SERMONS
ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS:
IN
FOUR VOLUMES.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.
Late Fellow of LINCOLN-COLLEGE OXFORD.

VOL. I.

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THE PREFACE.

1. The following Sermons contain the substance of what I have been preaching, for between eight and nine years last past. During that time I have frequently spoken in public, on every subject in the ensuing Collection: and I am not conscious, that there is any one point of doctrine on which I am accustomed to speak in public, which is not here, incidentally, if not professedly, laid before every Christian Reader. Every serious man, who peruses these, will therefore see in the clearest manner, what these doctrines are which I embrace and teach, as the Essentials of True Religion.

2. But I am thoroughly sensible, these are not proposed, in such a manner as some may expect. Nothing here appears in an elaborate, elegant or oratorical dress. If it had been my desire or design to write thus, my leisure would not permit. But in truth, I at present designed nothing less; for I now write (as I generally speak) ad populum: to the bulk of mankind, to those who neither relish nor understand the art of speaking: but who notwithstanding are competent judges of those truths, which are necessary to present and future happiness. I mention this, that curious Readers may spare themselves the labour, of seeking, for what they will not find.

3. I design plain truth for plain people. Therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplex and intricate reasonings; and as far as possible, from even
the shew of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in common life: and in particular, those kinds of technical terms, that so frequently occur in bodies of divinity, those modes of speaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which to common people are an unknown tongue. Yet I am not assured, that I do not sometimes slide into them unawares: it is so extremely natural to imagine, that a word which is familiar to ourselves, is so to all the world.

4. Nay, my design is, in some sense to forget all that ever I have read in my life. I mean to speak, in the general, as if I had never read one Author, ancient or modern (always excepting the inspired.) I am persuaded, that on the one hand, this may be a means of enabling me more clearly to express the sentiments of my heart, while I simply follow the chain of my own thoughts, without entangling myself with those of other men: and that, on the other, I shall come with fewer weights upon my mind, with less of prejudice and prepossession, either to search for myself, or to deliver to others; the naked truths of the Gospel.

5. To candid, reasonable men, I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, "I am a creature of a day, passing through life, as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulph: till a few moments hence, I am no more seen! I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be Homo unius libri. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone:
alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does any thing appear dark and intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights. "Lord is it not thy word, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God? Thou givest liberally and upbraidest not, Thou hast said, If any be willing to do thy will, he shall know. I am willing to do. Let me know thy will." I then search after and consider parallel passages of scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon, with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God: and then, the writings whereby being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach.

6. I have accordingly set down in the following Sermons, what I find in the Bible concerning the way to heaven; with a view to distinguish this way of God, from all those which are the inventions of men. I have endeavoured to describe the true, the scriptural, experimental Religion, so as to omit nothing thereto which is not. And herein it is more especially my desire, first, to guard those who are just setting their faces toward heaven, (and who having little acquaintance with the things of God, are the more liable to be turned out of the way) from formality, from mere outside religion, which has almost driven heart religion out of the world: and secondly, to warn those who know the religion of the heart, the faith which worketh by love, left at any time they make void the law through faith, and so fall back into the snares of the devil.

7. By the advice and at the request of some of my friends, I have prefixed to the other sermons contained in this Volume, three sermons of my own and one of my Brother's, preached before the University of Oxford. My design required some discourses on those heads. And I preferred these be-
fore any others, as being a stronger answer than
any which can be drawn up now, to those who
have frequently asserted, "That we have changed
our doctrine of late, and do not preach now, what
we did some years ago." Any man of understanding
may now judge for himself, when he has compared
the latter with the former Sermons.

8. But some may say, I have mistaken the way
myself, although I take upon me to teach it to
others. It is probable, many will think this, and
it is very possible, that I have. But I trust, where-
soever I have mistaken, my mind is open to con-
viction. I sincerely desire to be better informed.
I say to God and man, "What I know not, teach
thou me!

9. Are you persuaded, you see more clearly than
me? It is not unlikely that you may. Then, treat
me, as you would desire to be treated yourself upon
a change of circumstances. Point me out a better
way than I have yet known. Shew me it is so, by
plain proof of scripture. And if I linger in the path
I have been accustomed to tread, and therefore am
unwilling to leave it, labour with me a little, take
me by the hand, and lead me as I am able to bear.
But be not displeased if I intreat you, not to beat
me down, in order to quicken my pace: I can go
but feebly and slowly at best; then, I should not
be able to go at all. May I not request of you
further, not to give me hard names, in order to
bring me into the right way. Suppose I was ever
so much in the wrong, I doubt this would not set
me right. Rather, it would make me run so much
the farther from you, and so get more and more out
of the way.

10. Nay, perhaps, if you are angry, so shall I
be too; and then there will be small hopes of find-
ing the truth. If once anger arise, ἐνεργεῖ (as
Homer somewhere expresses it) this smoke will so
dim the eyes of my soul, that I shall be able to see
nothing clearly. For God's sake, if it be possible to
avoid it, let us not provoke one another to wrath.

Let
Let us not kindle in each other this fire of hell; much less blow it up into a flame. If we could discern truth by that dreadful light, would it not be loss, rather than gain? For how far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love? We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels!

The God of love forbid we should ever make the trial! May he prepare us for the knowledge of all truth, by filling our hearts with all his love, and with all joy and peace in believing.
SALVATION BY FAITH: A SERMON

Preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, before the University, on June 18, 1738.

Ephesians II. 8.

"By Grace ye are saved through Faith."

1. All the blessings which God hath bestowed upon man are of his mere grace, bounty, or favour; his free, undeserved favour! favour altogether undeserved; man having no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him a living soul," and stamped on that soul the image of God, and "put all things under his feet." The same free grace continues to us at this day, life and breath, and all things. For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand, "All our works thou, O God hast wrought in us." These, therefore, are so many more instances of free mercy: and whatever righteousness may be found in man, this is also the gift of God.

2. Wherewithal then shall a sinful man atone for any the least of his sins? With his own works? No. Were they ever so many or holy, they are not his own, but God's. But indeed they are all unholy and sinful themselves, so that every one of them needs a fresh atonement. Only corrupt fruit grows on a corrupt tree. And his heart is altogether corrupt and abominable; being "come short of the glory of God," the glorious righteousness at first impressed on his soul, after the image of his great Creator. Therefore, having nothing, neither righteousness nor works to plead, his "Mouth is utterly slopt before God."

3. If
Salvation by Faith.

3. If then sinful man find favour with God, it is grace upon grace. If God vouchsafe still to pour fresh blessings upon us, yea, the greatest of all blessings, Salvation; what can we say to these things, but "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable Gift!" And thus it is. Herein "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died to save us." By grace then are ye saved through faith. Grace is the source, faith the condition, of salvation.

Now, that we fall not short of the grace of God, it concerns us carefully to enquire,

I. What Faith it is through which we are saved?
II. What is the Salvation which is through Faith?
III. How we may answer some Objections.

I. What Faith it is through which we are saved?
1. And first. It is not barely the faith of a heathen.

Now God requireth of a heathen to believe, "That God is: that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" and that he is to be sought by glorifying him as God, by giving him thanks for all things; and by a careful practice of moral virtue, of justice, mercy and truth toward their fellow creatures. A Greek or Roman therefore, yea a Scythian or Indian, was without excuse if he did not believe thus much. The being and attributes of God, a future state of reward and punishment, and the obligatory nature of moral virtue. For this is barely the faith of a heathen.

2. Nor, 2dly, Is it the faith of a devil, though this goes much farther than that of a heathen. For the devil believes, not only, that there is a wise and powerful God, gracious to reward, and just to punish, but also, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ, the Saviour of the world. So we find him declaring, in express terms, Luke iv. 34, "I know Thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God." Nor can we doubt but that unhappy Spirit believes all those
those words, which came out of the mouth of the Holy One; yea, and whatsoever else was written by those holy men of old; of two of them he was compelled to give that glorious testimony, "These men are the Servants of the Most High God, who shew unto you the way of salvation." Thus much then the great Enemy of God and man believes and trembles in believing, that "God was made manifest in the flesh;" that he will "tread all enemies under his feet," and that "all scripture was given by inspiration of God." Thus far goeth the faith of a devil.

3. Thirdly, The faith through which we are saved, in that sense of the word which will hereafter be explained, is not barely that which the Apostles themselves had while Christ was yet upon earth; though they so believed on him as to "leave all and follow him;" although they had then power to work miracles, to "heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases;" yea, they had then "power and authority over all devils." And which is beyond all this, were sent by their Master to "preach the kingdom of God."

4. What Faith is it then through which we are saved? It may be answered, first, in general, It is a faith in Christ; Christ, and God through Christ, are the proper object of it. Herein therefore, it is sufficiently, absolutely distinguished from the faith either of ancient or modern heathens. And from the faith of a devil, it is fully distinguished by this, it is not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold, lifeless assent, a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart. For thus saith the Scripture, "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness. And, If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

5. And herein does it differ from that faith which the Apostles themselves had while our Lord was on earth, that it acknowledges the necessity and merit of his death, and the power of his resurrection.
Salvation by Faith.

It acknowledges his death as the only sufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal; and his resurrection as the restoration of us all to life and immortality: inasmuch as "he was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification." Christian faith is then, not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ, a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life; as given for us, and living in us. It is a sure confidence which a man hath in God that through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God; and in consequence hereof, a closing with him; and cleaving to him, as our "Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption;" or in one word, our Salvation.

II. What Salvation it is, which is through this Faith, is the second thing to be considered.

1. And first, Whatsoever else it imply, it is a present salvation. It is something attainable, yea, actually attained on earth, by those who are partakers of this faith. For thus faith the Apostle to the believers at Ephesus, and in them to the believers of all ages, not ye shall be (though that also is true) but ye are saved through faith.

2. Ye are saved (to comprise all in one word) from sin. This is the salvation which is through faith. This is the great salvation foretold by the Angel, before God brought his first begetten into the world, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." And neither here, nor in other parts of Holy Writ, is there any limitation or restriction. All his people, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, all that believe in him, he will save from their sins; from original and actual, past and present sin, of the flesh and of the spirit. Through faith that is in him, they are saved both from the guilt and from the power of it.

3. First from the guilt of all past sin. For whereas all the world is guilty before God; inasmuch that should
should he " be extreme to mark what is done amiss, there is none that could abide it:" and whereas:
" by the Law is only the knowledge of sin," but no deliverance from it; so that " by fulfilling the deeds of the Law, no flesh can be justified in his sight: now the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is manifested unto all that believe." Now "they are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Him God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for (or by) the remission of the sins that are past. Now hath Christ taken away the curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. He hath blotted out the handwriting that was against us, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. There is therefore no condemnation now, to them which believe in Christ Jesus.

4. And being saved from guilt, they are saved from fear. Not indeed from a filial fear of offending; but from all servile fear, from that fear which hath torment, from fear of punishment, from fear of the wrath of God; whom they no longer regard as a severe Master, but as an indulgent Father. " They have not received again the Spirit of bondage; but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself also bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God." They are also saved from the fear, though not from the possibility, of falling away from the grace of God, and coming short of the great and precious promises: they are " sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the Earneft of their inheritance." (Eph. i. 13.) Thus have they "Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. They rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, through the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them." And hereby they are persuaded (though perhaps not at all times, nor with the same fullness of persuasion) that "neither
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"neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

5. Again, through this faith they are saved from the power of sin, as well as from the guilt of it. So the Apostle declares, "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not." (John. iii. 5, &c.) Again, "Little children, let no man deceive you—He that committeth sin is of the devil.—Whosoever believeth is born of God. And whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Once more, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Chap. v. 18.

6. He that is by faith born of God, sinneth not,

1. By any habitual sin: for all habitual sin, is sin reigning. But sin cannot reign in any that believeth. Nor 2. By any wilful sin, for his will, while he abideth in the faith is utterly set against all sin, and abhorreth it as deadly poison. Nor 3. By any sinful desire; for he continually desireth the holy and perfect will of God; and any tendency to an unhol y desire, he by the grace of God, flippeth in the birth. Nor, 4. Doth he sin by infirmities, whether in act, word or thought. For his infirmities, have no concurrence of his will; and without this they are not properly sins. Thus, "He that is born of God, doth not commit sin." And though he cannot sin, He hath not sinned, yet now, 'he sinneth not'.

7. This then is the Salvation which is through Faith, even in the present world: a salvation from sin, and the consequences of sin, both often expressed in the word Justification; which, taken in

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the
the largest sense, implies, a deliverance from guilt and punishment, by the Atonement of Christ actually applied to the soul of the sinner now believing on him, and a deliverance from the whole body of sin through Christ formed in his heart. So that he who is thus justified or saved by faith, is indeed born again. He is born again of the Spirit unto a new life, "which is hid with Christ in God." "He is a new creature: old things are past away: all things in him are become new. And as a new born babe he gladly receives the sincere milk of the word, grows thereby: going on in the might of the Lord his God, from faith to faith, from grace to grace, until at length he comes unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

III. The first usual Objection to this is,

1. That to preach Salvation, or Justification by faith only, is to preach against Holiness and good Works. To which a short answer might be given: It would be so, if we spake as some do, of a faith which was separate from these. But we speak of a faith which is not so, but necessarily productive of all good works and all holiness.

2. But it may be of use to consider it more at large: especially since it is no new objection, but as old as St. Paul's time; for even then it was asked, "Do we not make void the Law through Faith?" We answer, first, All who preach not Faith, do manifestly make void the Law; either directly and grossly by limitations and comments, that eat out all the spirit of the Text: Or indirectly, by not pointing out the only means whereby it is possible to perform it. Whereas, secondly, We establish the law; both by shewing its full extent, and spiritual meaning: and by calling all to that living way, whereby "the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in them." These, while they trust in the blood of Christ alone, use all the ordinances which he hath appointed, do all the "good works
works which he had before prepared that they
should walk therein," and enjoy and manifest all
holy and heavenly tempers, even the same mind
that was in Christ Jesus.

3. But does not preaching this faith lead men
into pride? We answer, Accidentally it may.
Therefore ought every believer to be earnestly
cautions, (in the words of the great Apostle) "Be-
cause of unbelief, the first branches were broken off:
and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded,
but fear. If God spared not the natural branches,
take heed lest he spare not thee. Behold, therefore,
the goodness and severity of God! On them which
fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness: if thou
continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt
be cut off." And while he continues therein, he
will remember those words of St. Paul, foreseeing
and answering this very objection, (Rom. iii. 27.)
"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By
what Law? Of Works? Nay; but by the Law of
Faith." If a man were justified by his works, he
would have whereof to glory." But there is no
glorying for him, "that worketh not, but believeth
on him that justifieth the ungodly," (Rom. iv.) To
the same effect are the words both preceding and
following the text, (Eph. ii. 4, &c.) "God who is
rich in mercy—even when we were dead in sins,
hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace
ye are saved)—that he might shew the exceeding
riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us
through Christ Jesus. For by grace ye are saved
through faith. And that not of yourselves." Of
yourselves cometh neither your faith nor your sal-
vation. "It is the gift of God;" the free, undes-
served gift, the faith through which ye are saved,
as well as the salvation, which he of his own good
pleasure, his mere favour, annexes thereto. That
ye believe, is one instance of his grace; that be-
lieving ye are saved, another. "Not of works,
left any man should boast." For all our works, all

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our righteousness, which were before our believing, merited nothing of God but condemnation. So far were they from deserving faith; which therefore, whenever given, is not of works. Neither is salvation of the works we do when we believe. For it is then God that worketh in us. And therefore, that he giveth us a reward for what he himself worketh, only commendeth the riches of his mercy, but leaveth us nothing whereof to glory.

4. However, may not the speaking thus of the mercy of God, as saving or justifying freely by faith only, encourage men in sin? Indeed it may and will: many will continue in sin that grace may abound. But their blood is upon their own head. The goodness of God ought to lead them to repentance; and so it will those who are sincere of heart. When they know there is yet forgiveness with him, they will cry aloud that he would blot out their sins also, through faith which is in Jesus. And if they earnestly cry, and faint not, if they seek him in all the means he hath appointed, if they refuse to be comforted till he come, he will come and will not tarry. And he can do much work in a short time. Many are the examples in the Acts of the Apostles, of God's shedding abroad this faith in men's hearts, even like lightning falling from heaven. So in the same hour that Paul and Silas began to preach, the jailor repented, believed, and was baptized: as were three thousand by St. Peter on the day of Pentecost; who all repented and believed at his first preaching. And blessed be God, there are now many living proofs, that he is still mighty to save.

5. Yet to the same truth, placed in another view, a quite contrary objection is made; "If a man cannot be saved by all that he can do, this will drive men to despair." Truc, to despair of being saved by their own works, their own merits or righteousness. And so it ought; for none can trust in the merits of Christ, till he has utterly renounced his own. He that goeth about to establish his own righteousness,
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righteousness, cannot receive the righteousness of God. The righteousness which is of faith cannot be given him, while he trusted in that which is of the law.

6. But this, it is said, is an uncomfortable doctrine. The devil spoke like himself, that is, without either truth or shame, when he dared to suggest to men that it is such. It is the only comfortable one, it is very full of comfort, to all self-destroyed, self-condemned sinners. That "whoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed: That the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him: " here is comfort, high as Heaven, stronger than Death! What! Mercy for all? For Zaccheus, a public robber? For Mary Magdalene, a common harlot? Methinks I hear one say, Then I, even I, may hope for mercy! And so thou mayest, thou afflicted one, whom none hath comforted! God will not cast out thy prayer. Nay, perhaps he may say the next hour, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;" so forgiven that they shall reign over thee no more; yea, and that "the holy Spirit shall bear witness with thy spirit that thou art a child of God." O glad tidings! Tidings of great joy, which are sent unto all people. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; come ye and buy, without money, and without price." Whatesoever your sins be, "though red, like crimson, though more than the hairs of your head; return ye unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

7. When no more objections occur, then we are simply told, That salvation by faith only, ought not to be preached as the first doctrine, or at least not to be preached to all. But what faith the Holy Ghost? Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ. So then, That whosoever believeth on him shall be saved, is and must be the foundation of all our preaching;
SERMON I.

preaching; that is, must be preached first. "Well, but not to all," To whom then are we not to preach it? Whom shall we except? The poor? Nay, they have a peculiar right to have the gospel preached unto them. The unlearned? No. God hath revealed these things unto unlearned and ignorant men from the beginning. The young? By no means. Suffer these in any wise, to come unto Christ, and forbid them not. The sinners? Least of all. "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Why then, if any, we are to except the rich, the learned, the reputable, the moral men. And it is true, they too often except themselves from hearing; yet we must speak the words of our Lord. For thus the tenor of our commission runs, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature." If any man wrest it, or any part of it to his destruction, he must bear his own burden. But still, "as the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord faith unto us, that we will speak."

