, whether you should forgive.

Serve all with hearty good-will; but know mankind better than to expect much love or gratitude from them. Say all the good you can of all; but if you would have ill spoken of any, turn that office over to the devil.

The best way of being thankful to God for what he gives me, is a liberal distribution of it. Love every man for Christ's sake, and fear none in his cause.

When I am forward to speak the evil I know, or perhaps only surmise of others, what can it proceed from but a desire that they should be universally despised, or fear lest they should not? How diabolical! Leave an ill report to shift for itself; you need not say a word to set it forward.

I love those, as my best friends, who want my assistance. If I hoard any money, it is no more to me than if it was another man's which I had in keeping; it is only mine by being well bestowed.

Selfishness, with a measure of prudence, will make a good father, husband, friend, and neighbour; will perform many acts of virtue, and answer all the ends of society; and what can religion do more? Nothing: but turn selfishness into love, and make that a reality, which before was counterfeit.

Dr. Young says, "there are some whom we cannot love but for God's sake." It is a happy experience, and full proof of a supernatural change, when we find that there are none whom we do not so love.

I spare to spend; enjoy more what I spend than what I spare; and what I give, more than what I spend. What I give cheerfully and for Christ's sake, is charity to myself. The farthing I give is gold, the guinea I keep in my pocket is lead. When Christ comes with any one to ask me to lend, he must not be denied, though I know he does not always intend to repay in kind.

Oh, how happy should we be, if we could impart ourselves to all, in all kinds of help, with the same freedom and propensity (STORGE) that a mother gives the breast to her child!

1 John iv. 10. Our love is not the cause or foundation of peace of conscience; but peace of conscience, grounded on the knowledge of God's love, is the spring and origin of our love to God and man; and this love in us is the surest proof of vital faith.

Let others' contempt of me, and the evil which I observe in such a disposition, be a strong call to me not to despise them.

If I were to read St. Paul's description of charity for a thousand years together, I could not get one property of it into my heart. Before charity can flow out of it, as from a spring, God must first cast the salt of the Spirit into it.

Memorandum. To have no controversy (if possible) with any one but myself.

Let who will die of those who are near and dear to me, I shall still have enough left to love and be tenderly concerned for, whilst there are men upon earth.

Why should I cause uneasiness to others by

reasoning or reproaches, however just, unless it be their spiritual good; and when it can have no other effect but to inflame their passions, provoke their ill-will, and disturb the frame of my own mind.

Thank God for entrusting me with money to give, and much more for a will to give it. Wo be to me, if I keep back any part of it.

Can I, in this time of dearth, keep back a single sixpence from him who shed every drop of his blood for me! Surely I have sin enough already, and more than I well know how to think will be forgiven.

Fear seldom does the whole of what is to be done, and, besides, is unsteady. Nothing but love carries a man through with resolution; and you may as well build a house on a wave of the sea, as love on any thing but faith in the peace of God. Fear forbears more than acts, and both under the lash; love has wants of its own, to fly to all good and from all evil.—When we have said all we can, it is better to do something in fear, than nothing without it.

The difference between carnal and spiritual love is, that one is convergent, the other divergent: one is drawn to a point, like the rays in a burning glass; the other is diffusive, like the rays of the sun: one is particular and exclusive; the other is general, equal, and impartial.

If there were but one person in the world whom I knew to be the creature and workmanship of God, and all the rest made by chance, how greatly should I think of that person's nature and original, and how ready should I be to help him in all his necessities, for the sake of the divine impression he bears, and great dignity of relation! Behold, O man, thou art placed in a world of such beings; all the offspring of God, dear to

him as his children, thy brethren by the same high birth, and every one of them demanding thy love, esteem, and utmost compassion.

The man who wants me, is the man I want. Memorandum. To do my duty to every one I come in company with, and pay Christ some part of the debt I owe to him: "Take care of him," for Christ's sake, and with a feeling of his bowels.

God intends we should be happy, and cannot approve of any thing in us but what has a tendency to make us so. Hence the necessity of a free obedience from a root of love; for all force is misery.

If I consider how God loved me, who can be too wicked for me to love? To a believer, every distressed object is Christ's peremptory demand, or bill in sight, written with his blood, for so much help, or such a sum, as the case requires.

Let others say and do what they will, I must love. The obloquy, or ill usage of others, is my opportunity for self-inspection; and I am convinced, by a late occurrence, how much more happy I might have been all my life in a spirit of love. Not one of its proper ties set down in 1 Cor. xiii. must be wanting.

To love mankind, knowing what they are, can be nothing but the work of Omnipotence, and of God in man. I shall never love all mankind as I ought, till I hate myself.