8. At this time more especially will we speak, That by grace ye are saved through faith: because never was the maintaining this doctrine more reasonable than it is at this day. Nothing but this can actually prevent the increase of the Romish delusion among us. It is endless to attack one by one, all the errors of that Church. But salvation by faith strikes at the root, and all fall at once where this is established. It was this doctrine (which our Church justly calls the Strong Rock and Foundation of the Christian Religion) that first drove Popery out of these kingdoms, and it is this alone can keep it out. Nothing but this can give a check to that immorality, which hath overspread the land as a flood. Can you empty the great Deep, drop by drop? Then you may reform us, by diffusives from particular vices. But let the righteousness which is of God by faith be brought in, and so shall its proud waves be stayed. Nothing but this can stop the mouths of those who "glory
in their shame; and openly deny the Lord that bought them.” They can talk as sublimely of the Law, as he that hath it written by God in his heart. To hear them speak on this head, might incline one to think, they were not far from the kingdom of God. But take them out of the law into the gospel; begin with the righteousness of faith, with Christ, the end of the law to every one that believeth, and those who but now appeared almost, if not altogether Christians, stand confessed the sons of perdition; as far from life and salvation (God be merciful unto them!) as the depth of hell from the height of heaven.

9. For this reason the Adversary so rages, whenever Salvation by Faith is declared to the world. For this reason did he stir up Earth and Hell, to destroy those who first preached it. And for the same reason, knowing that faith alone could overturn the foundations of his kingdom, did he call forth all his forces, and employ all his arts of lies and calumny, to affright that Champion of the Lord of Hosts, Martin Luther, from reviving it. Nor can we wonder thereat; for as that man of God observes, “How would it enrage a proud strong man armed, to be flipt and set at nought by a little child, coming against him with a reed in his hand?” Especially, when he knew that little child would surely overthrow him, and tread him under foot. Even so, Lord Jesus! Thus hath thy strength been ever made perfect in weakness! Go forth then, thou little child, that believest in him, and his right-hand shall teach thee terrible things! Though thou art helpless and weak as an infant of days, the strong man shall not be able to stand before thee. Thou shalt prevail over him, and subdue him, and overthrow him, and trample him under thy feet. Thou shalt march on under the great Captain of thy Salvation, conquering and to conquer, until all thine enemies are destroyed, and Death is swallowed up in Victory.

Now
Now thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, for ever and ever. Amen.

The ALMOST CHRISTIAN:

A SERMON,

Preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, before the University, on July 25, 1741.

ACTS XXVI. 28.

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

And many there are who go thus far: ever since the Christian Religion was in the world, there have been many in every age and nation, who were almost persuaded to be Christians. But seeing it avails nothing before God, to go only thus far, it highly imports us to consider,

First. What is implied in being almost,
Secondly. What in being altogether a Christian.

(I.) Now, in the being almost a Christian is implied, first, heathen honesty. No one, I suppose, will make any question of this; especially, since by heathen honesty here, I mean, not that which is recommended in the writings of their Philosophers only, but such as the common heathens expected one of another, and many of them actually practised. By the rules of this they were taught, that they ought not to be unjust: not to take away their neighbour's goods, either by robbery or theft: not to oppress the poor, neither to use extortion toward
toward any; not to cheat or over-reach either the poor or rich, in whatsoever commerce they had with them: to defraud no man of his right, and, if it were possible, to owe no man anything.

2. Again, the common heathens allowed, that some regard was to be paid to truth as well as to justice. And accordingly, they not only held him in abomination, who was forsworn, who called God to witness to a lie; but him also, who was known to be a slanderer of his neighbour, who falsely accused any man. And indeed little better did they esteem wilful liars of any sort, accounting them the disgrace of human kind, and the pests of society.

3. Yet again, there was a sort of love and assistance, which they expected one from another. They expected whatever assistance any one could give another, without prejudice to himself. And this they extended not only to those little offices of humanity, which are performed without any expense or labour; but likewise, to the feeding the hungry, if they had food to spare, the clothing the naked, with their own superfluous raiment; and in general, the giving to any that needed, such things as they needed not themselves. Thus far (in the lowest account of it) heathen honestly went, the first thing implied in the being almost a Christian.

(II.) 4. A second thing implied in the being almost a Christian, is the having a form of godliness, of that godliness which is prescribed in the gospel of Christ: the having the Outside of a real Christian. Accordingly, the Almost Christian does nothing which the gospel forbids. He taketh not the name of God in vain: he bleareth and curseth not; he sweareth not at all, but his communication is yea, yea; nay, nay. He profanes not the day of the Lord, nor suffereth it to be profaned, even by the stranger that is within his gates. He not only avoids all actual adultery, fornication, and uncleanness, but every word or look, that either directly or indirectly tends thereto: nay, and all idle words, abstaining
abstaining both from all detraction, backbiting, tale-bearing, evil-speaking, and from all foolish talking and jesting, irrepaeina, a kind of virtue in the heathen Moralist's account. Briefly, from all conversation that is not "good to the use of edifying," and that consequently "grieves the holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption."

5. He abstains from wine wherein is excess, from revellings and glutony. He avoids, as much as in him lies, all strife and contention, continually endeavouring to live peaceably with all men. And if he suffers wrong, he avengeth not himself, neither returns evil for evil. He is no raider, no brawler, no scoffer, either at the faults or infirmities of his neighbour. He does not willingly wrong, hurt, or grieve any man; but in all things acts and speaks by that plain rule, "Whatsoever thou wouldst not he should do unto thee, that do not thou to another."

6. And in doing good, he does not confine himself to cheap and easy offices of kindness, but labours and suffers for the profit of many, that by all means he may help some. In spite of toil or pain, "Whatsoever his hand findeth to do, he doeth it with all his might:" whether it be for his friends, or for his enemies; for the evil, or for the good. For, being not slothful in this, or in any business, as he hath opportunity he doth good, all manner of good, to all men; and to their souls as well as their bodies. He reproves the wicked, instructs the ignorant, confirms the wavering, quickens the good, and comforts the afflicted. He labours to awaken those that sleep, to lead those whom God hath already awakened, to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, that they may wash therein and be clean; and to stir up those who are saved through faith, to adorn the gospel of Christ in all things.

7. He that hath the form of godliness, uses the means of grace; yea, all of them, and at all opportunities.
opportunities. He constantly frequents the house of God; and that not as the manner of some is, who come into the presence of the Most High, either loaded with gold and costly apparel, or in all the gaudy vanity of dress; and either by their unseasonable civilities to each other, or the impertinent gaiety of their behaviour, disclaim all pretensions to the form, as well as to the power of godliness. Would to God there were none even among ourselves who fall under the same condemnation: who come into this house, it may be, gazing about, or with all the signs of the most listless, careless indifference, tho' sometimes they may seem to use a prayer to God for his blessing on what they are entering upon; who during that awful service, are either asleep or reclined in the most convenient posture for it; or, as tho' they supposed God was asleep, talking with one another, or looking round, as utterly void of employment. Neither let these be accused of the form of godliness. No; he who has even this, behaves with seriousness and attention, in every part of that solemn service. More especially when he approaches the table of the Lord, it is not with a light or careless behaviour, but with an air, gesture and deportment which speaks nothing else, but "God be merciful to me a sinner."

8. To this if we add, the constant use of family-prayer, by those who are masters of families, and the setting times apart for private addresses to God, with a daily seriousness of behaviour: he who uniformly practises this outward religion, has the form of godliness. There needs but one thing more in order to his being almost a Christian, and that is, SINCERITY.

(III.) 9. By Sincerity I mean, a real, inward principle of Religion, from whence these outward actions flow. And indeed, if we have not this, we have not heathen honesty; no, not so much of it as will answer the demand of a Heathen Epicurean.
rean Poet. Even this poor wretch, in his sober intervals, is able to testify,

Oderunt peccare boni, virtutis amore;
Oderunt peccare mali, formidine pana.*

So that if a man only abstains from doing evil in order to avoid punishment, + Non pasces in cruce corvos, faith the Pagan; there, “Thou hast thy reward.” But even he will not allow such a harmless man as this, to be so much as a good heathen. If then any man, from the same motive, viz. to avoid punishment, to avoid the loss of his friends, or his gain, or his reputation, should not only abstain from doing evil, but also do ever so much good, yea, and use all the means of grace; yet we could not with any propriety say, This man is even almost a Christian. If he has no better principle in his heart, he is only a hypocrite altogether.

10. Sincerity therefore is necessarily implied in the being almost a Christian: a real design to serve God, a hearty desire to do his will: It is necessarily implied, that a man have a sincere view of pleasing God in all things: in all his conversation; in all his actions; in all he does, or leaves undone. This design, if any man be almost a Christian, runs through the whole tenor of his life. This is the moving principle both in his doing good, his abstaining from evil, and his using the ordinances of God.

11. But here it will probably be enquired, Is it possible that any man living, should go so far as this, and nevertheless be only almost a Christian? What more than this can be implied, in the being a Christian altogether? I answer, first, That it is possible to go thus far, and yet be but almost a Christian; I learn not only from the Oracles of God, but also from the sure testimony of Experience.

* Good men avoid sin from the love of virtue:
Wicked men avoid sin from a fear of punishment.

† Thou shalt not be hanged.

11. Brethren,
Brethren, Great is my boldness towards you in this behalf. And forgive me this wrong, if I declare my own folly upon the house-top, for yours and the gospel's sake. Suffer me then to speak freely of myself, even as of another man. I am content to be abased, so ye may be exalted, and to be yet more vile, for the glory of my Lord.

I did go thus far for many years, as many of this place can testify; using diligence to eschew all evil, and to have a conscience void of offence; redeeming the time, buying up every opportunity of doing all good to all men; constantly and carefully using all the public and all the private means of grace; endeavouring after a steady seriousness of behaviour, at all times and in all places: And God is my record, before whom I stand, doing all this in sincerity; having a real design to serve God, a hearty desire to do his will in all things, to please him who had called me to fight the good fight, and to lay hold on eternal life. Yet my own conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, that all this time I was but almost a Christian.

II. If it be enquired, What more than this is implied in the being altogether a Christian? I answer,

(I.) First, The love of God. For thus saith his word, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Such a love of God is this, as engrosses the whole heart, as takes up all the affections, as fills the entire capacity of the soul, and employs the utmost extent of all its faculties. He that thus loves the Lord his God, his spirit continually rejoiceth in God his Saviour. His delight is in the Lord, his Lord and his All, to whom in every thing he giveth thanks. All his desire is unto God, and the remembrance of his name. His heart is ever crying out, "Whom
have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” Indeed, what can he desire beside God? Not the world, or the things of the world. For he is “crucified to the world, and the world, crucified to him.” He is crucified to the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life. Yea, he is dead to pride of every kind: for “love is not puffed up;” but “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him,” is less than nothing in his own eyes.

(II.) 2. The second thing implied in the being altogether a Christian, is, The love of our neighbour. For thus said our Lord in the following words, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” If any man ask, who is my neighbour? we reply, Every man in the world; every child of his, who is the Father of the Spirits of all flesh. Nor may we anywise except our enemies, or the enemies of God and their own souls. But every Christian loveth these also as himself, yea, as Christ loveth us. He that would more fully understand what manner of love this is, may consider St. Paul’s description of it. It is “long-suffering and kind. It envieth not. It is not rash or hasty in judging. It is not puffed up,” but maketh him that loves, the least, the servant of all. Love “doth not behave itself unseemly, but becometh all things to all men.” She seeketh not her own, but only the good of others, that they may be saved. Love is not provoked. It causeth out wrath, which he who hath, is not “made perfect in love. It thinketh no evil. It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. It covereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

(III.) 3. There is yet one thing more that may be separately considered, tho' it cannot actually be separate from the preceding, which is implied in the being altogether a Christian, and that is the ground of all, even Faith. Very excellent things are spoken of this throughout the Oracles of God.
"Every one, said the beloved disciple, that believeth, is born of God. To as many as received him, gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his name. And, this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith." Yea, our Lord himself declares, "He that believeth in the Son, hath everlasting life; and cometh not into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

4. But here let no man deceive his own soul. "It is diligently to be noted, the faith which bringeth not forth repentance, and love, and all good works, is not that right living faith which is here spoken of, but a dead and devilish one. For even the devils believe that Christ was born of a virgin, that he wrought all kind of miracles, declaring himself very God: that for our sakes he suffered a most painful death, to redeem us from death everlasting: that he rose again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and at the end of the world, shall come again to judge both the quick and dead. These articles of our faith the devils believe, and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament. And yet for all this faith, they be but devils. They remain still in their damnable estate, lacking the very true christian faith."

5. "The right and true christian faith is," to go on in the words of our own Church, "not only to believe that holy Scripture, and the articles of our faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence, to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ. It is a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God,—whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey his commandments."
6. Now, whosoever has this faith, which purifies the heart, (by the power of God, who dwelleth there-in,) from pride, anger, desire, from all unrighteousness, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; which fills it with love stronger than death, both to God and to all mankind; love that doth the works of God, glorying to spend and be spent for all men, and that endureth with joy, not only the reproach of Christ, the being mocked, despised, and hated of all men, but whatsoever the wisdom of God permits the malice of men or devils to inflict; whosoever has this faith, thus working by love, is not almost only, but altogether a Christian.

7. But who are the living witnesses of these things? I beseech you, brethren, as in the presence of that God, before whom "hell and destruction are without a covering: how much more the hearts of the children of men;" that each of you would ask his own heart, "Am I of that number? Do I so far practice justice, mercy and truth, as even the rules of heathen honesty require? If so, have I the very outside of a Christian? The form of godliness? Do I abstain from evil, from whatsoever is forbidden in the written word of God? Do I, whatever good my hand findeth to do, do it with my might? Do I seriously use all the ordinances of God at all opportunities? And is all this done, with a sincere design and desire to please God in all things?

8. Are not many of you conscious, that you never came thus far: that you have not been even almost a Christian? That you have not come up to the standard of heathen honesty? At least, not to the form of Christian godliness? Much less hath God seen sincerity in you, a real design of pleasing him in all things. You never so much as intended, to devote all your words and works, your business, studies, diversions, to his glory. You never even designed or desired, that whatsoever you did, should be "done in the name of the Lord Jesus," and
as such, should be "a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ."

9. But supposing you had, do good designs and good desires make a Christian? By no means, unless they are brought to good effect. "Hell is paved, faith one, with good intentions." The great question of all then still remains. Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart? Can you cry out, "My God and my All?" Do you desire nothing but him? Are you happy in God? Is he your glory, your delight, your crown of rejoicing? And is this commandment written in your heart, That he who loveth God love his brother also? Do you then love your neighbour as yourself? Do you love every man, even your enemies, even the enemies of God, as your own soul? As Christ loved you? Yea, dost thou believe that Christ loved thee, and gave himself for thee? Hast thou faith in his blood? believest thou the Lamb of God hath taken away thy sins, and cast them as a stone into the depth of the sea? That he hath blotted out the hand-writing that was against thee, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross? Hast thou indeed redemption through his blood, even the remission of thy sins? And doth his spirit bear witness with thy spirit, that thou art a child of God?

10. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who now standeth in the midst of us, knoweth if any man die without this faith and this love, good it were for him that he had never been born. Awake then, thou that sleepest, and call upon thy God: call in the day when he may be found. Let him not rest, till he "make his goodness to pass before thee, till he proclaim unto thee the name of the Lord. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Let no man persuade thee by vain words, to rest short of this prize of thy high calling. But
cry unto him day and night, who, while we were without strength, died for the ungodly, until thou knowest in whom thou hast believed, and canst say, "My Lord and my God." Remember, "always to pray, and not to faint," till thou also canst lift up thy hand unto heaven, and declare to him that liveth for ever and ever, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

11. May we all thus experience what it is, to be not almost only, but altogether Christians! Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus: knowing we have peace with God through Jesus Christ: rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, and having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us!

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A SERMON

Preached on SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1742, before the UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,

By CHARLES WESLEY, M. A. Student of CHRIST-CHURCH.

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EPHESIANS V. 14.

"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Light."

In discoursing on these words, I shall, with the help of God,

First, Describe the sleepers to whom they are spoken.

Secondly, Enforce the exhortation, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead. And,

Thirdly, Explain the promise made to such as do awake and arise; Christ shall give thee Light.

(I.) 1. And
Awake thou that sleepest.

(1.) 1. And first, as to the sleepers here spoken to. By sleep is signified the natural state of man: that deep sleep of the soul into which the sin of Adam hath cast all who spring from his loins; that fupinenefs, indolence, and stupidity, that insen-fibility of his real condition, wherein every man comes into the world, and continues till the voice of God awakes him.

2. Now "they that sleep, sleep in the night." The state of nature is a state of utter darkness; a state wherein "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." The poor unawakened sinner, how much knowledge ever he may have as to other things, has no knowledge of himself: in this respect, "he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." He knows not that he is a fallen spirit, whose only business in the present world, is to re- cover from his fall, to regain that image of God wherein he was created. He sees no necessity for the one thing needful, even that inward, universal change, that birth from above (figured out by bap- tifin) which is the beginning of that total renova-tion, that fncification of spirit, soul and body, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

3. Full of all diseases as he is, he fancies himself in perfect health; fast bound in misery and iron, he dreams that he is happy, and at liberty. He says, peace, peace, while the devil, "as a strong man armed," is in full possession of his soul. He sleeps on still, and takes his rest though hell is moved from beneath to meet him; though the pit, from whence there is no return, hath opened its mouth to swallow him up: a fire is kindled around him, yet he knoweth it not; yea it burns him, yet he lays it not to heart.

4. By one who sleeps we are therefore to under- stand (and would to God we might all understand it!) A sinner satisfied in his sins; contented to re- main in his fallen state, to live and die without the image of God: one who is ignorant both of his disease
disease, and of the only remedy for it: one who never was warned, or never regarded the warning voice of God, “to flee from the wrath to come;” one that never yet saw he was in danger of hell-fire, or cried out in the earnestness of his soul, “What must I do to be saved?”