CHAP. XI.

RESIGNATION.

SUBMISSION to the will of God, with experience of his support in pain, sickness, affliction, is a more joyous and happy state than any degree of health or worldly prosperity.

He who had no sin, suffered for all sin; well may I, who have so much, and laid so heavy a load upon him, be content to suffer a little for my own. Lying awake all night—there is no sleep in hell. Rev. xiv. 11.

I see God in every thing: in pain I feel him; and know he is come near to me upon some gracious design. I never have so lively a sense of the being, presence, and goodness of God, as in pain, sickness, and suffering: it puts me upon thinking; and I cannot avoid coming to this conclusion, that it is ordained by his immediate will, and that he does it in mercy.

Instead of repining at bodily disorders, think how many have much greater, and how to be thankful both for those you have and have not. Pain, affliction, &c. is only God's speaking louder.

The strangury is a messenger sent from heaven, to warn me home, to reconcile me to the thought of death, and prepare me for a happy reception into another world.

In pain, sickness, trouble, methinks I hear God saying, Take this medicine, exactly suited to thy case, prepared and weighed by my own hands, and consisting of the choicest drugs which heaven affords.

If I was left to myself, I should never think of

crucifying sin with the stone and strangury as God does. The strangury has not done its work yet by far.

Say, my heart, with respect to the stone, "I am unworthy of this mercy: Lord, let it be more or less painful, and the means of death sooner or later, as thou pleasest; only make it a means of thy grace to me."

If the cross should be laid upon me, it will come assuredly to my relief; and I must be destitute of grace, and dead to all consideration, if I do not regard it as a help, and an especial mercy vouchsafed in a time of great danger.

A cold north wind.—Have patience with God.

If my heart and will were given up to God, stone, gravel, strangury, &c. would be well endured, and death come with a smile on his face.*

If I am afflicted, or sick, or weak, or in pain, let me not comfort myself chiefly with thinking that it will quickly be over, or that I shall soon be well, but rather with thinking and knowing that it is the appointment of divine wisdom; for reason of infinite concernment to myself, and for the end which God has chiefly in view for his people in all his inflictions, viz. the glory of his name in their spiritual health and recovery; and a blessed support it will be, to know and feel that I do not so much desire ease and deliverance from present trouble, as grace and strength to undergo more and greater, and even death itself, quietly, obediently, in the spirit of faith, and with full acceptance of the will of God.

* Mr. Darracot, a valuable minister of Wellington, in Somersetshire. He died of the stone, full of joy in Christ Jesus. The torment of the stone was so greatly alleviated, that in his last moments he said to his friends who stood around him, "is this dying!—'tis so easy!"

This whole life is a state of labour and suffering, in order to our purification; and not of enjoyment, either temporal or spiritual.

I believe no man is obliged to sell all he has, &c. because Christ gave such a command to one person, any more than he is obliged to sacrifice his son, because God commanded Abraham to do so; and yet, doubtless, these were written for our instruction, that we might be ready always to obey the severest calls of Providence: a matter of no small difficulty, and which we infinitely deceive ourselves and others in. It is a common thing for people to say, God's will be done, without one grain of sincerity or true resignation.

It is one point of happiness, and perhaps the highest we can attain to, to know and be fully convinced, that at the best we are but poorly qualified for it; and therefore must not expect it in this life. The generality of mankind create to themselves a thousand needless anxieties, by a vain search after a thing that never was, nor ever will be found upon earth. Let us, then, sit down contented with our lot; and in the mean-time be as happy as we can in a diligent preparation for what is to come.

The world is so constituted, that obedience to the commands of God is impossible, without taking up the cross daily; but then, they who are unwilling to take up the cross, explain away all the trying commands of the gospel, and that of the cross in the first place.

If any thing, though ever so dear, is taken from me by the order of Providence, I have no longer any interest in it, or business with it. The cloud is taken up, (Numb. ix. 17.) and my station is fixed for some other place. God is now in the absence and privation of it, and if ever I find him, it must be there.

It is our duty to bless God for the measure of grace we have, and to rest satisfied with his appointment in spirituals as well as temporals. Every degree of real grace is his gift, and the work of the Spirit, who divideth to every man severally as he will; and to be thankful for lower degrees of grace, notwithstanding the most ardent desires and longings after the highest, perhaps the truest and as well as most difficult kind of humility and resignation. Rom. xiv.

Christ is a refiner's fire, Mal. iii. We could like well enough to come and warm ourselves at this fire; but the business depends upon being thrown into it.