5. If this sleeper be not outwardly vicious, his sleep is usually the deepest of all: whether he be of the Laodicean spirit, neither cold nor hot; but a quiet, rational, inoffensive, good-natured professor of the religion of his fathers; or whether he be zealous and orthodox, and “after the most straitest sect of our religion, live a Pharisee;” that is, according to the scriptural account, one that justifies himself; one that labours to establish his own righteousness, as the ground of his acceptance with God.

6. This is he, who “having a form of godliness, denies the power thereof;” yea, and probably reviles it, wherefover it is found, as mere extravagance and delusion. Mean while the wretched self-deceiver thanks God, that he “is not as other men are; adulterers, unjust, extortioners:” no, he doth no wrong to any man. He saith twice in a week, uses all the means of grace, is constant at church and sacrament: yea, and gives tythes of all that he has, does all the good that he can: touching the righteousness of the law, he is blameless: he wants nothing of godliness but the power; nothing of religion, but the spirit; nothing of christianity, but the truth and the life.

7. But know ye not, that however highly esteemed, among men, such a Christian as this may be, he is an abomination in the light of God, and an heir of every woe, which the Son of God, yester-day, to-day, and for ever, denounces against Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites? He hath “made clean the outside of the cup and the platter,” but within is full of all filthiness. “An evil disease cleaveth still unto him, so that his inward parts are very wickedness.”
Awake thou that sleepest. Our Lord fitly compares him to a painted sepulchre, which "appears beautiful without;" but nevertheless is "full of dead mens bones and of all uncleanness." The bones indeed are no longer dry; the sinews and flesh are come upon them, and the skin covers them above: but there is no breath in them, no spirit of the living God. And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. Ye are Christ's, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you." But if not, God knoweth that ye abide in death, even until now.

8. This is another character of the sleeper here spoken to. He abides in death, though he knows it not. He is dead unto God, "dead in trespasses and sins." For, "to be carnally minded is death." Even as it is written, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men," not only temporal death, but likewise spiritual and eternal. "In that day that thou eatest (said God to Adam) Thou shalt surely die." Not bodily (unless as he then became mortal) but spiritually: thou shalt lose the life of thy soul; thou shalt die to God; shalt be separated from him, thy essential life and happiness.

9. Thus first was dissolved the vital union of our soul with God: insomuch that in the midst of natural life, we are now in spiritual death. And herein we remain till the second Adam becomes a quickening spirit to us, till he raises the dead, the dead in sin, in pleasure, riches, or honours. But before any dead soul can live, he hears (hearkens to) the voice of the Son of God: he is made sensible of his lost estate, and receives the sentence of death in himself. He knows himself to be "dead while he liveth," dead to God, and all the things of God: having no more power to perform the actions of a living Christian, than a dead body to perform the functions of a living man.

10. And most certain it is, that one dead in sin, has not "senses exercised to discern spiritual good and
SERMON III

and evil." "Having eyes, he sees not, he hath ears and hears not." He doth not "taste and see that the Lord is gracious." He "hath not seen God at any time, nor heard his voice, nor handled the word of life." In vain is the name of Jesus "like ointment poured forth, and all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia." The soul that sleepeth in death hath no perception of any objects of this kind. His heart is past feeling, and understandeth none of these things.

11. And hence, having no spiritual senses, no inlets of spiritual knowledge, the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; nay, he is so far from receiving them, that whatsoever is spiritually discerned is mere foolishness unto him. He is not content with being utterly ignorant of spiritual things, but he denies the very existence of them. And spiritual sensation itself is to him, the foolishness of folly. "How, faith he, can these things be?" How can any man know, that he is alive to God? Even as you know, that your body is now alive. Faith is the life of the soul: and if ye have this life abiding in you, ye want no marks to evidence it to yourself, but that διαφωνειν, that divine consciousness, that witness of God, which is more and greater than ten thousand human witnesses.

12. If he doth not now bear witness with thy spirit, that thou art a child of God, O that he might convince thee, thou poor unawakened sinner, by his demonstration and power, that thou art a child of the devil! O that as I prophesy, there might now be "a noise and a shaking," and may "the bones come together, bone to his bone!" Then "come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live! And do not ye harden your hearts, and resist the Holy Ghost, who even now is come to convince you of sin, "because you believe not on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

(II.) 1. Where-
Awake thou that sleepest.

(II.) 1. Wherefore, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." God calleth thee now by my mouth; and bids thee know thyself, thou fallen spirit, thy true estate and only concern below. "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise! Call upon thy God, if so be thy God will think upon thee, that thou perish not." A mighty tempest is stirred up round about thee, and thou art sinking into the depths of perdition, the gulph of God's judgments. If thou wouldst escape them, cast thyself into them. "Judge thyself, and thou shalt not be judged of the Lord."

2. Awake, awake! Stand up this moment, lest thou "drink at the Lord's hand the cup of his fury." Stir up thyself "to lay hold on the Lord, the Lord thy righteousness, mighty to save! Shake thyself from the dust." At least, let the earthquake of God's threatenings shake thee. Awake and cry out with the trembling gaoler, "What must I do to be saved?" And never rest, till thou believest on the Lord Jesus, with a faith which is his gift, by the operation of his spirit.

3. If I speak to any one of you more than to another, it is to thee, who thinkest thyself unconcerned in this exhortation. I have a message from God unto thee. In his name I warn thee to flee from the wrath to come. Thou unholy soul, see thy picture in condemned Peter, lying in the dark dungeon, between the soldiers, bound with two chains, the keepers before the door keeping the prison. The night is far spent, the morning is at hand, when thou art to be brought forth to execution. And in these dread circumstances, thou art fast asleep; thou art fast asleep in the devil's arms, on the brink of the pit, in the jaws of everlasting destruction.

4. O may the angel of the Lord come upon thee, and the light shine into thy prison! And mayest thou feel the stroke of an almighty hand, raising thee with, "Arise up quickly, gird thyself and
and bind on thy sandals, cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.”

5. Awake, thou everlasting spirit, out of thy dream of worldly happiness. Did not God create thee for himself? Then, thou canst not rest, till thou restest in him. Return thou wanderer. Fly back to thy ark. This is not thy home. Think not of building tabernacles here. Thou art but a stranger, a sojourner upon earth: a creature of a day, but just launching out into an unchangeable state. Make haste. Eternity is at hand. Eternity depends on this moment. An eternity of happiness, or an eternity of misery!

6. In what state is thy soul? Was God, while I am yet speaking, to require it of thee, art thou ready to meet death and judgment? Canst thou stand in his sight, “who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?” Art thou “meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light?” Haft thou “fought a good fight and kept the faith?” Haft thou secured the one thing needful? Haft thou recovered the image of God, even righteousness and true holiness? Haft thou put off the old man and put on the new? Art thou clothed upon with Christ?

7. Haft thou oil in thy lamp? Grace in thy heart? Dost thou “love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength? Is that mind in thee, which was also in Christ Jesus?” Art thou a Christian indeed? That is, a new creature? Are old things past away, and all things become new?

8. Art thou “a partaker of the divine nature? Knowest thou not, that Christ is in thee, except thou be reprobate?” Knowest thou, that God “dwelleth in thee, and thou in God, by his spirit which he hath given thee?” Knowest thou not, that “thy body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, which thou hast of God?” Haft thou the witness in thyself? The earnest of thine inheritance? Art thou “sealed by that spirit of promise, unto the
Awake thou that sleepest. Day of redemption? Haft thou received the Holy Ghost? Or doft thou start at the question, not knowing whether there be any Holy Ghost?

9. If it offends thee, be thou assured, that thou neither art a Christian, nor desireft to be one. Nay, thy very prayer is turned into sin; and thou haft solemnly mocked God this very day, by praying for the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, when thou didft not believe there was any such thing to be received.

10. Yet on the authority of God's word and our own Church, I must repeat the question, "Haft thou received the Holy Ghost?" If thou haft not, thou art not yet a Christian. For a Christian is a man, that is "anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power." Thou art not yet made a partaker of pure religion and undefiled. Dost thou know what religion is? That it is, a participation of the divine nature, the life of God in the soul of man: "Christ formed in the heart, Christ in thee, the hope of glory." Happiness and holiness; heaven begun upon earth. "A kingdom of God within thee: not meat and drink," no outward thing: "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?" An everlasting kingdom brought into thy soul; a "peace of God, that passeth all understanding; a joy unspeakable and full of glory?"

11. Knoweft thou, that "in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith that worketh by love;" but a new creation? Seest thou the necessity of that inward change, that spiritual birth, that life from the dead? That holiness? And art thou thoroughly convinced, that without it, no man shall see the Lord? Art thou labouring after it? "Giving all diligence, to make thy calling and election sure? Working out thy salvation with fear and trembling? Agonizing to enter in at the strait gate?" Art thou in earnest about thy soul? And, canst thou tell the Searcher...
of hearts, "Thou, O God, art the thing that I long for!" Lord, thou knowest all things! Thou knowest that I would love thee!

12. Thou hopest to be saved;—but what reason hast thou to give of the hope that is in thee? Is it because thou hast done no harm? Or, because thou hast done much good? Or, because thou art not like other men; but wise, or learned, or honest and morally good? Esteemed of men, and of a fair reputation? Alas, all this will never bring thee to God. It is in his account lighter than vanity.

Doest thou know Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? Hath he taught thee, that "by grace we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast?" Hast thou received the faithful saying as the whole foundation of thy hope, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners?" Hast thou learned what that meaneth, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance? I am not sent, but to the lost sheep?" Art thou (he that heareth, let him understand!) Lost? Dead? Damned already?—Doest thou know thy deserts? Doest thou feel thy wants? Art thou poor in spirit? Mourning for God and refusing to be comforted? Is the prodigal come to himself, and well-content to be therefore thought beside himself; by those who are still feeding upon the husks which he hath left? Art thou willing to live godly in Christ Jesus? And doest thou therefore suffer persecution? Do men say all manner of evil against thee falsely, for the Son of man's sake?

13. O, that in all these questions ye may hear the voice that wakes the dead, and feel that hammer of the word, which breaketh the rock in pieces!—"If ye will hear his voice to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts." Now awake thou that sleepest in spiritual death, that thou sleep not in death eternal! Feel thy lost estate, and arise from the dead. Leave thine old companions in sin and
Awake thou that sleepeft. Follow thou Jesus; and let the dead bury their dead. "Save thyself from this untoward generation. Come out from among them, and be thou separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and the Lord shall receive thee; Christ shall give thee light."

(III.) 1. This promise I come, lastly, to explain. And how encouraging a consideration is this, that whosoever thou art who obeyest his call, thou canst not seek his face in vain. If thou even now awakest and arisest from the dead, he hath bound himself to give thee light. The Lord shall give thee grace and glory; the light of his grace here, and the light of his glory, when thou receivest the crown that fadeth not away. "Thy light shall break forth as the morning, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shall shine in thy heart; to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. On them that fear the Lord shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings. And in that day it shall be said unto thee, Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." For Christ shall reveal himself in thee. And he is the true Light.

2. God is light, and will give himself to every awakened sinner, that waiteth for him: and thou shalt then be a temple of the living God, and Christ shall dwell in thy heart by faith: and "being rooted and grounded in love, thou shalt be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and heighth of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that thou mayest be filled with all the fulness of God."

3. Ye see your calling, brethren. We are called to be "an habitation of God through his Spirit;" And through his Spirit dwelling in us, to be saints, here, and partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. So exceeding great are the promises which
which are given unto us, actually given unto us who believe. For by faith "we receive, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God," the sum of all the promises, "that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God."

4. The Spirit of Christ is that great gift of God, which at sundry times, and in divers manners he hath promised to man, and hath fully bestowed since the time that Christ was glorified. Those promises before made to the Fathers, he hath thus fulfilled: "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. * I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." †

5. Ye may all be living witnesses of these things: of remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. Who among you is there, that fearcth the Lord, and yet walketh on in darkness, and hath no light?" I ask thee in the name of Jesus, believest thou that his arm is not shortened at all? That he is still mighty to save? That he is the same yesternight, to-day, and for ever? That he hath now power, on earth to forgive sins? "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven." God for Christ's sake hath forgiven thee. Receive this, "not as the word of man; but as it is, indeed, the word of God;" and thou art justified freely thro' faith. Thou shalt be sanctified also through faith which is in Jesus, and shalt set to thy seal, even thine, that "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

6. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you. And suffer ye the word of exhortation, even from one the least esteemed in the Church. Your conscience beareth you witness in the Holy Ghost, that these things are so, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. "This is eternal life, to

* Ezek. xxxvi. 27. † Isaiah xlv. 3. know
Awake thou that sleepest. know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.” This experimental knowledge, and this alone, is true Christianity. He is a Christian, who hath received the Spirit of Christ. He is not a Christian, who hath not received him. Neither is it possible to have received him and not know it. “For at that day* (when he cometh, faith our Lord) ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. This is that Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it feeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him: for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

7. The world cannot receive him, but utterly reject the promise of the Father, contradicting and blaspheming. But every Spirit which confesseth not this, is not of God. Yea, “this is that Spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard, that it should come into the world, and even now it is in the world.” He is Antichrist whosoever denies the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or that the indwelling Spirit of God is the common privilege of all believers, the blessing of the gospel, the unspeakable gift, the universal promise, the criterion of a real Christian.

8. It nothing helps them to say, “We do not deny the assistance of God’s Spirit; but only this inspiration, this receiving the Holy Ghost, and being sensible of it. It is only this feeling of the Spirit, this being moved by the Spirit, or filled with it, which we deny to have any place in sound Religion.” But in only denying this, you deny the whole Scriptures, the whole truth and promise and testimony of God.

9. Our own excellent Church knows nothing of this devilish distinction: but speaks plainly of § “feeling the Spirit of Christ;” of being † “moved by the Holy Ghost,” and knowing and § "feeling

* John xiv. 26. † Art. 11. † Office of consecrating Priests. § Visitation of the Sick.
there is no other name than that of Jesus," whereby we can receive life and salvation. She teaches us all to pray for the *"inspiration of the Holy Spirit," yea, that we may be "filled with the Holy Ghost.† Nay, and every Presbyter of her's professions to receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands. Therefore to deny any of these, is in effect, to renounce the Church of England, as well as the whole Christian revelation.

10. But the wisdom of God was always foolishness with men. No marvel then, that the great mystery of the gospel, should be now also "hid from the wise and prudent," as well as in the days of old: that it should be almost universally denied, ridiculed and exploded as mere frenzy: and that all who dare avow it still, are branded with the names of madmen and enthusiasts. This is that falling away which was to come: that general apostasy, of all orders and degrees of men, which we even now find to have overspread the earth. "Run to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem, and see if ye can find a man;" a man that loveth the Lord his God with all his heart, and serveth him with all his strength? How does our own land mourn (to look no farther) under the overflowings of ungodliness? What villanies of every kind are committed day by day; yea, too often with impunity, by those who sin with a high hand, and glory in their shame? Who can reckon up the oaths, curses, profaneness, blasphemies, the lying, flandering, evil-speaking, the sabbath-breaking, gluttony, drunkenness, revenge, the whoredoms, adulteries, and various uncleannesses, the frauds, injustice, oppression, extortion, which overspread our land as a flood?

11. And even among those who have kept themselves pure from these grofer abominations; how much anger and pride, how much sloth and idle-

* Collect before the Holy Communion. † Order of Confirmation.
Awake thou that sleepest.

nefs, how much softness and effeminacy, how much luxury and self-indulgence, how much covetousness and ambition, how much thirst of praise, how much love of the world, how much fear of man is to be found? Mean while, how little of true religion? For where is he that loveth either God or his neighbour, as he hath given us commandment? On the one hand are those who have not so much as the form of godliness: on the other those who have the form only; there stands the open, there the painted sepulchre. So that in very deed, whofoever were earnestly to behold any public gathering together of the people, (I fear, those in our Churches are not to be excepted) might easily perceive, “that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees:” the one having almost as little concern about religion, as if there were no resurrection, neither Angel, nor Spirit; and the other make it a mere lifeless form, a dull round of external performances, without either true faith, or the love of God, or joy in the Holy Ghost.

12. Would to God I could except us of this place. Brethren, my heart’s desire, and prayer to God, for you is, That ye may be saved from this overflowing of ungodliness, and that here may its proud waves be stayed! But is it so indeed? God knoweth, yea, and our own conscience, it is not. Ye have not kept yourselves pure. Corrupt are we also and abominable; and few are there that understand any more; few that worship God in spirit and in truth. We too are “a generation that set not our hearts aright, and whose spirit cleaveth not fledgally unto God:” he hath appointed us indeed to be “the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its favour, it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”

13. And “shall I not visit for these things, faith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” Yea, we know not how soon he may
SERMON III.

may say to the sword, Sword, go through the land! He hath given us long space to repent. He lets us alone this year also: but he warns and awakens us by thunder. His judgments are abroad in the earth. And we have all reason to expect the heaviest of all, even that he " should come unto us quickly, and remove our candlestick out of its place, except we repent and do the first works;" unless we return to the principles of the Reformation, the truth and simplicity of the gospel. Perhaps we are now resifting the last effort of divine grace to save us. Perhaps we have well nigh filled up the measure of our iniquities, by rejecting the counsel of God against ourselves, and casting out his Messengers.

14. O God, in the midst of wrath remember mercy! Be glorified in our reformation, not in our destruction. Let us hear the rod, and him that appointed it. "Now that thy judgments are abroad in the earth, let the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness."

15. My brethren, it is high time for us to awake out of sleep; before the great trumpet of the Lord be blown, and our land become a field of blood. O may we speedily see the things that make for our peace, before they are hid from our eyes! "Turn thou us, O good Lord, and let thine anger cease from us. O Lord, look down from heaven, behold and visit this vine;" and cause us to know the time of our visitation. "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; O deliver us, and be merciful to our sins, for thy name's sake. And so we will not go back from thee: O let us live, and we shall call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord of hosts, shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole."

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Scriptural
Scriptural Christianity.

A S E R M O N

Preached at St. Mary's Oxford, before the University, August 24, 1744.

"Whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head." Ezek. xxiii. 4.