Be not disturbed for trifles. By the practice of this rule, we should come in time to think most things too trifling to disturb us.

Till I make, through grace, a full and free surrender of myself, my heart and conscience, whole state and being to God, in simplicity and sincerity, his will for my salvation and recovery cannot take place in me; I shall not be steady a moment in the practice of holiness.

The highest angels are at an infinite distance from the knowledge of God; and, therefore, there must of necessity be always something in his nature and acts, mysterious even to them: why, then should not we be content with our darkness, and submit to live by faith here, when we must do it to all eternity?

How can I be happy but in God? And how can I be in God with a will contrary to, or but indifferent to his? No quiet in the spirit till we settle upon this basis of rest and satisfaction; acquiescence in the will of God; contentedness under the accidents of life; patience with the humours of all about us, and cheerful submission to the demands of the present hour.

God, who knows my state, and the danger I am in, sends pain to warn me of it, to make me dread sin more than pain, and to think how I shall ever be able to endure remediless, everlasting pain.

Suffering is an excellent preacher, sent immediately from heaven, to speak aloud in the name of God to the heart, mind, and conscience, and has saved many a soul, when, humanly speaking, nothing else could. If it was not for pain, I should spend less time with God.

We may have some faint wish, and perhaps real desire to be freed from sin; but not in God's way of a broken contrite heart, or some grievous suffering.

In a fit of the cholic.—Death frees from all sin; eases of all troubles; clears up all mistakes; and is a full answer to all my prayers.

If I had not been kept awake with the toothache, I should have lost a lively acting of faith, and one of the sweetest experiences I ever had in my life.

The will of God may put me to pain; but it is the will of God.

Joseph seems to have been at the height of perfection, when he resisted the solicitations of Potiphar's wife; but if he had not wanted some further refinement, God would never have sent him to prison.

If Mr. North's writings should be lost, and the 500*l.* I have depending upon them, it will be my own fault if I do not make it a step towards heaven, and receive more advantage and comfort from the loss than I could from the money.—The writings may not be lost; and if they are, the money may be safe. But if it is not, am I safe, as to my inward disposition, in a pure resignation to the will of God, to give and take as he

pleases? and am I sensible that a much greater cross is wanted?

The disorder of my body is the very help I want from God; and if it does its work before it lays me in the dust, it will raise me up to heaven.

In affliction see the necessity of it, and be humble; see the use, and improve it; see the love there is in it, and be thankful. I know of no greater blessing than health, except pain and sickness.

If we reflect on the exceeding sinfulness, desert, and horrible curse of sin, as represented in the dreadful consequences of the first man's sin, and the necessity of Christ's death, how comparatively light is all we suffer for our own multiplied transgressions, especially considering that suffering is a corrective as well as a punishment; and that in the worst of troubles, we have this hope to support us, that there is redemption from all sin by the blood of Christ. I know this is but a thought, and, without God, will work no effect.

In the paroxysm of pain or prospect of death, I can no more reason myself into a state of perfect submission and tranquillity, than I can think the stone out of my body. God's patience is that which he requires and gives, extends to every thing, and holds out till death.

Why should any man complain, or think his lot hard, when he has a God to live with, and order all his affairs in this world, and to do so when he dies?

I find it hard to bear and be contented with the disposal of Providence in temporal things; but much harder to bear my want of contentment, with perfect resignation to the will of God, and be as poor in spirit as I am poor in reality.

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION, &c.

Query. Whether it is not a high degree of holiness in a man who sees and laments his sin, and feels it as the heaviest of all burdens, to bear it patiently, and with submission to the divine will, as he would any other affliction, till God is pleased to remove it?

There is no coming to God but through pain: no matter how, if we do but come to him.

I am a cow poorer, a thought richer: If I do not give more, God will take more away.

God be thanked that I do pray, though but poorly. I will complain to none but God, and never of God. However I am crossed, or whatever I suffer, God does me no wrong; intends me no hurt, designs my good; I may well be patient, I must do more; there is obligation in the case, I must be thankful.

Blessed be God for all his favours, and particularly for the special mercy of the stone.

We are always thinking we should be better with or without such a thing; but if we do not steal a little content in present circumstances, there is no hope of any other.

It is our duty to bear the disorders of the mind, as well as those of the body; feeling both, applying proper remedies, and submitting quietly to the will of God.

Whatever God is pleased to do with me, in me, for me, blessed be his will. If God gives me patience, and quiet submission to his will, in the want of what I pray for, he gives me enough, and more than I ask. At all events, let the will of God be mine, in spite of nature, reputation, ease, or worldly interest.

Real heart-felt submission to the will of God in pain, sickness, crosses, every thing, never was the work of a man's own spirit! and when it comes

from above, in answer to prayer, is full amends for all we can suffer.

I have just so much godliness as God gives me, and no more; and it is a necessary but hard part of religion, to be contented and thankful, whether it be much or little. If this thought does not keep me humble and dependent, drive me to prayer, and make Christ all in all to me, I know not what will.

God does not regard what he makes us suffer, if he can but keep us out of hell. When I am in pain, I have a strong conviction of my obligation to Christ for delivering me from eternal pain.

When pain comes, God comes. Welcome pain. We should bear pain better, if we did not increase it by impatience, or apprehension of the issue, and suffer nothing but the pain.

God's will is blessed; and, whether it be for or against me, I must wait patiently, and receive all as a gift; for I find I can do nothing.

Bear a late cross, as from God, and you will be prepared for a heavier, and have him bearing all with you.

Come what will, God does me no harm. If God has given me Christ, what have I to complain of; and how should I welcome the disease, or decay which is sent to secure him to me, and bring me to him!

Whether soap and lime-water will cure the stone, I know not; I am sure the stone will cure me. The stone is an answer to my prayers.

It is hard to bear crosses, but harder to bear with my own impatience. And yet if God is not pleased to deliver me from it, upon my endeavour and prayer, what can be more a duty than submission in the case, especially as I have Jesus Christ to thank him for?

When pain comes, I can hardly think of any thing but God; when I am at ease, the heart returns to its bent, the world resumes its place in it, and God leaves me.

God consults my interest in every thing, not me; and though I know he cannot be mistaken in what he does, I find it hard to give my consent to it.

When pain comes, it seems as if it was reached out to me by the hand of an angel who is come post with it from heaven; glad of the office of administering to my safety and improvement; rejoicing in the love of God towards me, and calling upon me to join with him in blessing God for it.

God is always with me, though I am not with him; and because I do not advert to his presence, he sends pain to introduce, and even force me into his company.

In the strangury.—If ever I am to come to self-knowledge, to repentance, to Christ, to God, this is the way pointed out to me by a clear light shining upon it from heaven.

What would thousands and ten thousands give to be no more in pain than I am? What I suffer would be perfect ease to them.

I never have so lively and full a conviction of my weakness and absolute dependance upon God, as in pain or sickness. Acquiescence in his blessed will, choice of what he chooses for me, and thankfulness for the mercy, I know to be my duty, and would gladly work this disposition in myself, but find, by repeated experience, that I have no more power over my mind than I have over my body.

By pain God drives me to prayer, teaches me what prayer is, and inclines me to pray.

It is a sore trial to the soul to be deprived of

all earthly comforts, and reduced to the necessity of living upon God.

No man, let him be ever so great a saint, resigns himself to God's method of cure in suffering, with the same choice, confidence, and fulness of consent, that he would put himself into the hands of a surgeon to be cut for the stone.

If we do not propose to ourselves the same end in suffering which God does, self-knowledge and the purification of the heart, it must necessarily be without effect.

Because I trifle with my soul, and do not enter resolutely into a process of mortification, God in mercy takes the matter into his own hands, and sends pain to do that for me, which I am not willing to do for myself.

God sometimes will not let me sleep, but keeps me awake to catechise me; and is always ready with some new instruction and conviction.

Not a bit too much pain; with God's help I can think so from my heart, take it patiently, and bless him for the mercy of it.

When I suffer most, I will comfort myself with thinking that I might, and that many do, suffer more; and that all I can suffer is not only much less than I deserve, but ordained in mercy as the means of my eternal happiness.

Trouble is the engine in God's hands to lift us up to heaven.

What can I not bear with the help of God? What can I do or suffer without it?

The very point and top of resignation, is to submit quietly to the leading of God in the want of sensible support and comfort.

The pain of pain is impatience under it, and apprehension of its continuance or consequences; it might be greatly alleviated, if we adverted only

to the present time, and did not add to it the burden of to-morrow.

Pain comes for punishment and purification: the one I am sure I deserve; and have great cause to lament the slowness and imperfection of the other.

If chastisement is a token of God's love, why should I faint under it, or so much as desire release from it, till it has done its work? I must suffer and die: with the help of God, I will suffer and die.

CHAP. XII.

PRAYER.

I HAVE great hope, from the promises, made to prayer that I shall begin to live before I die.

What is the meaning of prayer, but that God would do what we cannot; and how vainly do we ask the help which we do not think we want!