ACTS IV. 31.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

1 The same expression occurs in the second chapter, where we read, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all (the Apostles with the women, and the mother of Jesus, and his brethren) with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."* One immediate effect whereof was, "They began to speak with other tongues;"+ inasmuch that both the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the other strangers who "came together, when this was noised abroad, heard them speak, in their several tongues, the wonderful works of God."‡

2 In this chapter we read, that when the Apostles and brethren had been praying, and praising God, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost"§ Not that we find any visible appearance

* Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. † Ver. 4. ‡ Ver. 6. § Acts iv. 31.
here, such as had been in the former instance: nor are we informed that the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, were then given to all or any of them; such as "the gift of healing, of working other miracles, of prophecy, of discerning spirits: the speaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues."*

3. Whether these gifts of the Holy Ghost were designed to remain in the Church throughout all ages; and whether or no they will be restored at the nearer approach of the restitution of all things, are questions which is not needful to decide. But it is needful to observe this, that even in the infancy of the Church, God divided them with a sparing hand. Were all even then Prophets? Were all workers of miracles? Had all the gifts of healing? Did all speak with tongues? No, in nowise. Perhaps not one in a thousand. Probably none but the Teachers in the Church, and only some of them.† It was therefore for a more excellent purpose than this, that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

4. It was, to give them (what none can deny to be essential to all Christians in all ages) the mind which was in Christ, those holy fruits of the Spirit, which whosoever hath not, is none of his: to fill them with "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness:" § to endue them with faith, (perhaps it might be rendered, fidelity) with meekness and temperance: to enable them to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, its passions and desires; and, in consequence of that inward change, to fulfil all outward righteousness, "to walk as Christ also walked, in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love."

5. Without busying ourselves then in curious, needless enquirys touching those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, let us take a nearer view of these his ordinary fruits; which we are assured will remain throughout all ages: of that great work of God

* 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10. † 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29, 30. § Gal. v. 22, 23, 24. † 1 Thess. i. 3.
among the children of men, which we are used to express by one word, Christianity: not as it implies a set of opinions, a system of doctrines, but as it refers to men's hearts and lives. And this Christianity it may be useful to consider under three distinct views.

I. As beginning to exist in individuals.
II. As spreading from one to another.
III. As covering the earth.

I design to close these considerations with a plain practical Application.

I. And first, let us consider Christianity in its rise, as beginning to exist in individuals.

Suppose then one of those who heard the Apostle Peter preaching Repentance and remission of sins, was pricked to the heart, was convinced of sin, repented, and then believed in Jesus. By this faith of the operation of God, which was the very substance or subsistence of things hoped for, the demonstrative evidence of invisible things, he instantly received the spirit of adoption, whereby he now cried Abba, Father! Now first it was that he could call Jesus Lord, by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit itself bearing witness with his spirit that he was a child of God. Now it was that he could truly say, "I live not, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

2. This then was the very essence of his faith, a divine gift, of the love of God the Father, through the Son of his love, to him a sinner, now accepted in the beloved. And "being justified by faith, he had peace with God," yea "the peace of God ruling in his heart:" a peace which passing all understanding, kept his heart and mind from all doubt and fear.
fear, through the knowledge of him in whom he had believed. He could not therefore "be afraid of any evil tidings; for his heart flood fast believing in the Lord." He feared not what man could do unto him, knowing the very hairs of his head were all numbered. He feared not all the powers of darkness, whom God was daily bruising under his feet. Least of all was he afraid to die, nay, he desired to depart and be with Christ; * who † "through death had destroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death, were all their life-time, till then, subject to bondage."

3. His soul therefore magnified the Lord, and his spirit rejoiced in God his Saviour. "He rejoiced in him with joy unspeakable, who had reconciled him to God, even the Father: in whom he had redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." He rejoiceth in that witness of God's Spirit with his spirit, that he was a child of God: and more abundantly, in hope of the glory of God, in hope of the glorious image of God, and full renewal of his soul in righteousness and true holiness; and in hope of that crown of glory, that "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

4. The love of God was also shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him." || "Because he was a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father!" § And that filial love of God was continually increased by the witness he had in himself, of God's pardoning love to him, by " beholding what manner of love it was, which the Father had bestowed upon him, that he should be called a child of God **" So that God was the desire of his eyes, and the joy of his heart; his portion in time and in eternity.

5. He that thus loved God, could not but love his brother also; and "not in word alone, but in *Phil. i. 23. † Heb. ii. 15. || Rom. v. 5. § Gal. iv. 6. ¶ 1 John v. 10. ** 1 John iii. 1.
deed and in truth." "If God, said he, so loved us, we ought also to love one another,"* Yea, every soul of man, as the mercy of God is over all his works.† Agreeably hereo, the affection of this lover of God, embraced all mankind for his sake; not excepting those whom he had never seen in the flesh, or those of whom he knew nothing more than that they were the offspring of God; for whose souls his Son had died; not excepting the evil and unthankful, and least of all his enemies, those who hated, or persecuted, or despitefully used him for his Master's sake. These had a peculiar place both in his heart and in his prayers. He loved them even as Christ loved us.

6. And love is not puffed up.|| It abases to the dust every soul wherein it dwells. Accordingly he was lowly of heart, little, mean, and vile in his own eyes. He neither fought nor received the praise of men, but that which cometh of God only. He was meek and long-suffering, gentle to all, and easy to be intreated. Faithfulness and truth never forsak him; they were "bound about his neck, and wrote on the table of his heart." By the same spirit he was enabled to be temperate in all things, refraining his soul even as a weaned child. He was "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him:" superior to "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life." By the same Almighty love was he saved, both from passion and pride, from lust and vanity, from ambition and covetousness, and from every temper which was not in Christ.

7. It may easily be believed, he who had this love in his heart, would work no evil to his neighbour. It was impossible for him, knowingly and designedly, to do harm to any man. He was at the greatest distance from cruelty and wrong, from any unjust or unkind action. With the same care did he "set a watch before his mouth, and keep the door

* 1 John iv. 11. † Psal. cxlv. 9. ‖ 1 Cor. xiii. 4.
of his lips;” left he should offend in tongue, either against justice, or against mercy or truth. He put away all lying, falsehood and fraud; neither was guile found in his mouth. He spake evil of no man; nor did any unkind word ever come out of his lips.

8. And as he was deeply sensible of the truth of that word, without me ye can do nothing, and consequently, of the need he had to be watered of God every moment; so he continued daily in all the ordinances of God, the flated channels of his grace to man. In the Apostle’s doctrine or teaching, receiving that food of the soul with all readiness of heart, in the breaking of bread, which he found to be the communion of the body of Christ, and in the prayers and praises offered up by the great congregation. And thus he daily grew in grace, increasing in strength, in the knowledge and love of God.

9. But it did not satisfy him, barely to abstain from doing evil. His soul was athirst to do good. The language of his heart continually was, “My father worketh hitherto, and I work.” My Lord went about doing good; and shall not I tread in his steps? As he had opportunity therefore, if he could do no good of a higher kind, he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, helped the fatherless or stranger, visited and assisted them that were sick or in prison. He gave all his goods to the poor. He rejoiced to labour or to suffer for them; and wherein loever he might profit another, there especially to deny himself. He counted nothing too dear to part with for them, as well remembering the word of his Lord, “Infomuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”*

10. Such was Christianity in its rise. Such was a Christian in ancient days. Such was every one of those, who when they heard the threatenings of the Chief Priests and Elders, “lift up their voice to God with one accord, and were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The multitude of them that believed,
Scriptural Christianity.

were of one heart and of one soul." (So did the love of him in whom they had believed, constrain them to love one another.) "Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." So fully were they crucified to the world, and the world crucified to them. "And they continued steadfastly with one accord in the Apostles doctrine, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayer. And great grace was upon them all; neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles feet; and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need."*

II. 1. Let us take a view, in the second place, of this Christianity, as spreading from one to another, and so gradually making its way into the world. For such was the will of God concerning it, who "did not light a candle to put it under a bushel, but that it might give light to all that were in the house." And this our Lord had declared to his first disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth, the light of the world;" at the same time that he gave that general command, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."†

2. And, indeed, supposing a few of these lovers of mankind, to see "the whole world lying in wickedness," Can we believe they would be unconcerned at the sight, at the misery of those for whom their Lord died? Would not their bowels yearn over them, and their hearts melt away for very trouble? Could they then stand idle all the day long, even were there no command from him whom they loved? Rather would they not labour, by all possible means, to pluck some of these brands out of the burning? Undoubtedly they would: they would spare no pains to bring back whomsoever they

* Acts iv. 31.-35. † Matt. v. 13, 14, 15, 16. E 2
SERMON IV.
could of those poor "sheep that had gone astray, to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls."*

3. So the Christians of old did. They laboured, having opportunity, † "to do good to all men," warning them to flee from the wrath to come; now, now, to escape the damnation of hell. They declared, || "The times of ignorance God winked at; but now he calleth all men every where to repent." They cried aloud, "Turn ye, turn ye from your ruin." They reasoned with them of temperance and righteousness, or justice, of the virtues opposite to their reigning sins, and of judgment to come, of the wrath of God which would surely be executed on evil doers in that day when he should judge the world.

4. They endeavoured herein to speak to every man severally as he had need. To the careless, to those who lay unconcerned in darkness and in the shadow of death, they thundered, "Awake thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light:" but to those who were already awakened out of sleep, and groaning under a sense of the wrath of God, their language was, "We have an Advocate with the Father; he is the Propitiation for our sins." Mean time those who had believed, they "provoked to love and to good works; to patient continuance in well-doing; and to abound more and more in that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord."**

5. And their labour was not in vain in the Lord. "His word ran and was glorified. It grew mightily and prevailed." But so much the more did offences prevalel also. The world in general were offended, "because they testified of it, that the works thereof were evil."†† The men of pleasure were offended, not only because these men were made, as it were, to reprove their thoughts. ("He professed, said they, to have the knowledge of God: he calleth himself the child of the Lord: his life is not like...

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other
Scriptural Christianity.

other men's: his ways are of another fashion: he abstaineth from our ways, as from filthiness: he maketh his boast, that God is his Father."*) But much more, because so many of their companions were taken away, and would no more run with them to the same excess of riot. † The men of reputation were offended, because, as the gospel spread, they declined in the esteem of the people; and because many no longer dared to give them flattering titles, or to pay man the homage due to God only. The men of trade called one another together, and said, § "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. But ye see and hear that these men have persuaded and turned away much people. So that this our craft is in danger to be set at nought." Above all, the men of religion, so called, the men of outside religion, "the saints of the world." were offended and ready at every opportunity to cry out, ¶ "Men of Israel, help! we have found these men! Pestilent fellows, movers of sedition throughout the world. These are the men that teach all men, everywhere, against the people, and against the law."

6. Thus it was that the heavens grew black with clouds, and the storm gathered amain. For the more Christianity spread, the more hurt was done, in the account of those who received it not, and the number increased of those who were more and more enraged at these ** Men who thus turned the world upside down; insomuch that they more and more cried out, Away with such fellows from the earth; it is not fit that they should live, yea, and sincerely believed, that whoever should kill them would do God service.

7. Mean while they did not fail to ‡‡ cast out their name as evil: so that this |||| "self was every where spoken against." ¶¶ Men said all manner of evil of them, even as had been done of the Prophets that were before them. And whatsoever


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any would affirm, others would believe. So that offences grew as the stars of heaven for multitude. And hence arose, at the time fore-ordained of the Father, persecution in all its forms. Some, for a season, suffered only shame and reproach; some, "the spoiling of their goods; some had trials of mocking and scourging, some of bonds and imprisonment; and others resisted unto blood."*

8. Now it was that the pillars of hell were shaken, and the kingdom of God spread more and more. Sinners were everywhere "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." He gave his children, "such a mouth, and such wisdom, as all their adversaries could not resist." And their lives were of equal force with their words. But above all, their sufferings spake to all the world. They "approved themselves the servants of God, in afflictions, in necessities; in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours; in perils in the sea, in perils in the wilderness; in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and in thirst, in cold and nakedness."† And when having fought the good fight, they were led as sheep to the slaughter, and offered up on the sacrifice and service of their faith, then the blood of each found a voice, and the heathen owned, *He being dead, yet speaketh.*

9. Thus did Christianity spread itself in the earth. But how soon did the tares appear with the wheat? And the mystery of iniquity work as well as the mystery of godliness! How soon did Satan find a seat, even in the temple of God! "Till the woman fled in the wilderness, and the faithful were again ministered from the children of men." Here we tread a beaten path: the still increasing corruptions of the succeeding generations, have been largely described from time to time, by those witnesses God raised up, to shew that he had "built his Church upon a Rock, and the gates of hell should not wholly prevail against her."‡

* Heb. x. 34.—xi. 37, &c. † 2 Cor. vi. 4, &c. ‡ Mat. xvi. 18.
III. 1. But shall we not see greater things than these? Yea, greater than have been yet from the beginning of the world. Can Satan cause the truth of God to fail, or his promises to be of none effect? If not, the time will come, when Christianity will prevail over all, and cover the earth. Let us stand a little, and survey (the third thing which was proposed) this strange sight, a Christian world. "Of this the Prophets of old enquired and searched diligently: * of this the spirit which was in them testified, It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.† In that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign of the people. To it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again to recover the remnant of his people; and he shall set up an Ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth. § The wolf shall then dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy, faith the Lord, in all my holy mountain. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

2. To the same effect are the words of the great Apostle, which it is evident have never yet been fulfilled. "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. But through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles. And if the diminishing of them be

* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, &c. † Isa. ii. 2, 4. § Isa. xi. 10, 11, 12. || Isa. xi. 6.—9.
the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved."

3. Suppose now the fulness of time to be come, and the prophecies to be accomplished, What a prospect is this? All is peace, quietness, and assurance for ever. Here is no din of arms, no confused noise, no garments rolled in blood. Destruc-
tions are come to a perpetual end: wars are ceased from the earth. Neither are there any intestine jars remaining; no brother rising up against brother; no country or city divided against itself, and tearing out its own bowels. Civil discord is at an end for evermore, and none is left either to destroy or hurt his neighbour. Here is no oppression to make every
the wife man mad; no extortion to grind the face of the poor; no robbery or wrong; no rapine or injustice; for all are content with such things as they possess. Thus righteousness and peace have kissed each other; they have taken root and filled the
land: righteousness flourishing out of the earth, and peace looking down from heaven.

4. And with righteousness or justice, mercy is also found. The earth is no longer full of cruel habitations. The Lord hath destroyed both the blood-thirsty and malicious, the envious and revengeful man. Were there any provocation, there is none that now knoweth to return evil for evil: but indeed there is none doth evil, no not one; for all are harmless as doves. And being filled with peace and joy in believing, and united in one body, by one spirit, they all love as brethren, they are all of one heart, and of one soul. "Neither faith any of them, that ought of the things which he possesseth is his own." There is none among them that lacketh; for every man loveth his neighbour as himself.

* Rom. xi. 1, 11, 12, 25, 29. † Psal. lxxv. 10.
And all walk by one rule, "Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them."

5. It follows, that no unkind word can ever be heard among them. No strife of tongues, no contention of any kind, no railing or evil-speaking; but every one "opens his mouth with wisdom, and in his tongue there is the law of kindness." Equally incapable are they of fraud or guile: their love is without dissimulation: their words are always the just expression of their thoughts, opening a window into their breast, that whosoever desires may look into their hearts, and see that only love and God are there.

6. Thus, where "the Lord Omnipotent taketh to himself his mighty power and reigneth, doth he subdue all things to himself;" cause every heart to overflow with love, and fill every mouth with praise. "Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God." Arise, shine (saith the Lord) for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Thou hast known that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty God of Jacob. I have made thy Officers peace, and thy Exalters righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. Thy people are all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever: the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. The Sun shall no more be thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

IV. Having thus briefly considered Christianity, as beginning, as going on, and as covering the earth,

* Psal. cxliv. 15. † Isa. lx. 1. 16.—19.
it remains only that I should close the whole with a plain practical Application.

1. And first, I would ask, Where does this Christianity now exist? Where, I pray, do the Christians live? Which is the country, the inhabitants whereof are all thus filled with the Holy Ghost? Are all of one heart and of one soul? Cannot suffer one among them to lack any thing, but continually give to every man as he hath need? Who one and all have the love of God filling their hearts, and constraining them to love their neighbour as themselves? Who have all "put on bowels of mercy, humblestes of mind, gentleness, long-suffering?" Who offend not in any kind, either by word or deed, against justice, mercy, or truth? But in every point do unto all men, as they would these should do unto them. With what propriety can we term any a Christian Country, which does not answer this description? Why then, let us confess we have never yet seen a Christian Country upon earth.

2. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, if ye do account me a madman or a fool, yet as a fool bear with me. It is utterly needful that some one should use great plainness of speech towards you. It is more especially needful at this time; for who knoweth but it is the last? Who knoweth how soon the righteous Judge may say, "I will no more be intreated for this people. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in this land, they should but deliver their own souls." And who will use this plainness, if I do not? Therefore I, even I, will speak. And I adjure you, by the living God, that ye cleel not your breasts against receiving a blessing at my hands. Do not lay in your heart, Non persuadabis, etiam si persuaseries: or, in other words, Lord, thou shalt not send, by whom thou wilt send. Let me rather perish in my blood, than be saved by this man!
3. Brethren, "I am persuaded better things of you, tho' I thus speak." Let me ask you then, in tender love, and in the spirit of meekness, Is this city a Christian city? Is Christianity, Scriptural Christianity, found here? Are we, considered as a community of men, so filled with the Holy Ghost, as to enjoy in our hearts, and shew forth in our lives, the genuine fruits of that spirit? Are all the Magistrates, all Heads and Governors of Colleges and Halls, and their respective Societies (not to speak of the inhabitants of the town) "of one heart and one soul? Is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts?" Are our tempers the same that were in him? And are our lives agreeable thereto? Are we "holy as he which hath called us is holy, in all manner of conversation?"

I intreat you to observe, that here are no peculiar notions now under consideration; that the question moved is not concerning doubtful opinions, of one kind or another; (but concerning the undoubted, fundamental branches if there be any such) of our common Christianity. And for the decision thereof, I appeal to your own consciences, guided by the word of God. He therefore that is not condemned by his own heart, let him go free.