The loss of prayer is the greatest of all losses; and yet how many prayers are rendered fruitless, if not turned into sin, through inattention, levity of spirit, unbelief, insensibility of want, or greater desire of something else in the heart!

No man need be miserable or unhelped, so long as there is a way open to the throne of grace.

If we pray at all, we must be poor, helpless, and resigned; neither thinking we have already what we ask, or that we can give it to ourselves, or setting a time, or prescribing a measure to God.

Nothing is more easy than to say the words of

a prayer; but to pray hungering and thirsting, is the hardest of all works.

What more need to be said of prayer, than that it brings God into the heart, and keeps sin out?

“Ask, and it shall be given you:” I ask; therefore it is given me. The consequence is infallible; only let God choose the time and manner of giving.

Praying with the heart, for the heart, is praying by the Spirit, whether with or without a form.

No true prayer is lost, though we may have forgotten it.

Blessed be God, I do not only begin to pray when I kneel down, but leave not off praying when I rise up.

All prayer is hypocrisy and sad deceit, if we do not ask what God would have us to ask, and really desire what we ask.

We can have no grace or spiritual supply without asking; and whatever we think of ourselves, or say to God, we cannot act without felt want, and real desire. Of those that do pray, how few pray from their own sense, or any particular knowledge of their own circumstances!

Acquiescence in the bare act of prayer, is a most dangerous delusion, and keeps the soul from its proper relief.

O God! give me what thou knowest to be good, and thou alone knowest what is good! Give me more than I can ask or think. If the reverse of what I ask, is what I should ask, give me that; let me not be undone by my prayers.

Many pray not to be kept from sin, but to keep it; and with a secret hope that prayer will excuse it, and be accepted instead of reformation.

God does not want our praises; but the disposition to praise him is essential to our own happiness, and therefore required.

I put my prayers into Christ's hands; and what may I not expect from them, when I have such an advocate?

Prayer is living with God; and is founded upon right principles of religion, puts us upon searching the heart, leads us to the knowledge of our wants and weakness, and fixes us in dependence upon God: nothing is more easy, as a bare duty or lip-service, and nothing more difficult than the performance of it in truth and sincerity.

Prayer is knowing work, believing work, thanking work, searching work, humbling work, and nothing worth if heart and hand do not join in it.

There is abundant comfort in the thought, that God has given me a desire and will to pray for the blessings of Jesus; whether with greater or less fervour at the time of praying, it matters little as to the event; I may repose myself quietly on his word, in full assurance that there will be a performance of all his promises, in life, death, and eternity.

The great mistake of prayer is, not praying as poor and destitute creatures, but thinking that we are and have already in some good degree what we pray for. See a notable instance of this in *Lord Bacon's prayer. Tatler, No. 267.* The Liturgy is formed upon a different plan, and puts us on a better method.

Be sure not to ask a little of God.

It is a great mistake that prayer is lost, or nothing but formality, because we do not find comfort in it, or any immediate effect from it, or pray with so much fervour as we could wish.

We are on the wrong side of prayer till we have a lively sense of our condition in sin, and are convinced by self-knowledge of the necessity of redemption from the guilt and power of it.

It is a sad mistake in religion to acquiesce in

the form of prayer, without obtaining, or desiring to obtain what is asked.

It is an easy work to offer up many prayers to God; but who almost offers up himself to him?

We are apt to suppose that nothing is a return to prayer, but the very thing we ask: but if there is a better way of granting our request than we think of, it is well for us that God will not choose the worst.

We eat for bodily strength, and for strength to labour. So the spiritual life must be renewed and maintained by continual supplies of grace, to the end we may perform the service we owe to God. The consequence is, we must pray at least as often as we eat.

All power of spiritual renovation is from God; and it is a fatal mistake to look for it in ourselves, or in books, the scriptures not excepted. One prayer is worth a thousand fine thoughts.

Let your prayer be short, and think a long time before you begin, what you are going to say, and what you mean by it; that is, to speak plainly whether you would be taken at your word, and put to the pain of having your prayers answered. It would be death to the generality even of those who appear on the side of religion, to receive or be what they pray for.

When I pray, it is for a moral impossibility, and for as great a miracle, as if I was to say, "Sun, stand still." I shall never love God and hate sin as I ought, till I pray better.

Want felt, and help desired, with faith to obtain it, is prayer; and without these qualifications, whatever is called so, is nothing but self-deceit and lying to God.

We shall never be Christians till we think as we pray, and always carry the same humbling

sentiments about us, as if we were on our knees before God.

I can expect no good effect from my prayers, till I know what I am, and do not pray above my state, or think more highly of it and of myself than I ought to think; but sit down in the lowest room, as I well may without any fear of mistaking my place.

It seems to me, that the first thing we should pray for, is a sense of our wants, with a will and desire to pray according to them.

CHAP. XIII.

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

AT the time of receiving.—Lord, I here appeal to thy sacrifice against my sin, to thy grace against my corruption, to thy love against my fears, to thee against myself. I believe thy word; I remember thy command; I adore thy goodness; I wait for thy salvation. Give effect to thine own ordinance, and make it the seal of mercy, and the conveyance of life to me. O Jesus, come to my heart!

I go to the sacrament for mercy, and strength to keep mercy; to profess my faith in Christ, that I have pardon and peace with God, life and righteousness only by his death and merits: and to own my obligation to live unto him that died for me, in faith, love, and self-dedication. I go to the sacrament for Christ's love and likeness; for the benefit and for the munition of the cross; to have the load of sin taken from my heart;

and any other which Christ thinks fit, laid upon my back.

Were pardon, salvation, and life received in the sacrament? Did I bid an eternal farewell to sin; and have I the poison of it expelled by the virtue of Christ's body and blood?

I go to the sacrament to leave sin behind me, and receive Christ instead of it; and if I do the one, laying my sins on Christ, with a will to forsake them, I am sure of the other. Lord, grant me thy peace, and all that comes with it,—love, patience, resignation, thankfulness, deliverance from the fear of death, and a hearty longing for eternity.

I go to the sacrament for the pardon of sin, for the kingdom of love, for the turning of my heart, for the renewal of my will.

I do not go to the Lord's table to give, but to receive; not to tell Christ how good I am, but to think how good he is. I have a great many sins and wants to tell him of—more than would take up the whole day: and when I have told him all that I know of myself, it is not the half, but a very little of what he knows of me. I bring myself, that is, sin, to him, believing that he will be all to me, and do all for me that is in his heart; and I know it is a very compassionate one. I go as a sinner to the Saviour. To whom else should I go, with my blind eyes, foul leprosy, hard heart, and rebellious will? You tell me I must have I know not how many graces and qualifications to go to the sacrament with; but I cannot stay for them: my wants are urgent—I am a dying man. My Lord, with his known kindness, says, "Come; do this; remember me." His invitation is qualification enough; and I long to feed on him, to thank God for him, to take him into my heart. I will go to behold him crucified, and his blood

poured out for me, in spite of all my sins and fears; and though all the saints on earth stood up with one mouth to forbid me, I go to put myself under Christ's wings, and fly to him for refuge from the monster sin, ready to devour me.

I go to the sacrament to know God and myself; to wonder at the reconciliation of strict punishment with free pardon; to see the greatness of my sin, and the greatness of my hope, in the greatness of the sacrifice therein represented; to sin no more, because I believe there is no condemnation for my sin; to be raised as high as heaven, and humbled in the dust; to be astonished at the mystery of Christ crucified; and to profess that I know less of God than ever.

Let me be daily thinking of the sacrament, daily in a state of preparation for it, daily living upon it, resolving to secure my portion in the love therein exhibited, by receiving it in faith and humility, as love and undeserved mercy, making it my pattern, and dreading the sin which could be expiated with no less a sacrifice.

“Do this in remembrance of me.”—Remember who I am, and what thou art; remember me as thy Saviour; remember me as thy master; remember my love; remember thy obligations; remember me as hating thy sin; remember me as bearing thy sin; remember me and fear not; remember me and sin not; remember me to live for me, by me, with me.

The day before the sacrament.—Knowing and assuredly believing the promises of God made over to me for the forgiveness of my sins, through faith in the blood of Christ; I do from a detestation of my sinfulness, and a hearty sense of my want of pardoning grace, accept his covenant of rest and peace: trusting in him for the accom-

plishment of my whole salvation, in the way of gospel-holiness, by his Spirit; and resolving without delay to put myself into his hands for that purpose. And may the God of mercies keep me steadfast in his faith and engagement, and carry me on from strength to strength, that I may be one with him, and with my Saviour, and live for him, and love him with all my heart, and with all my soul!

CHAP. XIV.

PASTORAL OFFICE.

I MUST, I must incur the hatred of my parish and hearers, in love to them, and for Christ's sake; but let me be infamous, so I may but do good.

Ruling slothfulness in a minister of the gospel, is a certain mark of infidelity, or an unregenerate state.

Let no man think he is qualified to seek and to save that which is lost, as an agent under Christ, till he has first found himself.

A clergyman, if in truth he is a follower of Christ, must not expect to have any friends in his parish but his converts; the rest will despise, envy, and traduce him more than they do other men.