5. In the fear then, and in the presence of the great God, before whom both you and I shall shortly appear, I pray you, that are in authority over us, whom I reverence for your Office sake, to consider, (and not after the manner of dissemblers with God) Are you "filled with the Holy Ghost?" Are you lively portraits of him, whom ye are appointed to represent among men? I have said, Ye are God's, ye Magistrates and Rulers; ye are by office so nearly allied to the God of heaven! In your several stations and degrees, ye are to shew forth unto us the Lord our Governor. Are all the thoughts of your hearts, all your tempers and desires, suitable to your high calling? Are all your words like unto those which come out of the mouth
mouth of God? Is there, in all your actions, dignity and love? A greatness which words cannot express, which can flow only from an heart full of God—and yet consistent with the character of "Man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm!"

6. Ye venerable men, who are more especially called to form the tender minds of youth, to dispel thence the shades of ignorance and error, and train them up to be wise unto salvation, Are you filled with the Holy Ghost? With all these fruits of the Spirit, which your important office so indissolubly requires? Is your heart whole with God? Full of love and zeal to set up his kingdom on earth? Do you continually remind those under your care, that the one rational end of all our studies, is to know, love, and serve "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent?" Do you inculcate upon them, day by day, that love alone never faileth? (Whereas, whether there be tongues, they shall fail, or philosophical knowledge, it shall vanish away:) and that without love, all learning is but splendid ignorance, pompous folly, vexation of spirit. Has all you teach an actual tendency to the love of God, and of all mankind for his sake? Have you an eye to this end in whatever you prescribe, touching the kind, the manner, and the measure of their studies; directing and labouring, that wherever the lot of these young soldiers of Christ is cast, they may be so many "burning and shining lights, adorning the gospel of Christ in all things?" And permit me to ask, Do you put forth all your strength in the vast work you have undertaken? Do you labour herein with all your might? Exerting every faculty of your soul? Using every talent which God hath lent you, and that to the utmost of your power?

7. Let it not be said, that I speak here, as if all under your care were intended to be Clergymen. Not so: I only speak as if they were all intended
to be Christians. But what example is set them by us who enjoy the beneficence of our forefathers? by Fellows, Students, Scholars; more especially those who are of some rank and eminence? Do ye, brethren, abound in the fruits of the Spirit, in lowliness of mind, in self-denial and mortification, in seriousness and composure of spirit, in patience, meekness, sobriety, temperance; and in unwearyed, restless endeavours, to do good, in every kind, unto all men; to relieve their outward wants, and to bring their souls to the true knowledge and love of God? Is this the general character of Fellows of Colleges? I fear it is not. Rather, have not pride and haughtiness of spirit, impatience and peevishness, sloth and indolence, gluttony and sensuality, and even a proverbial uselessness, been objected to us, perhaps not always by our enemies, nor wholly without ground? O that God would roll away this reproach from us, that the very memory of it might perish for ever!

8. Many of us are more immediately consecrated to God, called to minister in holy things. Are we then patterns to the rest, "in word, in conversation, in charity: in spirit, in faith, in purity?" Is there written on our forehead and on our heart, "Holiness to the Lord?" For what motives did we enter upon this office? Was it indeed with a single eye "to serve God, trusting that we were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon us this ministration, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" And have we "clearly determined, by God's grace, to give ourselves wholly to this Office? Do we forlack and set aside, as much as in us lies, all worldly cares and studies? Do we apply ourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all our cares and studies this way?" Are we apt to teach? Are we taught of God, that we may be able to teach others also? Do we know God? Do we know Jesus Christ?
Hath "God revealed his Son in us?" And hath he "made us able Ministers of the new Covenant?"
Where then are the "seals of our Apostleship?"
Who that were dead in trespasses and sin, have been quickened by our word? Have we a burning zeal to save souls from death, so that for their sake we often forget even to eat our bread? Do we speak plain, "by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God?"* Are we dead to the world and the things of the world, "laying up all our treasure in heaven?" Do we lord over God's heritage?
Or are we the least, the servants of all? When we bear the reproach of Christ does it sit heavy upon us? Or do we rejoice therein? When we are smitten on the one cheek, Do we resent it? Are we impatient of affronts? Or do we turn the other also; not resisting the evil, but overcoming evil with good? Have we a bitter zeal, inciting us to strive sharply and passionately with them that are out of the way? Or is our zeal the flame of love, so as to direct all our words with sweetness, lowliness, and meekness of wisdom?

9. Once more, What shall we say concerning the youth of this place? Have you either the form or the power of Christian godliness? Are you humble, teachable, adviseable; or stubborn, self-willed, heady, and high-minded? Are you obedient to your superiors as to parents? Or do you despise those to whom you owe the tenderest reverence? Are you diligent in your easy business, pursuing your studies with all your strength? Do you redeem the time, crowding as much work into every day as it can contain? Rather, are ye not conscious to yourselves, that you waste away day after day, either in reading what has no tendency to Christianity, or in gaming, or in—you know not what? Are you better managers of your fortune than of your time? Do you, out of principle,
take care to owe no man any thing? Do you "remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," to spend it in the more immediate worship of God? When you are in his house, Do you consider that God is there? Do you behave, "as seeing him that is invisible?" Do you know how to "possess your bodies, in sanctification and honour?" Are not drunkenness and uncleanness found among you? Yea, are there not a multitude of you who "glory in their shame?" Do not many of you "take the name of God in vain, perhaps habitually, without either remorse or fear? Yea, are there not a multitude of you that are forsworn? I fear, a swiftly-increasing multitude. Be not surprised, brethren. Before God and this congregation, I own myself to have been of the number; solemnly swearing to observe all those customs, which I then knew nothing of; and those statutes, which I did not so much as read over, either then, or for some years after. What is perjury, if this is not? But if it be, O what a weight of sin, yea, sin of no common dye, lieth upon us! And doth not the Most High regard it?

10. May it not be one of the consequences of this, that so many of you are a generation of triflers; triflers with God, with one another, and with your own souls? For how few of you spend from one week to another, a single hour in private prayer? How few have any thought of God in the general tenor of your conversation? Who of you is, in any degree, acquainted with the work of his Spirit, his supernatural work in the souls of men? Can you bear, unless now and then, in a Church, any talk of the Holy Spirit? Would you not take it for granted, if one began such a conversation, that it was either Hypocrisy, or Enthusiasm? In the name of the Lord God Almighty, I ask, What Religion are you of? Even the talk of Christianity, ye cannot, will not bear. O my brethren! What a
Christian city is this? "It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand!"

11. For indeed, what probability, what possibility rather, (speaking after the manner of men) is there that Christianity, Scriptural Christianity, should be again the religion of this place? That all orders of men among us should speak and live as men, "filled with the Holy Spirit?" By whom should this Christianity be restored? By those of you that are in authority? Are you convinced then that this is Scriptural Christianity? Are you desirous it should be restored? And do ye not count your fortune, liberty, life, dear unto yourselves, so ye may be instrumental in the restoring of it? But suppose ye have this desire, who hath any power proportioned to the effect? Perhaps some of you have made a few faint attempts, but with how small success? Shall Christianity then be restored by young, unknown, inconsiderable men? I know not whether ye yourselves could suffer it. Would not some of you cry out, "Young man, in so doing thou reproachest us?" But there is no danger of your being put to the proof; so hath iniquity overspread us like a flood. Whom then shall God send? The famine, the pestilence, (the last Messengers of God to a guilty land) or the sword? The armies of the Romish Aliens, to reform us into our first love? Nay, "rather let us fall into thy hand, O Lord, and let us not fall into the hand of man."

Lord, save or we perish? Take us out of the mire that we sink not! O help us against these enemies! for vain is the help of man. Unto thee all things are possible. According to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die; and preserve us in the manner that seemeth to thee good; not as we will, but as thou wilt.

Justification
Justification by Faith,
A SERMON,
On Romans iv. 5.

"To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted to him for Righteousness."

1. HOW a sinner may be justified before God, the Lord and Judge of all, is a question of no common importance, to every child of man. It contains the foundation of all our hope; in as much as while we are at enmity with God, there can be no true peace, no solid joy, either in time or in eternity. What peace can there be, while our own heart condemns us? And much more, He that is "greater than our heart and knoweth all things?" What solid joy, either in this world or that to come, while "the wrath of God abideth on us?"

2. And yet how little hath this important question been understood? What confused notions have many had concerning it? Indeed not only confused, but often utterly false; contrary to the truth, as light to darkness: notions absolutely inconsistent with the Oracles of God, and with the whole analogy of Faith. And hence, erring concerning the very foundation, they could not possibly build thereon: at least, not gold, silver, or precious stones, which would endure when tried as by fire; but only hay and stubble, neither acceptable to God, nor profitable to man.

3. In order to do justice, as far as in me lies, to the vast importance of the subject, to save those that seek the truth in sincerity, from vain jangling and strife of words, to clear the confusions of thought, into which so many have already been led thereby, and to give them true and just conceptions...
of this great mystery of godliness, I shall endeavour to shew,

First, What is the general ground of this whole Doctrine of Justification.

Secondly, What Justification is.

Thirdly, Who they are that are justified. And

Fourthly, On what Terms they are justified.

1. I am first, to shew, What is the general ground of this whole Doctrine of Justification.

1. In the image of God was man made only as that created him is holy; merciful as the Author of all is merciful, perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. As God is love, so man dwelling in love, dwelt in God, and God in him. God made him to be an image of his own eternity, an incorruptible picture of the God of glory. He was accordingly pure, as God is pure, from every spot of sin. He knew not evil in any kind or degree, but was inwardly and outwardly sinless and undefiled. He "loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and soul, and strength."

2. To man thus upright and perfect, God gave a perfect law, to which he required full and perfect obedience. He required full obedience in every point, and this to be performed without any intermission, from the moment man became a living soul, till the time of his trial should be ended. No allowance was made for any falling short. As indeed there was no need of any; man being altogether equal to the task assigned, and thoroughly furnished for every good word and work.

3. To the entire law of love which was written in his heart (against which perhaps he could not sin directly) it seemed good to the sovereign wisdom of God, to superadd one positive law: "Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of the tree that groweth in the midst of the garden," annexing that penalty thereto, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

4. Such
Justification by Faith.

4. Such then was the state of man in Paradise. By the free, unmerited love of God, he was holy and happy; he knew, loved, enjoyed God, which is (in substance) life everlasting. And in this life of love, he was to continue for ever, if he continued to obey God in all things: but if he disobeyed in any, he was to forfeit all. “In that day, said God, thou shalt surely die.”

5. Man did disobey God. He “ate of the tree, of which God commanded him, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it.” And in that day he was condemned, by the righteous judgment of God. Then also the sentence whereof he was warned before, began to take place upon him. For the moment he tasted that fruit, he died: his soul died, was separated from God; separate from whom the soul has no more life, than the body has when separate from the soul. His body likewise became corruptible and mortal; so that death then took hold on this also. And being already dead in the spirit, dead to God, dead in sin, he hastened on to death everlasting; to the destruction both of body and soul, in the fire never to be quenched.

6. Thus, “by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so death passed upon all men,” as being contained in him who was the common Father and Representative of us all. Thus “through the offence of one,” all are dead, dead to God, dead in sin, dwelling in a corruptible, mortal body, shortly to be dissolved, and under the sentence of death eternal. For as “by one man’s disobedience, all were made sinners;” so by that offence of one, “judgment came upon all men to condemnation,” Rom v. 12, &c.

7. In this state we were, even all mankind, when “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not perish but have everlasting life.” In the fulness of time, he was made man, another common Head of mankind, a second general Parent and Representative of the whole
whole human race. And as such it was that “he bore our griefs, the Lord laying upon him the iniquities of us all.” Then was he wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He made his soul an offering for sin:” he poured out his blood for the transgressors: he “bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that by his stripes we might be healed:” and by that one oblation of himself once offered, he hath redeemed me and all mankind; having thereby “made a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.”

8. In consideration of this, that the Son of God hath “tasted death for every man,” God hath now “reconciled the world to himself, not imputing to them their former trespasses.” And thus, “as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification.” So that for the sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes on only one condition (which himself also enables us to perform) both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us in his favour, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal.

9. This therefore is the general ground, of the whole doctrine of justification. By the sin of the first Adam, who was not only the Father, but likewise the Representative of us all, we all fell short of the favour of God: we all became children of wrath: or, as the Apostle expresses it, “Judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Even so, by the sacrifice for sin made by the Second Adam, as the Representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world, that he hath given them a new Covenant. The plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, “there is no more condemnation for us, but we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.”

II. 1.
II. 1. But what is it to be justified? What is justification? This was the second thing which I proposed to shew. And it is evident from what has been already observed, that it is not, the being made actually just and righteous. This is salvation; which is indeed, in some degree, the immediate Fruit of justification; but nevertheless is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature. The one implies, what God does for us through his Son; the other what he works in us by his Spirit. So that although some rare instances may be found, wherein the term justified or justification, is used in so wide a sense as to include salvation also; yet in general use, they are sufficiently distinguished from each other, both by St. Paul and the other inspired Writers.

2. Neither is that far-fetched conceit, that justification is, the clearing us from accusation, particularly that of Satan, easily proveable from any clear text of holy writ. In the whole scriptural account of this matter, as above laid down, neither that accuser nor his accusation appears to be at all taken in. It cannot indeed be denied, that he is the Accuser of men, emphatically so called. But it does in nowise appear, that the great Apostle hath any reference to this, more or less, in all that he hath written touching justification, either to the Romans or the Galatians.

3. It is also far easier to take for granted, than to prove from any clear Scripture-Testimony, that justification is, the clearing us from the accusation brought against us by the Law. At least, if this forced, unnatural way of speaking, mean either more or less than this, That whereas we have transgressed the Law of God, and thereby deserved the damnation of hell, God does not inflict on those who are justified, the punishment which they had deserved.

4. Least of all does justification imply, that God is deceived in those whom he justifies; that he thinks them
them to be what in fact they are not, that he accounts them to be otherwise than they are. It does by no means imply, that God judges concerning us, contrary to the real nature of things: that he esteems us better than we really are, or believes us righteous, when we are unrighteous. Surely no. The judgment of the all-wise God, is always according to truth. Neither can it ever consist with his unerring wisdom, to think that I am innocent, to judge that I am righteous or holy, because another is so. He can no more in this manner confound me with Christ, than with David or Abraham. Let any man to whom God hath given understanding, weigh this without prejudice: and he cannot but perceive, that such a notion of Justification, is neither reconcilable to Reason or Scripture.

5. The plain scriptural notion of Justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father, whereby for the sake of the Propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he "sheweth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by the remission of the sins that are past." This is the easy, natural account of it given by St. Paul, throughout this whole Epistle. So he explains it himself, more particularly in this, and in the following chapter. Thus in the next verses but one to the text, "Blessed are they, faith he, whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." To him that is justified or forgiven, God will not impute sin to his condemnation. He will not condemn him on that account, either in this world or in that which is to come. His sins, all his past sins, in thought, word and deed, are covered, are blotted out: shall not be remembered or mentioned against him, any more than if they had not been. God will not inflict on that sinner what he deserved to suffer, because the Son of his love hath suffered for him. And from the time we are accepted through the Beloved, reconciled to God through his blood, he
he loves and blesses and watches over us for good, even as if we had never sinned.

Indeed the Apostle in one place seems to extend the meaning of the word much farther; where he says, "Not the hearers of the Law, but the doers of the Law shall be justified." Here he appears to refer our Justification, to the sentence of the great day. And so our Lord himself unquestionably doth, when he says, "By thy words thou shalt be justified:" proving thereby, that for "every idle word men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment." But perhaps we can hardly produce another instance, of St. Paul's using the word in that distant sense. In the general tenor of his writings, it is evident he doth not. And least of all in the text before us, which undeniably speaks, not of those who have already finished their course, but of those who are now just setting out, just beginning to run the race which is set before them.

III. 1. But this is the third thing which was to be considered, namely, who are they that are justified? And the Apostle tells us expressly, the ungodly: "He, that is, God, justifieth the ungodly:" the ungodly of every kind and degree, and none but the ungodly. As "they that are righteous need no repentance," so they need no forgiveness. It is only sinners that have any occasion for pardon: it is sin alone which admits of being forgiven. Forgiveness therefore has an immediate reference to sin, and (in this respect) to nothing else. It is our unrighteousness to which the pardoning God is merciful: it is our iniquity which he remem- 

breth no more.

2. This seems not to be at all considered by those who so vehemently contend, that a man must be sanctified, that is, holy, before he can be justified especially by such of them as affirm, that universal Holiness or Obedience must precede Justification (unlesse they mean, that Justification at the last day, which is wholly out of the present ques-
tion) so far from it, that the very supposition, is not only flatly impossible (for where there is no love of God, there is no holiness; and there is no love of God, but from a sense of his loving us, but also grossly, intrinsically absurd, contradictory to itself. For it is not a Saint but a Sinner that is forgiven, and under the notion of a sinner. God justifieth not the godly, but the ungodly; not those that are holy already, but the unholy. Upon what condition he doth this, will be considered quickly: but whatever it is, it cannot be holiness. To assert this, is to say, the Lamb of God takes away, only those sins which were taken away before.

3. Does then the good Shepherd seek and save only those that are found already? No. He seeks and saves that which is lost. He pardons those who need his pardoning mercy. He saves from the guilt of sin (and at the same time from the power) sinners of every kind, of every degree: men who till then were altogether ungodly; in whom the love of the Father was not; and consequently, in whom dwelt no good thing, no good or truly Christian temper; but all such as were evil and abominable, pride, anger, love of the world, the genuine fruits of that carnal mind which enmity against God.

4. These who are sick, the burden of whose sins is intolerable, are they that need a Physician; these who are guilty, who groan under the wrath of God, are they that need a pardon. These who are condemned already, not only by God, but also by their own conscience, as by a thousand witnesses, of all their ungodliness, both in thought and word and work, cry aloud for him that justifieth the ungodly, through the redemption that is in Jesus: the ungodly and him that worketh not; that worketh not before he is justified; any thing that is good, that is truly virtuous or holy, but only evil continually. For his heart is necessarily, essentially evil.
evil till the love of God is shed abroad therein. And while the tree is corrupt, so are the fruits; "for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

5. If it be objected, "Nay, but a man, before he is justified, may feed the hungry, or clothe the naked; and these are good works:" the answer is easy. He may do those, even before he is justified. And these are, in one sense, good works; they are good and unprofitable to men. But it does not follow, that they are, strictly speaking, good in themselves, or good in the sight of God. All truly good works (to use the words of our Church) follow after Justification. And they are therefore good and acceptable to God in Christ, because they spring out of a true and living faith. By a parity of Reason, all works done before Justification, are not good, in the Christian sense, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ (though often from some kind of faith in God they may spring) "yea, rather, for they are not done, as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not (how strange soever it may appear to some) but they have the nature of sin."

6. Perhaps those who doubt of this, have not duly considered the weighty reason which is here assigned, why no works done before Justification, can be truly and properly good. The Argument plainly runs thus:

No Works are good which are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done:

But no Works done before Justification are done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done:

Therefore no Works done before Justification are good.

The first Proposition is self-evident. And the second, That no Works done before Justification, are done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, will appear equally plain and undeniable, if we only consider God hath willed and
commanded, that all our works should be done in charity, in love, in that love to God which produces love to all mankind. But none of our works can be done in this love, while the love of the Father (of God as our Father) is not in us. And this love cannot be in us, till we receive the “Spirit of Adoption, crying in our hearts, Abba, Father.” If therefore God doth not justify the ungodly, and him that (in this sense) worketh not, then hath Christ died in vain; then notwithstanding his death, can no flesh living be justified.

IV. 1. But on what terms then is he justified, who is altogether ungodly, and till that time, worketh not? On one alone, which is Faith. He “believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly.” And “he that believeth is not condemned: yea, he is passed from death unto life.” “For the righteousness (or mercy) of God is by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: whom God hath sent forth for a Propitiation, through faith in his blood: that he might be just, and (consistently with his justice) the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus: therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by Faith, without the deeds of the law:” without previous obedience to the Moral Law, which indeed he could not till now perform. That it is the Moral Law, and that alone which is here intended, appears evidently from the words that follow. “Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the Law.” What Law do we establish by Faith? Not the Ritual Law: not the Ceremonial Law of Moses. In no wise; but the great unchangeable law of Love, the holy love of God and of our neighbour.

2. Faith in general is, a divine, supernatural evidence or conviction of things not seen, nor discoverable by our bodily senses, as being either past, future, or spiritual. Justifying faith implies, not only a divine evidence or conviction, that
that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," but a sure trust and confidence, that Christ died for my sins, that he loved me and gave himself for me. And at what time soever a sinner thus believes, be it in early childhood, in the strength of his years, or when he is old and hoary-haired, God justifieth that ungodly one: God for the sake of his Son, pardoneth and ab-solveth him, who had in him till then no good thing. Repentance indeed God hath given him before; but that repentance was neither more nor less, than a deep sense of the want of all good, and the presence of all evil. And whatever good he hath or doth from that hour, when he first believes in God through Christ, Faith does not find, but bring. This is the fruit of Faith. First the tree is good, and then the fruit is good also.

3. I cannot describe the nature of this Faith better, than in the words of our own Church. "The only instrument of salvation" (whereof Justification is one branch) "is Faith: that is, a sure trust and confidence, that God both hath and will forgive our sins, that he hath accepted us again into his favour, for the merits of Christ's death and passion.—But here we must take heed that we do not halt with God, through an inconstant, waver-ing Faith. Peter coming to Christ upon the water, because he fainted in Faith, was in danger of drowning. So we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be feared, that we should sink as Peter did, not into the water, but into the bottomless pit of hell-fire." Second Sermon on the Passion.

"Therefore have a sure and constant Faith, not only that the death of Christ is available for all the world, but that he hath made a full and sufficient sacrifice for thee, a perfect cleansing of thy sins, so that thou mayest lay with the Apostle, he loved thee and gave himself for thee. For this is to make Christ thine own, and to apply his merits unto thy- self." Sermon on the Sacrament, first Part.
4. By affirming that this Faith is the term or Condition of Justification, I mean, first, that there is no Justification without it. "He that believeth not is condemned already," and so long as he believeth not, that condemnation cannot be removed, but the wrath of God abideth on him. As "there is no other name given under heaven than that of Jesus of Nazareth," no other merit whereby a condemned sinner can ever be saved from the guilt of sin; so there is no other way of obtaining a share of his merit, than by Faith in his name. So that as long as we are without this Faith, we are "strangers to the Covenant of promise, we are aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and without God in the world." Whate'er virtues (so called) a man may have, I speak of those unto whom the gospel is preached; for "what have I to do to judge them that are without?" Whate'er good works (so accounted) he may do, it profiteth not; he is still a child of wrath, still under the curse, till he believes in Jesus.

5. Faith therefore is the necessary condition of Justification. Yea, and the only necessary condition thereof. This is the second point carefully to be observed; that the very moment God giveth Faith (for it is the gift of God) to the ungodly, that worketh not, that Faith is counted to him for righteousness. He hath no righteousness at all, antecedent to this, not so much as negative righteousness or innocences. But Faith is imputed to him for righteousness, the very moment that he believeth. Not that God (as was observed before) thinketh him to be, what he is not. But as he made Christ to be a sin-offering for us, that is, treated him as a sinner, punished him for our sins, so he counteth us righteous, from the time we believe in him: that is, he doth not punish us for our sins, yea, treats us as though we were guiltless and righteous.

6. Surely
6. Surely the difficulty of assenting to the proposition, That Faith is the only condition of Justification, must arise from not understanding it. We mean thereby thus much, That it is the only thing without which no one is justified; the only thing that is immediately, indispensably, absolutely requisite in order to pardon. As on the one hand, though a man should have every thing else, without Faith, yet he cannot be justified; so on the other, though he be supposed to want every thing else, yet if he hath Faith, he cannot but be justified. For suppose a sinner of any kind or degree, in a full sense of his total ungodliness, of his utter inability to think, speak, or do good, and his absolute meanness for hell-fire: suppose, I say, this sinner, helpless and hopeless, calls himself wholly on the mercy of God in Christ (which indeed he cannot do but by the grace of God) who can doubt, but he is forgiven in that moment? Who will affirm, that any more is indispensably required, before that sinner can be justified?

Now if there ever was one such instance from the beginning of the world. (And have there not been, and are there not ten thousand times ten thousand?) it plainly follows, that Faith is, in the above sense, the sole condition of Justification.

7. It does not become poor, guilty, sinful worms, who receive whatsoever blessings they enjoy, (from the least drop of water that cools our tongue, to the immense riches of glory in eternity) of grace, of mere favour, and not of debt, to ask of God the reasons of his conduct. It is not meet for us to call him in question, "who giveth account to none of his ways;" to demand, Why didst thou make Faith the condition, the only condition of Justification? Wherefore didst thou decree, He that believeth, and he only, shall be saved? This is the very point on which St. Paul so strongly insists in the ninth chapter of his Epistle, viz. That
the terms of pardon and acceptance must depend, not on us, but on him that calleth us: that there is no unrighteousness with God, in fixing his own terms, not according to ours, but his own good pleasure: who may justly say, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” namely, on him who believeth in Jesus. So then it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, to cause the condition on which he shall find acceptance; but of God that sheweth mercy, that accepteth none at all, but of his own free love, his unmerited goodness. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, viz. on those who believe on the Son of his love: and whom he will, that is, those who believe not, he hardeneth, leaves at last to the hardness of their hearts.

8. One reason, however, we may humbly conceive, of God’s fixing this condition of Justification, “if thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ thou shalt be saved,” was to hide pride from man. Pride had already destroyed the Angels of God, had cast down a third part of the stars of heaven. It was likewise in great measure owing to this, when the Tempter said, Ye shall be as God’s, that Adam fell from his own self-sufficiency, and brought sin and death into the world. It was therefore an instance of wisdom worthy of God, to appoint such a condition of reconciliation, for him and all his posterity, as might effectually humble, might abase them to the dust. And such is Faith. It is peculiarly fitted for this end. For he that cometh unto God by this Faith, must fix his eye singly on his own wickedness, on his guilt and helplessness, without having the least regard to any supposed good in himself to any virtue or righteousness whatsoever. He must come as a mere sinner inwardly and outwardly, self-destroyed and self-condemned, bringing nothing to God but ungodliness only, pleading nothing of his own but sin and misery.
Thus it is, and thus alone, when his mouth is stopped, and he stands utterly guilty before God, that he can look unto Jesus, as the whole and sole Propitiation for his sins. Thus only can he be found in him, and receive the righteousness which is of God by Faith.

9 Thou ungodly one, who hearest or readest these words, thou vile, helpless, miserable sinner, I charge thee before God the Judge of all, go straight unto him, with all thy ungodliness. Take heed thou destroy not thine own soul by pleading thy righteousness, more or less. Go as altogether ungodly, guilty, lost, destroyed, deserving and dropping into hell: and thou shalt then find favour in his sight, and know that he justifieth the ungodly. As such thou shalt be brought unto the blood of sprinkling, as an undone, helpless, damned sinner. Thus look unto Jesus! There is the Lamb of God, who taketh away thy sins! Plead thou no works, no righteousness of thine own! No humility, contrition, sincerity. In no wise. That were, in very deed, to deny the Lord that bought thee. No. Plead thou singly, the blood of the Covenant, the ransom paid for thy proud, stubborn, sinful soul. Who art thou, that now seest and feelst both thine inward and outward ungodliness? Thou art the man! I want thee for my Lord. I challenge thee for a child of God by Faith. The Lord hath need of thee. Thou who feelst thou art just fit for hell, art just fit to advance his glory: the glory of his free grace, justifying the ungodly and him that worketh not. O come quickly! Believe in the Lord Jesus: and thou, even thou art reconciled to God.
The Righteousness of Faith,  
A SERMON. 

ROMANS X. 5, 6, 7, 8.

"Moses describeth the Righteousness which is of the Law. That the man which doeth those Things shall live by them.

"But the Righteousness which is of Faith speaketh on this wise; Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above:

"O, Who shall descend into the Deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the Dead.

"But what faith is? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is the Word of Faith, which we preach."

1. THE Apostle does not here oppose the Covenant given by Moses, to the Covenant given by Christ. If we ever imagined this, it was for want of observing, that the latter, as well as the former part of these words, were spoken by Moses himself, to the people of Israel, and that, concerning the Covenant which then was. (Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 14.) But it is the Covenant of Grace, which God through Christ hath established with men in all ages, (as well before and under the Jewish dispensation, as since God was manifest in the flesh) which St. Paul here opposes to the Covenant of Works, made with Adam while in paradise; but commonly supposed to be the only Covenant which God had made with man, particularly by those Jews of whom the Apostle writes.

2. Of these it was that he so affectionately speaks, in the beginning of this chapter. "My heart's
heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved. For I bear them record, that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness” (of the Justification that flows from his mere grace and mercy, freely forgiving our sins through the Son of his love, through the redemption which is in Jesus) “and seeking to establish their own righteousness,” (their own holiness, antecedent to Faith in him that justifieth the ungodly, as the ground of their pardon and acceptance) “have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God,” and consequently seek death in the error of their life.

3. They were ignorant, that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;” that by the oblation of himself once offered, he had put an end to the first Law or Covenant (which indeed was not given by God to Moses, but to Adam in his state of innocence) the strict tenor whereof, without any abatement was; “Do this and live;” and at the same time purchased for us that better Covenant, “Believe and live:” Believe and thou shalt be saved; now saved both from the guilt and power of sin, and, of consequence, from the wages of it.

4. And how many are equally ignorant now, even among those who are called by the name of Christ? How many who have now a zeal for God, yet have it not according to knowledge: but are still seeking to establish their own righteousness, as the ground of their pardon and acceptance; and therefore vehemently refuse to submit themselves to the righteousness of God? Surely my heart's desire, and prayer to God for you, brethren, is, that ye may be saved. And in order to remove this grand stumbling-block out of your way, I will endeavour to shew, First, What the righteousness is, which is of the Law, and what the righteousness which is of Faith: Secondly, The folly of trusting in the
righteousness of the law, and the wisdom of submitting to that which is of Faith.

1. And, first, "The righteousness which is of the law, faith. The man which doth these things, shall live by them." Constantly and perfectly observe all these things to do them, and then shalt live for ever. This Law or Covenant (usually called, The Covenant of works) given by God to man in paradise, required an obedience, perfect in all its parts, entire and wanting nothing, as the condition of eternal continuance in the holiness and happiness wherein he was created.

2. It required, That man should fulfil all righteousness, inward and outward, negative and positive: That he should not only abstain from every idle word, and avoid every evil work, but should keep every affection, every desire, every thought in obedience to the will of God. That he should continue holy, as he which had created him was holy, both in heart and in all manner of conversation; that he should be pure in heart, even as God is pure; perfect as his Father in heaven was perfect: That he should love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength: that he should love every soul which God had made, even as God had loved him: that by his universal benevolence, he should dwell in God (who is love) and God in him: that he should serve the Lord his God with all his strength, and in all things singly aim at his glory.

3. These were the things which the righteousness of the law required, that he who did them might live thereby. But it farther required, That this entire obedience to God, this inward and outward holiness, this conformity both of heart and life to his will, should be perfect in degree. No abatement, no allowance could possibly be made, for falling short in any degree, as to any jot or tittle either
either of the outward or the inward law. If every commandment relating to outward things was obeyed, yet that was not sufficient, unless every one was obeyed with all the strength, in the highest measure, and most perfect manner. Nor did it answer the demand of this Covenant, to love God with every power and faculty, unless he were loved with the full capacity of each, with the whole possibility of the soul.

4. One thing more was indispensably required by the righteousness of the law, namely, that this universal obedience, this perfect holiness both of heart and life, should be perfectly uninterrupted also, should continue without any intermission, from the moment wherein God created man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, until the days of his trial should be ended, and he should be confirmed in life everlasting.

5. The righteousness then which is of the Law, speaketh on this wise: "Thou, O man of God, stand fast in love, in the image of God, wherein thou art made. If thou wilt remain in life, keep the commandments, which are now written in thy heart. Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Love as thyself every soul that he hath made. Defire nothing but God. Aim at God in every thought, in every word and work. Swerve not in one motion of body or soul, from him thy mark and the prize of thy high calling. And let all that is in thee praise his holy name, every power and faculty of thy soul, in every kind, in every degree, and at every moment of thine existence. This do, and thou shalt live: thy light shall shine, thy love shall flame more and more, till thou art received up into the house of God in the heavens, to reign with him for ever and ever."

6. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring down Christ from above" (as tho' it were some impossible task,
SERMON VI.

task, which God required thee previously to perform in order to thine acceptance:) "Or, who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ from the dead;" (as tho' that were still remaining to be done, for the sake of which thou wert to be accepted.) "But what faith it? The word," (according to the tenor of which, thou mayest now be accepted as an heir of life eternal) "is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of Faith, which we preach:" the new covenant which God hath now established with sinful man, through Christ Jesus.

7. By the righteousness which is of Faith, is meant that condition of Justification (and in consequence of present and final salvation, if we endure therein unto the end) which was given by God to fallen man, through the merits and mediation of his only begotten Son. This was in part revealed to Adam soon after his fall, being contained in the original promise, made to him and his seed, concerning the seed of the woman, who should bruise the Serpent's head.* It was a little more clearly revealed to Abraham, by the Angel of God from heaven, saying, † "By myself have I sworn, faith the Lord, that in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." It was yet more fully made known to Moses, to David, and to the Prophets that followed: and through them, to many of the people of God, in their respective generations. But still the bulk even of these were ignorant of it; and very few understood it clearly. Still life and immortality were not so brought to light to the Jews of old, as they are now unto us by the gospel.

8. Now this covenant faith not to sinful man "Perform unfinning obedience and live." If this were the term, he would have no more benefit by all which Christ hath done and suffered for him, than if he was required, in order to life, to ascend

* Gen. iii. 15. † Gen. xxii. 15, 18.
into heaven and bring down Christ from above; or to descend into the deep, into the invisible world, and bring up Christ from the dead. It doth not require any impossibility to be done (altho' to mere man, what it requires would be impossible; but not, to man assisted by the Spirit of God:) this were only, to mock human weakness. Indeed, strictly speaking, the covenant of Grace doth not require us, to do any thing at all, as absolutely and indispensably necessary in order to our justification: but only, to believe in him, who, for the sake of his Son, and the propitiation which he hath made, justifieth the ungodly that worketh not, and imputes his faith to him for righteousness. Even so "Abraham believed in the Lord, 5 and he counted it to him for righteousness. Even so" — "Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith—that he might be the father of all them that believe—that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. * Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it, [i.e. Faith] was imputed to him. But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed," to whom Faith shall be imputed for righteousness, shall stand in the stead of perfect obedience, in order to our acceptance with God, "if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: who was delivered [to death] for our offences, and was raised again for our justification:" "For the assurance of the remission of our sins, and of a second life to come, to them that believe."

9. What faith then the covenant of forgiveness, of unmerited love, of pardoning mercy? "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In the day thou believest, thou shalt surely live. Thou shalt be restored to the favour of God; and in his pleasure is life. Thou shalt be saved from the curse and from the wrath of God. Thou shalt be quickened from the death of sin, into the life of righteousness. And if thou endure to the end, the faith that worketh.
believing in Jesus, thou shalt never taste the second death, but having suffered with thy Lord, shalt also live and reign with him for ever and ever.

10. Now this word is nigh thee. This condition of life, is plain, easy, always at hand. *It is in thy mouth and in thy heart*, through the operation of the Spirit of God. The moment thou believest in thine heart in him, whom God hath raised from the dead, and confesseth with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, as thy Lord and thy God, thou shalt be saved from condemnation, from the guilt and punishment of thy former sins, and shalt have power to serve God in true holiness, all the remaining days of thy life.

11. What is the difference then between the righteousness which is of the Law, and the righteousness which is of Faith? Between the first Covenant, or the Covenant of works, and the second, the Covenant of grace? The essential, unchangeable difference is this: the one supposes him to whom it is given, to be already holy and happy, created in the image and enjoying the favour of God; and prescribes the condition whereon we may continue therein, in love and joy, life and immortality. The other supposes him to whom it is given, to be now unholy and unhappy; fallen short of the glorious image of God, having the wrath of God abiding on him, and hastening through sin, whereby his soul is dead, to bodily death, and death everlasting. And to man in this state, it prescribes the condition, whereon he may regain the pearl he has lost: may recover the favour, and the image of God, may retrieve the life of God in his soul, and be restored to the knowledge and the love of God, which is the beginning of life eternal.

12. Again, the Covenant of works, in order to man's continuance in the favour of God, in his knowledge and love, in holiness and happiness, required of perfect man, a perfect and uninterrupted obedience,
obedience, to every point of the law of God. Whereas the Covenant of grace, in order to man's recovery, of the favour and life of God, requires only faith; living faith in him who through God justifies him that obeyed not.