How much better would it be, if, instead of censuring, and bitterly inveighing against the ignorance, perverseness, and corruption of my neighbours, I exerted myself in good earnest, according to the duty of my station, and the talents which God has given me, to instruct and

reform them! Perhaps, many a one has long been waiting at the pool of Bethesda for some friendly hand to help them in, and I pass by them with a stupid unconcern, and leave them groaning under their misery.

There is but one right way of preaching, which is, to speak the plain truth of the gospel plainly; but then this way is the hardest of all others, for it supposes conversion in the preacher.

It is the business of a minister of the gospel to preach faith and live morally.

I find it very difficult, if not impossible, through my selfishness, to sink myself into the common mass of mankind, so as to take my full share of their guilt, to sympathize, to pity, to have a fellow-feeling of their wants, joys, and sorrows, and be truly concerned for the temporal and spiritual welfare of all.

How glorious a distinction for any man to be employed as an agent under Christ, in the recovery of souls! and what guilt not to attend upon it out of love to him, with the same ardour and assiduity that other physicians do for their fees!

How can those preachers be supposed to bring others to Christ, who never came to him themselves?

We are greatly deceived in fancying that discernment, or approbation of moral excellence, is possession, or ability to possess ourselves of it. The Christian religion goes another way to work with us; and those preachers wretchedly mistake their office, and abuse their hearers, who spend all their discourses in recommending virtue to their notice and esteem, without leading them to the root of their disorder, and pointing out the cure.

What would a physician, who had a sovereign cure for all diseases, be accounted, if he kept it

a secret, or was slothful in dispensing it, or mixed poison with it? How much more criminal is a minister of the gospel, who thinks himself entrusted with an infallible medicine for all the disorders of the soul, if he adulterates it, or is unfaithful and inactive in applying it.

I may conscientiously take the wages for the work, when I have a distinct consciousness that I would do the work without the wages.

To relinquish, or intermit parochial labour, because it is not attended with success, would be terribly inexcusable. Labour on; commit the matter to God; wait patiently; get a feeling of the bowels of Christ; and die praying, "Lord, pity the people!"

The declarations of scripture, concerning the guilt of sin, and the damnation of sinners, may be assented to, but are fully and efficaciously believed by few. Hence faintness of endeavour to snatch others out of the fire, cold prayer, speaking, preaching, and writing, without real pity and heart-felt concern.

"But we will give ourselves unto prayer and the ministry of the word." Remember this, O my soul, it is for eternity!

A poor country parson fighting against the devil in his parish, has nobler ideas than Alexander had.

As a minister of the gospel, I must either be despised or hated. I choose the latter.

Am I a minister of Jesus, with his bowels for souls! called! willing to be spent! regardless of worldly preferment! owned of God! hated of men! happy in myself!

Intrusion into the ministry for worldly ends, and with absolute unfitness for it; in great ignorance of Christ; great unconcern for the salvation of souls; consequent sloth and remissness;

squandering a large income in sensual pleasures; and when I was something awakened, doing what I did in self-dependance and self-seeking—
How awful!

Dreamed that J. M. and S. E. were under soul-concern. I interpreted it as a call to go and speak with them. But what shall I say to J. for not speaking more to him, and to all others, without a dream!

CHAP. XV.

HEAVEN.

MY heaven upon earth is communion with God; and therefore nothing else would be my heaven in heaven.

We shall never know any degree of happiness in this life, till we are settled in a clear conviction of judgment, that it is chiefly hereafter, and that we are in the way to it. God forbid I should ever think myself at home, till I am in heaven.

Heaven is not a place or state of idleness. Perhaps the highest angels have a task and work assigned them, which keep them continually employed. What is considered as greatness and happiness on earth is, having nothing to do.

Happiness will be the necessary result of gospel holiness, when external impediments are removed; but heaven itself would lose its nature, if the inward disposition were wanting.

Our future existence will be the same kind of life or state of being continued, which we are fixed in here. Death makes no alteration in our condition; it only clears up our mistakes about it.

Thankfulness and happiness imply each other. We must be thankful to be happy, and happy to be thankful. God's house is an hospital at one end, and a palace at the other. In the hospital end are Christ's members upon earth, conflicting with various diseases, and confined to a strict regimen of his appointing. What sort of a patient must he be, who would be sorry to be told that the hour is come for his dismissal from the hospital, and to see the doors thrown wide open for his admission into the presence!

Nothing can be our happiness in this life, but what is to be the foundation of it in the next. If I cannot serve God and my saviour with delight, and make a kind of heaven of it here, they have no other heaven for me hereafter.