13. Yet again. The Covenant of works required of Adam and all his children, to *pay the price themselves*, in consideration of which, they were to receive all the future blessings of God. But in the Covenant of grace, seeing we have nothing to pay, God frankly forgives us all: provided only, that we believe in him, who hath *paid the price for us*; who hath given himself a *propitiation for our sins, for the sins of the whole world*.

14. Thus the first Covenant required what is now as far off from all the children of men; namely, unfinning obedience, which is far from those who are conceived and born in sin. Whereas the second requires what is nigh at hand; as though it should say, Thou art sin! God is love. Thou by sin art fallen short of the glory of God; yet there is mercy with him. Bring then all thy sins to the pardoning God, and they shall vanish away as a cloud. If thou wert not ungodly, there would be no room for him to justify thee as ungodly. But now draw near, in full assurance of faith. He speaketh, and it is done. Fear not, only believe; for even the just God *justifieth all that believe in Jesus*.

II. 1. These things considered, it will be easy to shew, as I proposed to do in the second place, the folly of trusting in the *righteousness of the Law*, and the wisdom of *submitting to the righteousness which is of Faith*. The folly of those who still trust, in the *righteousness which is of the Law*, the terms of which are, Do this and live, may abundantly appear from hence. They set out wrong. Their very first step is a fundamental mistake. For before they can
ever think of claiming any blessing on the terms of this Covenant, they must suppose themselves to be in his state, with whom this Covenant was made. But how vain a supposition is this? Since it was made with Adam in a state of innocence. How weak therefore must that whole building be, which stands on such a foundation? And how foolish are they who thus build on the sand? Who seem never to have considered, that the Covenant of works was not given to man, when he was dead in trespasses and sins, but when he was alive to God, when he knew no sin, but was holy as God is holy: who forget, that it was never designed for the recovery of the favour and life of God once lost, but only for the continuance and increase thereof, till it should be compleat in life everlasting.

2. Neither do they consider, who are thus seeking to establish their own righteousness which is of the Law, what manner of obedience or righteousness that is, which the Law indispensably requires. It must be perfect and entire, in every point, or it answers not the demand of the Law. But which of you is able to perform such obedience? Or, consequentlly to live thereby? Who among you fulfils every jot and tittle even of the outward commandments of God? Doing nothing, great or small, which God forbids? Leaving nothing undone which he enjoins? Speaking no idle words? Having your conversation always meet to minister grace to the hearers? And whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, doing all to the glory of God? And how much less are you able to fulfil all the inward commandments of God? Those which require, that every temper and motion of your soul should be holiness unto the Lord? Are you able, To love God with all your heart? To love all mankind as your own soul? To pray without ceasing? In every thing to give thanks? To have God always before
before you? And to keep every affection, desire and thought, in obedience to his Law?

3. You should farther consider, That the righteousness of the Law requires, not only the obeying every command of God, negative and positive, internal and external, but likewise in the perfect degree. In every instance whatever, the voice of the Law is, Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God with all thy strength. It allows no abatement of any kind. It excuses no defect. It condemns every coming short of the full measure of obedience, and immediately pronounces a curse on the offender. It regards only the invariable rules of Justice, and faith, "I know not to shew mercy."

4. Who then can appear before such a Judge, which is extreme to mark what is done amiss? How weak are they who desire to be tried at the bar, where no flesh living can be justified? None of the offspring of Adam. For suppose we did now keep every commandment with all our strength: yet one single breach which ever was, utterly destroys our whole claim to life. If we have ever offended in any one point, this righteousness is at an end. For the Law condemns all who do not perform uninterrupted as well as perfect obedience. So that according to the sentence of this, for him who hath once sinned, in any degree, there remaineth only a fearful looking for of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries of God.

5. Is it not then the very foolishness of folly, for fallen man to seek life by this righteousness? For man, who was "shapen in wickedness, and in sin did his mother conceive him:" man, who is by nature all earthly, sensual, devilish, altogether corrupt and abominable: in whom, till he find grace, dwelleth no good thing; nay, who cannot of himself think one good thought? Who is indeed all sin, a mere lump of ungodliness, and who commits sin in every breath he draws; whose actual transgressions, in word and deed, are more in num-
SERMON VI.

ber than the hairs of his head! What stupidity, what senselessness must it be for such an uncleane

guilty, helpless worm as this, to dream of seeking

acceptance by his own righteousness, of living by

the righteousness which is of the Law?

6. Now whatsoever considerations prove the folly

of trusting in the righteousness which is of the Law,

prove equally the wisdom of submitting to the righ-
teousness which is of God by Faith. This were
easy to be shewn with regard to each of the pre-
ceding considerations. But to wave this, the wis-
dom of the first step hereto, the disclaiming our

own righteousness, plainly appears from hence,

That it is acting according to truth, to the real

nature of things. For what is it more, than to

acknowledge with our heart as well as lips, the

true state wherein we are? To acknowledge, that

we bring with us into the world, a corrupt, sinful

nature; more corrupt indeed than we can easily

conceive or find words to express? That hereby

we are prone to all that is evil, and averse from all

that is good; that we are full of pride, self-will,

unruly passions, foolish desires, vile and inordi-
nate affections; lovers of the world, lovers of plea-

ture more than lovers of God? That our lives

have been no better than our hearts, but many

ways ungodly and unholy; insomuch that our

actual sins, both in word and deed, have been as

the stars of heaven for multitude: that on all these

accounts, we are unpleasing to him, who is of purer

eyes than to behold iniquity; and deserve nothing

from him, but indignation and wrath and death,

the due wages of sin? That we cannot by any of

our righteousness, (for indeed, we have none at all)

nor by any of our works (for they are as the tree

from which they grow) appease the wrath of God,
or avert the punishment we have justly deserved;
yea, that, if left to ourselves, we shall only wax

worse and worse, sink deeper and deeper into sin,

offend God more and more both with our evil works,
The Righteousness of Faith.

and with the evil tempers of our carnal mind, till we fill up the measure of our iniquities, and bring upon ourselves swift destruction? And is not this the very state wherein by nature we are? To acknowledge this then, both with our heart and lips, that is, to disclaim our righteousness, the righteousness which is of the Law, is to act according to the real nature of things, and consequently is an instance of true wisdom.

7. The wisdom of submitting to the righteousness of Faith, appears farther from this consideration. That it is the righteousness of God: I mean here, It is that method of reconciliation with God, which hath been chose and established by God himself, not only as he is the God of wisdom, but as he is the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and of every creature which he hath made. Now as it is not meet for man to say unto God, what dost thou? As none who is not utterly void of understanding, will contend with one that is mightier than he, with him whose kingdom ruleth over all; so it is true wisdom, it is a mark of sound understanding, to acquiesce in whatever he hath chosen, to say in this, as in all things, "It is the Lord: Let him do what seemeth him good."

8. It may be farther considered, That it was of mere grace, of free love, of undeserved mercy, that God hath vouchsafed to sinful man, any way of reconciliation with himself, that we were not cut away from his hand, and utterly blotted out of his remembrance. Therefore whatever method he is pleased to appoint, of his tender mercy, of his unmerited goodness, whereby his enemies, who have so deeply revolted from him, so long and obstinately rebelled against him, may still find favour in his sight, it is doubtless our wisdom to accept with all thankfulness.

9. To mention but one consideration more. It is wisdom to aim at the best end by the best means. Now the best end which any creature can pursue, is
is happiness in God. And the best end a fallen creature can pursue is, The recovery of the favour and image of God. But the best, indeed the only means under heaven given to man, whereby he may regain the favour of God, which is better than life itself, or the image of God which is the true life of the soul, is the submitting to the righteousness which is of Faith, the believing in the only begotten Son of God.

III. 1. Whosoever therefore thou art who desirest to be forgiven and reconciled to the favour of God; do not say in thy heart, “I must first do this; I must first conquer every sin; break off every evil word and work, and do all good to all men: or, I must first go to Church, receive the Lord’s supper, hear more sermons, and say more prayers.” Alas, my brother, thou art clean gone out of the way. Thou art still ignorant of the righteousness of God, and art seeking to establish thy own righteousness, as the ground of thy reconciliation. Knowest thou not, that thou canst do nothing but sin, till thou art reconciled to God? Wherefore then dost thou say, I must do this and this first, and then I shall believe. Nay, but First Believe. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Propitiation for thy sins. Let this good foundation first be laid, and then thou shalt do all things well.

2. Neither say in thy heart, “I cannot be accepted yet, because I am not good enough.” Who is good enough? Who ever was? To merit acceptance at God’s hands! Was ever any child of Adam good enough for this? Or, will any, till the consummation of all things? And as for thee, thou art not good at all: there dwelleth in thee no good thing. And thou never wilt be, till thou believe in Jesus. Rather thou wilt find thyself worse and worse. But is there any need of being worse, in order to be accepted? Art thou not bad enough already? Indeed thou art, and that
The Righteousness of Faith.

God knoweth. And thou thyself canst not deny it. Then delay not. All things are now ready. Arise and wash away thy sins. The fountain is open. Now is the time, to wash thee white in the blood of the Lamb. Now he shall purge thee as with hyssop, and thou shalt be clean; he shall wash thee, and thou shalt be whiter than snow.

3. Do not say, "But I am not contrite enough: I am not sensible enough of my sins." I know it. I would to God, thou werst more sensible of them, more contrite a thousand fold than thou art. But do not say for this. It may be God will make thee so, not before thou believest, but by believing. It may be, thou wilt not weep much, till thou lovest much, because thou hast had much forgiven. In the mean time, look unto Jesus. Behold how he loveth thee! What could he have done more for thee which he hath not done?

"O Lamb of God, was ever pain, Was ever love like thine!"

Look steadily upon him, till he looks on thee, and breaks thy hard heart. Then shall thy head be waters, and thy eyes fountains of tears.

4. Nor yet do thou say, "I must do something more, before I come to Christ." I grant, supposing thy Lord should delay his coming, it were meet and right to wait for his appearing, in doing so far as thou hast power, whatsoever he hath commanded thee. But there is no necessity for making such a supposition. How knowest thou that he will delay? Perhaps he will appear, as the dayspring from on high, before the morning-light. O do not set him a time. Expect him every hour. Now, he is nigh! Even at the door!

5. And to what end wouldst thou wait for more sincerity, before thy sins are blotted out? To make thee more worthy of the grace of God? Alas, thou art still establishing thy own righteousness. He will have mercy, not because thou art worthy of
of it, but because his compassions fail not: nor because thou art righ
teous; but because Jesus Christ hath atoned for thy sins.

Again, if there be any thing good in sincerity, why dost thou expect it before thou hast Faith? Seeing Faith itself is the only root of whatever is really good and holy.

Above all, How long wilt thou forget, That whatsoever thou dost, or whatsoever thou hast, before thy sins are forgiven thee, it avails nothing with God, toward the procuring of thy forgiveness? Yea, and that it must all be cast behind thy back, trampled under foot, made no account of, or thou wilt never find favour in God's sight; because until then thou canst not ask it, as a mere sinner, guilty, lost, undone, having nothing to plead, nothing to offer to God, but only the merits of his well beloved Son, who loved thee, and gave himself for thee.

6. To conclude. Whosoever thou art, O man, who hast the sentence of death in thyself, who feelest thyself a condemned sinner, and hast the wrath of God abiding on thee: unto thee faith the Lord, Not, Do this: perfectly obey all my commands and live: but, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The word of Faith is nigh unto thee; now, at this instant, in the present moment, and in thy present state, sinner as thou art, just as thou art, Believe the gospel: and I will be merciful unto thy unrighteousness and thy iniquities will I remember no more.
The Way to the Kingdom,
A SERMON.

MARK I. 15.

"The Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel."

These words naturally lead us to consider, First, The Nature of True Religion, here termed by our Lord, The Kingdom of God, which he, is at hand: And secondly, The way there-to, which he points out in those words, Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.

I. 1. We are First, to consider, The Nature of True Religion, here termed by our Lord, The Kingdom of God. The same expression the great Apostle uses in his Epistle to the Romans, where he likewise explains his Lord’s words, saying, “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” chap. xiv. 17.

2. The kingdom of God, or True Religion, is not meat and drink. It is well known, that not only the unconverted Jews, but great numbers of those who had received the Faith of Christ, were notwithstanding zealous of the Law, (Acts xxii. 20.) even the Ceremonial Law of Moses. Whatsoever therefore they found written therein, either concerning meat and drink-offerings, or the distinction between clean and unclean meats, they not only observed themselves but vehemently pressed the same, even on those among the Gentiles (or Heathens) who were turned to God. Yea, to such a degree,
a degree, that some of them taught, wheresoever they came among them, Except ye be circumcised, and keep the Law, (the whole Ritual Law) ye cannot be saved, Acts. xv. 1. 24.

3. In opposition to these, the Apostle declares, both here and in many other places, That True Religion does not consist in meat and drink, or in any Ritual observances: nor indeed in any outward thing whatever, in any thing exterior to the heart; the whole substance thereof lying in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

4. Not in any outward thing; such as Forms or Ceremonies, even of the most excellent kind. Supposing these to be ever so decent and significant, ever so expressive of inward things: supposing them ever so helpful, not only to the vulgar, whose thought reaches little farther than their sight; but even to men of understanding, men of stronger capacities, as doubtless they may sometimes be: yea, supposing them, as in the case of the Jews, to be appointed by God himself; yet even during the period of time wherein that appointment remains in force, True Religion does not principally consist therein; nay, strictly speaking, not at all. How much more must this hold concerning such Rights and Forms, as are only of human appointment? The Religion of Christ rises infinitely higher, and lies immensely deeper than all these. These are good in their places; just so far as they are in fact subservient to true Religion. And it were superstition to object against them, while they are applied only as occasional helps to human weakness. But let no man carry them further. Let no man dream, that they have any intrinsic worth; or that religion cannot subsist without them. This were to make them an abomination to the Lord.

5. The nature of Religion is so far from consisting in these, in Forms of worship, or Rites and Ceremonies, that it does not properly consist in any
outward actions, of what kind soever. It is true, a man cannot have any Religion, who is guilty of vicious, immoral actions; or who does to others, what he would not they should do to him, if he were in the same circumstance. And it is also true, that he can have no real Religion, who knows to do good, and does it not. Yet may a man both abstain from outward evil, and do good, and still have no religion. Yea, two persons may do the same outward work; suppose, feeding the hungry or clothing the naked: and, in the mean time, one of these may be truly religious, and the other have no religion at all: for the one may act from the love of God, and the other from the love of praise. So manifest it is; that although true religion naturally leads to every good word and work, yet the real nature thereof lies deeper still, even in the hidden man of the heart.

6. I say of the heart. For neither does Religion consist in Orthodoxy or right Opinions; which altho' they are not properly outward things, are not in the heart, but the understanding. A man may be orthodox in every point; he may not only espouse right Opinions, but zealously defend them against all opposers: he may think justly concerning the incarnation of our Lord, concerning the ever blessed Trinity, and every other doctrine, contained in the Oracles of God: he may assent to all the three Creeds; that called the Apostles, the Nicene, and the Athanasian: and yet it is possible, he may have no Religion at all, no more than a Jew, Turk, or Pagan. He may be almost as orthodox as —— the Devil; (though indeed not altogether. For every man errs in something; whereas we cannot well conceive him to hold any erroneous opinion) and may all the while be as great a stranger as he to the religion of the heart.

7. This alone is Religion, truly so called: this alone is in the sight of God of great price. The Apostle sums it all up in three particulars, righteousnes,
And first, righteousness. We cannot be at a loss concerning this; if we remember the words of our Lord describing the two grand branches thereof; on which hang all the Law and the Prophets.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment," the first and great branch of Christian righteousness. Thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord thy God; thou shalt seek and find all happiness in him. He shall be thy shield and exceeding great reward, in time and eternity. All thy bones shall say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!" Thou shalt hear, and fulfil his word who faith, "My son, give me thy heart." And having given him thy heart, thy inmost soul, to reign there without a rival, thou mayest well cry out, in the fulness of thy heart, "I will love thee O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my strong Rock, and my defence; my Saviour, my God, and my might, in whom I will trust; my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge."

8. And the Second Commandment is like unto this; the second great branch of Christian righteousness is closely and inseparably connected therewith, even "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Thou shalt love—Thou shalt embrace with the most tender good-will, the most earnest and cordial affection, the most enflamed desires of preventing or removing all evil, and of procuring for him every possible good—Thy neighbour—that is, not only thy friend, thy kinsman, or thy acquaintance; not only the virtuous, the friendly, him that loves thee, that prevents or returns thy kindness; but every child of man, every human creature, every soul which God hath made: not excepting him whom thou had never seen in the flesh, whom

* Mark xiii. 30.
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thou knowest not either by face or name: not excepting him whom thou knowest to be evil and unthankful, him that still despitefully uses and perfectes thee. Him thou shalt love as thyself; with the same invariable thirst after his happiness in every kind; the same unwearied care to screen him from whatever might grieve or hurt either his soul or body.

9. Now is not this love The fulfilling of the Law? The sum of all Christian righteousness? Of all inward righteousness; for it necessarily implies bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind (seeing love is not puffed up) gentleness, meekness, long-suffering, (for love is not provoked but believeth, hopeth, endureth all things) and of all outward righteousness; for love worketh no evil to his neighbour, either by word or deed. It cannot willingly either hurt or grieve any one. And it is zealous of good works, Every lover of mankind, as he hath opportunity, doth good unto all men, being (without partiality and without hypocrisy) full of mercy and good fruits.

10. But true Religion, or a heart right toward God and man, implies happiness as well as holiness. For it is not only righteousness, but also peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. What peace? The peace of God, which God only can give and the world cannot take away: the peace which passeth all understanding, all (barely) rational conception; being a supernatural sensation, a divine taste of the powers of the world to come: such as the natural man knoweth not, how wise forever in the things of this world: nor indeed can he know it, in his present state, because it is spiritually discerned. It is a peace that banishes all doubt, all painful uncertainty; the Spirit of God bearing witness with the spirit of a Christian, that he is a child of God. And it banishes fear, all such fear as hath torment the fear of the wrath of God, the fear of hell, the fear of the Devil, and in particular, the fear of I 2 Death:
Death: he that hath the peace of God, desiring (if it were the will of God) to depart and to be with God.