We shall never know the thousandth part of our mercies, deliverance, and protections, temporal and spiritual, till we come to another world.

In heaven, sin known and pardoned, is the song of praise; sin known and unpardoned, is hell.

If ever I thank Christ as I ought, it must be in heaven; it is in vain to think of doing it here.

Heaven is heaven rather as a state of exemption from sin than suffering. We must die for perfect conformity to the will of God; and it is worth dying for.

Delight in the will of God is the perfection of all intelligent beings, the essence of happiness, the joy of angels, heaven upon earth, and the heaven of heaven.

Heaven is whatever God is; in my heart, if I desire it, and delight in his presence.

Ten thousand years in this world would not complete my happiness. I should never be wise and good, have an absolute command of my will, passions, and affections, without one irregular thought, vain wish, or spot of sin. If we are really aiming at and longing for this perfection, how desirable is death, which alone can put us in possession of it! By death, we do not go out of life, but into life.

The Christian's hope of heaven is the sweetness of prosperity, and the support of adversity, and cures us at once of all attachment to the world, or expectation of rest in it.

If Christ had not brought down heaven to us, we could never have raised ourselves up to it.

This world is the reign of darkness, pain, and sorrow; and we must not expect fully to find God here as a present portion. The Christian believes that he shall know him better, and enjoy him fully hereafter. O my soul, hold fast, and be very thankful for his sweet hope!

“Let us labour to enter into that rest.” We like the rest, better than the labour of attaining it; but cannot so much as have an idea of it, if we do not think it worth all the labour we can bestow upon it.

It is a vain thing to think we can take any delight in being with Christ hereafter, if we care not how little we are in his company here.

The highest state of the greatest saint upon earth, is only a small taste or glimpse of heaven, in the first-fruits and earnest of the Spirit. The full harvest is beyond the grave, and is not to be expected in this world.

When I can truly say, “thy will be done on

earth, as it is in heaven," I shall long to be in heaven, that I may do it perfectly.

What is the reason that we do not keep our eyes steadily fixed upon the light of scripture, and follow it as our guide to heaven, but because we do not really think of heaven as the country we are bound to; have yet other designs in the world than to get thither; and whatever we pretend, do not desire to be there.

I long to know something, and be something; i. e. to die. I see the glory and beauty of perfect holiness, as Moses did the promised land from mount Pisgah; but, like him, must die without entering into the possession of it.

"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;" that is, with angelical love and liking, and the full bent of our desire to it. A virtuous, pure, holy state, is a strong tendency to all good, and only to good; and if we could suppose the mind to be in a state of suspense or indifference, and equally poised between good and evil, it would be a bad state. What, then, is man with a natural and morally invincible propensity to evil?

Unless I see something beyond the grave worth dying for, there is nothing on this side worth living for.

How welcome will death be to those who truly mourn for sin, feel the burden, taste the bitterness of it, and long for complete deliverance from it!

CHAP. XVI.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE commandment is holy, and just, and good; not only in its precept, but curse. The first is evident, and denied by none; the latter is never believed but by a work of the Spirit.

Let us talk no more of the constitution of this or that country, and the excellence of one above another; it is in every man's power, through grace, to live under the best government in the world.

We may put on different clothes, and different looks; speak different words, and do different actions on a Sunday; but nature will be the same that it is all the rest of the week. Sunday, in our rest from bodily labour and employment, in the thoughts it suggests, the prospect it opens, the hope it confirms, is a day taken from time, and made a portion of eternity.

Dreams indicate the temper of the soul more certainly than they do the temperament of the body. Dreams have no dissimulations; they unmask the heart, and tell me honestly what I am, when waking.

A forced obedience will not make us happy in this world, but may not be lost as to another.

Hell is truth seen too late.

What is it to me whether the Americans are in a state of rebellion or not? Why do I not advert more to the rebellion of my own heart and will against God?

A partial half-religion is a state of terrible anxiety.

Why is man for ever searching after pretences to wander from home? Fixing the laws of motion; measuring the planets; prying with glasses into the minutest parts of nature; and either gazing with stupid wonder on what he can never understand, or, what is worse, circumscribing Omnipotence, and saying, "Thus it must be!" when all the while the poor soul within him, buried in flesh and blood, wants its proper relief, begs his attention, and being known, would infinitely reward his curiosity?

If we do not live down error, I am sure we shall never dispute it down.

The eager reading even of religious books may, be dangerous, and a hinderance to those who are aiming at the true Spirit of religion, if they have recourse to them instead of God.

THE END.