11. With this peace of God, wherever it is fixed in the soul, there is also joy in the Holy Ghost: joy wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, by the ever blessed Spirit of God. He it is that worketh in us that calm, humble rejoicing in God, through Christ Jesus, by whom we have now received the Atonement, αὐτόλαξίαν, the reconciliation with God; and that enables us boldly to confirm the truth of the royal Psalmist's declaration, "Blessed is the man (or rather happy) ἦλθεν ἀπόκαλυμμα, whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whole sin is covered." He it is that inspires the Christian soul, with that even, solid joy, which arises from the testimony of the Spirit, that he is a child of God: and that gives him to rejoice with joy unspeakable, in hope of the glory of God: hope both of the glorious image of God, which is in part and shall be fully revealed in him; and of that crown of Glory, which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him.

12. This holiness and happiness joined in one, are sometimes styled in the inspired Writings, the kingdom of God, (as by our Lord in the text) and sometimes, The kingdom of heaven. It is termed the kingdom of God, because it is the immediate fruit of God's reigning in the soul. So soon as ever he takes unto himself his mighty power, and sets up his throne in our hearts, they are instantly filled with this righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is called the kingdom of heaven, because it is (in a degree) heaven opened in the soul. For whosoever they are that experience this, they can aver before angels and men,

Everlasting life is won:

Glory is on earth begun:

According to the constant tenor of Scripture, which every where bears record, God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath
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the Son (reigning in his heart) hath life, (even life everlasting) 1 John v. 11, 12, For this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, John xvii. 3. And they to whom it is given, may confidently address God, though they were in the midst of a fiery furnace,

"Thee—Lord, safe shielded by thy power, Thee, Son of God, Jehovah, we adore; In form of man descending to appear: To thee be ceaseless hallelujah's given. Praise, as in heaven thy throne, we offer here; For where thy presence is display'd, is heaven."

13. And this kingdom of God, or of heaven, is at hand. As these words were originally spoken, they implied, that the time was then fulfilled, God being made manifest in the flesh, when he would set up his kingdom among men, and reign in the hearts of his people. And is not the time now fulfilled? For if faith he, I am with you always, you who preach remission of sins in my name, even unto the end of the world. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Wherefore therefore the gospel of Christ is preached, this his kingdom is nigh at hand. It is not far from every one of you. Ye may this hour enter thereinto, if so be ye hearken to his voice, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel."

II. 1. This is the way. Walk ye in it. And first, Repent, that is, Know yourselves. This is the first Repentance, previous to Faith: even conviction, or self-knowledge. Awake then thou that sleepest. Know thyself to be a sinner, and what manner of sinner thou art. Know that corruption of thy inmost nature, whereby thou art very far gone from original righteousness, whereby the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit, through that carnal mind which is enmity against God, which is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. Know that thou art corrupted in every power,

I 3 in
SERMON VII.

in every faculty of thy soul; that thou art totally corrupted in every one of these, all the foundations being out of course. The eyes of thine understanding are darkened, so that they cannot discern God or the things of God. The clouds of ignorance and error rest upon thee, and cover thee with the shadow of death. Thou knowest nothing yet, as thou oughtest to know, neither God, nor the world, nor thyself. Thy will is no longer the will of God, but is utterly perverse and distorted, averse from all good, from all which God loves, and prone to all evil, to every abomination which God hateth. Thy affections are alienated from God, and scattered abroad over all the earth. All thy passions, both thy desires and aversions, thy joys and sorrows, thy hopes and fears, are out of frame, are either undue in their degree, or placed on undue objects. So that there is no soundness in thy soul; but from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot (to use the strong expression of the Prophet) there are only wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.

2. Such is the inbred corruption of thy heart, of thy very inmost nature. And what manner of branches canst thou expect to grow, from such an evil root? Hence springs unbelief, ever departing from the living God: saying, "Who is the Lord that I should serve him? Tush! Thou God, carest not for it." Hence independence, affecting to be like the Most High; hence pride in all its forms, teaching thee to say, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." From this evil fountain flow forth the bitter streams of vanity, thirst of praise; ambition, covetousness; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. From this arise anger, hatred, malice, revenge, envy, jealousy, evil surmisings: from this all the foolish and hurtful lusts, that now pierce thee through with many sorrows, and if not timely prevented,
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prevented, will at length drown thy soul in everlasting perdition.

8. And what fruits can grow on such branches as these? Only such as are bitter and evil continually. Of pride cometh contention, vain boasting, seeking and receiving praise of men, and so robbing God of that glory which he cannot give unto another. Of the lust of the flesh come gluttony or drunkenness, luxury or sensuality: fornication, uncleanness, variously defiling that body, which was designed for a temple of the Holy Ghost: of unbelief, every evil word and work. But the time would fail, shouldst thou reckon up all; all the idle words thou hast spoken, provoking the Most High, grieving the holy One of Israel: all the evil works thou hast done, either wholly evil in themselves, or at least, not done to the glory of God. For thy actual sins are more than thou art able to express, more than the hairs of thy head. Who can number the sands of the sea, or the drops of rain, or thy iniquities?

4. And knowest thou not that "the wages of sin is death?" Death not only temporal, but eternal. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die:" for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. It shall die the second death. This is the sentence, to be punished with never-ending death, "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Knowest thou not that every sinner, ἐμπόλας is: τῇ παντὶ ἔργῳ; not properly is in danger of hell-fire, that expression is far too weak: but rather, is under the sentence of hell-fire, doomed already, just dragging to execution. Thou art guilty of everlasting death. It is the just reward of thy inward and outward wickedness. It is just, that the sentence should now take place. Doft thou see, dost thou feel this? Art thou thoroughly convinced, that thou deservest God's wrath and everlasting damnation? Would God do thee any wrong, if he commanded the
the earth to open and swallow thee up? If thou were now to go down quick into the pit, into the fire that never shall be quenched? If God hath given thee truly to repent, thou hast a deep sense that these things are so; and that it is of his mere mercy thou art not consumed, swept away from the face of the earth.

5. And what wilt thou do to appease the wrath of God, to atone for all thy sins, and escape the punishment thou hast so justly deserved? Alas, thou canst do nothing: nothing that will in any wise make amends to God, for one evil work, or word or thought. If thou couldst now do all things well, if from this very hour, till thy soul should return to God, thou couldst perform perfect uninterrupted obedience, even this would not atone for what is past. The not increasing thy debt would not discharge it. It would still remain as great as ever. Yea, the present and the future obedience of all the men upon earth, and all the angels in heaven, would never make satisfaction to the justice of God for one single sin. How vain then was the thought, of atoning for thy own sins by any thing thou couldst do? It costeth far more to redeem one soul, than all mankind is able to pay. So that were there no other help for a guilty sinner, without doubt he must have perished everlastingly.

6. But suppose perfect obedience for the time to come, could atone for the sins that are past, this would profit nothing; for thou art not able to perform it; no, not in any one point. Begin now. Make the trial. Shake off that outward sin that so easily besettesth thee. Thou canst not. How then wilt thou change thy life from all evil to all good? Indeed, it is impossible to be done, unless first thy heart be changed. For so long as the tree remains evil, it cannot bring forth good fruit. But art thou able to change thy own heart, from all sin to all holiness? To quicken a soul that is dead in sin? Dead to God and alive only to the world? No more
The Way to the Kingdom.

more than thou art able to quicken a dead body, to raise to life him that liveth in the grave. Yea, thou art not able to quicken thy soul in any degree, no more than to give any degree of life to the dead body. Thou canst do nothing more or less, in this matter; thou art utterly without strength. To be deeply sensible of this, how helpless thou art, as well as how guilty and how sinful, this is that Repentance not to be repented of, which is the Forerunner of the kingdom of God.

7. If to this lively conviction of thy inward and outward sins, of thy utter guiltiness and helplessness, there be added suitable affections, sorrow of heart, for having despised thy own mercies, remorse and self-condemnation, having the mouth flopped, shame, to lift up thine eyes to heaven; fear of the wrath of God abiding on thee, of his curse hanging over thy head, and of the fiery indignation ready to devour those who forget God, and obey not our Lord Jesus Christ: earnest desire to escape from that indignation, to cease from evil and learn to do well: then I say unto thee in the name of the Lord, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." One step more and thou shalt enter in. Thou dost repent. Now, Believe the Gospel.

8. The Gospel (that is, good tidings, good news for guilty, helpless sinners) in the largest sense of the word, means, the whole Revelation made to man by Jesus Christ: and sometimes the whole account of what our Lord did and suffered, while he tabernacled among men. The substance of all is, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Or, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not perish, but have everlasting life." Or, "he was bruised for our transgressions, he was wounded for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

9. Believe this and the kingdom of God is thine. By faith thou attainest the promise. "He par- doneth
donest and absolveth all that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." As soon as ever God hath spoken to thy heart, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee," his kingdom comes; thou hast righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

10. Only beware thou dost not deceive thy own soul, with regard to the nature of this Faith. It is not (as some have fondly conceived) a bare assent to the truth of the Bible, of the Articles of our Creed, or of all that is contained in the Old and New Testament. The Devils believe this, as well as I or thou? And yet they are Devils still. But it is, over and above this, a sure trust in the mercy of God through Christ Jesus. It is a confidence in a pardoning God. It is a divine evidence or conviction, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their former trespasses:" and in particular, that the Son of God hath loved me and given himself for me: and that I, even I, am now reconciled to God by the blood of the cross.

11. Doest thou thus believe? Then the peace of God is in thy heart, and sorrowing and sighing flee away. Thou art no longer in doubt of the love of God: it is clear as the noon-day sun. Thou cryest out, "My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the Lord: with my mouth will I ever be telling of thy truth, from one generation to another." Thou art no longer afraid of hell, or death, or him that had once the power of death, the devil: no, nor painfully afraid of God himself; only thou hast a tender, filial fear of offending him. Doest thou believe? Then thy soul doth magnify the Lord, and thy spirit rejoiceth in God thy Saviour." Thou rejoicest in that thou hast "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Thou rejoicest in that "Spirit of Adoption, which crieth in thy heart, Abba, Father!" Thou rejoicest in a hope full of immortality,
tality, in reaching forth unto the mark of the prize of thy high calling; in an earnest expectation of all the good things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

12. Dost thou now believe? Then the love of God is now shed abroad in thy heart. Thou lovest him, because he first loved us. And because thou lovest God, thou lovest thy brother also. And being filled with love, peace, joy, thou art also filled with long-suffering, gentleness, fidelity, goodness, meekness, temperance, and all the other fruits of the same Spirit: in a word, with whatever dispositions are holy, are heavenly, or divine. For while thou beholdest with open, uncovered face, (the veil now being taken away) the glory of the Lord, his glorious love, and glorious image wherein thou wast created, “thou art changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.”

13. This repentance, this faith, this peace, joy, love; this change from glory to glory, is what the wisdom of the world has voted to be madness, mere enthusiasm, utter distraction. But thou, O man of God, regard them not: be thou moved by none of these things. Thou knowest in whom thou hast believed. See that no man take thy crown. Whereunto thou hast already attained hold fast; and follow, till thou attain all the great and precious promises. And thou who hast not yet known him, let not vain men make thee ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Be thou in nothing terrified by those who speak evil of the things which they know not. God will soon turn thy heaviness into joy. O let not thy hands hang down. Yet a little longer, and he will take away thy fears, and give thee the spirit of a sound mind. He is nigh that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that rose again; who is even now on the right hand of God, making intercession for thee. Now cast thyself on the Lamb.
Lamb of God, with all thy sins, how many forever they be; and an entrance shall now be ministered unto thee, into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

The First-Fruits of the Spirit,

A SERMON.

ROMANS VIII. 1.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit."

1. By them which are in Christ Jesus, St. Paul evidently means, Those who truly believe in him: those who being justified by faith, have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. They who thus believe do no longer walk after the flesh, no longer follow the motions of corrupt nature: but after the Spirit: both their thoughts, words and works, are under the direction of the blessed Spirit of God.

2. There is therefore now no condemnation to these. There is no condemnation to them from God: for he hath justified them freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus. He hath forgiven all their iniquities, and blotted out all their sins. And there is no condemnation to them from within: for they "have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things which are freely given to them of God:"

* 1 Cor. ii. 12.
with their spirits, that they are the children of God." And to this is added, * "the testimony of their conscience: that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, they have had their conversation in the world."

3. But because this Scripture has been so frequently misunderstood, and that in so dangerous a manner, because, such multitudes of unlearned and unteachable men, (io αμαθεοι και ασεβικοι, men untaught of God, and consequently unestablished in the truth which is after godliness) have wrested it to their own destruction, I propose to shew as clearly as I can, First, Who those are "which are in Christ Jesus, and walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit;" and Secondly, How there is no condemnation to these. I shall conclude with some practical inferences.

I. 1. First I am to shew, Who those are that are in Christ Jesus. And are they not, Those who believe in his name? Those who are "found in him, not having their own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by Faith?" These, who have redemption through his blood, are properly said to be in Him. For they dwell in Christ and Christ in them. They are joined unto the Lord in one Spirit. They are ingrafted into him as branches into the vine. They are united, as Members to their Head, in a manner which words cannot express, nor could it before enter into their hearts to conceive.

2. Now "whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; walketh not after the flesh." The flesh, in the usual language of St. Paul, signifies corrupt nature. In this sense, he uses the word, writing to the Galatians. "The works of the flesh are manifest," Gal: v. 19. And a little before, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust (or

* 2 Cor. i. 12. 
Of the flesh,” (v. 16.) To prove which, namely, that those who walk by the Spirit, do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, he immediately adds, For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit; but the Spirit lusteth against the flesh (for these are contrary to each other) that ye may not do the things which ye would. So the words are literally translated, (ινα μὴ ἐν σέμε, ταῦτα ποιήτε.) Not, So that ye cannot do the things that ye would, as if the flesh overcame the Spirit: a translation which hath not only nothing to do with the original text of the Apostle, but likewise makes his whole argument nothing worth, yea, afferts just the reverse of what he is proving.

3. “They who are of Christ, who abide in him, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.” They abstain from all those works of the flesh; from adultery and fornication, from uncleanness and lasciviousness; from idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance; from emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings: from every design, and word, and work, to which the corruption of nature leads. Altho’ they feel the root of bitterness in themselves, yet are they endued with power from on high, to trample it continually under foot, so that it cannot spring up to trouble them: insomuch that every fresh assault which they undergo, only gives them fresh occasion of praise, of crying out, “Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

4. They now walk after the Spirit, both in their hearts and lives. They are taught of him to love God and their neighbour, with a love which is as “a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.” And by him they are led into every holy desire, into every divine and heavenly temper, till every thought which arises in their heart is holiness unto the Lord.

5. They who walk after the Spirit, are also led by him, into all holiness of conversation. Their speech
The First-Fruits of the Spirit.

Speech is always in grace, seasoned with salt, with the love and fear of God. "No corrupt communication comes out of their mouth, but only that which is good;" that which is to the use of edifying, which is meet to minister grace to the hearers. And herein likewise do they exercise themselves day and night, to do only the things which please God: in all their outward behaviour to follow him, "who left us an example that we might tread in his steps:" in all their intercourse with their neighbour to walk in justice, mercy and truth; and whatsoever they do, in every circumstance of life, to do all to the glory of God.

6 These are they who indeed walk by the spirit. Being filled with faith and with the Holy Ghost, they possess in their hearts, and shew forth in their lives, in the whole course of their words and actions, the genuine fruits of the Spirit of God, namely, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance," and whatsoever else is lovely or praise-worthy. They "adorn in all things the gospel of God our Saviour;" and give full proof to all mankind, that they are indeed actuated by the same spirit, "which raised up Jesus from the dead."

II. 1. I proposed to shew, in the second place, how "there is no condemnation to them, which are thus in Christ Jesus, and thus walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

And, first, To believers in Christ, walking thus, there is no condemnation on account of their past sins. God condemneth them not for any of these; they are as tho' they had never been. They are cast "as a stone into the depth of the sea," and he remembereth them no more. God having "set forth his Son to be a propitiation for them, through faith in his blood, hath declared unto them, his righteousness, for the remission of the sins that are past." He layeth therefore none of these
S E R M O N VIII.

to their charge; their memorial is perished with them.

2. And there is no condemnation in their own breast; no sense of guilt, or dread of the wrath of God. They have the witness in themselves; they are conscious of their interest in the Blood of Sprinkling. "They have not received again the Spirit of Bondage unto fear," unto doubt and racking uncertainty; but they "have received the Spirit of Adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father." Thus being justified by Faith, they have the peace of God ruling in their hearts: flowing from a continual sense of his pardoning mercy, and "the answer of a good conscience toward God."

3. If it be said, but sometimes a believer in Christ, may lose his light of the mercy of God; sometimes such darknes may fall upon him that he no longer sees Him that is invisible, no longer feels that witnesses in himself of his part in the atoning Blood; and then he is inwardly condemned, he hath again the sentence of death in himself: I answer, supposing it so to be, supposing him not to see the mercy of God, then he is not a believer: for faith implies light: the light of God shining upon the soul. So far therefore as any one loses this light, he for the time loses his faith. And no doubt a true believer in Christ, may lose the light of faith. And so far as this is lost, he may for a time fall again into condemnation. But this is not the case of them who now are in Christ Jesus, who now believe in his name. For so long as they believe and walk after the Spirit, neither God condemns them nor their own heart.

4. They are not condemned, secondly, for any present sins, for now transgressing the commandments of God. For they do not transgress them: they do not "walk after the flesh but after the Spirit," This is the continual proof of their love of God, that they keep his commandments: even as St.
The First-Fruits of the Spirit.

St. John bears witness, "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. For his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God:" he cannot, so long as that seed of God, that loving, holy faith remaineth in him. So long as he keepeth himself herein, "that wicked one toucheth him not." Now it is evident, he is not condemned for the sins which he doth not commit at all. They therefore who are thus "led by the Spirit, are not under the law," (Gal. v. 18.) Not under the curse or condemnation of it; for it condemns none but those who break it. Thus, that law of God, "Thou shalt not steal," condemns none but those who do steal. Thus, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," condemns those only who do not keep it holy. But against the fruits of the Spirit, "there is no law;" (v. 23.)

As the Apostle more largely declares, in those memorable words of his former epistle to Timothy.

We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, (if while he uses the law of God, in order either to convince or direct, he knows and remembers this) ὅτι δικαιός ἔσται. (Not that the law is not made for a righteous man; but) That the law does not lie against a righteous man: it has no force against him, no power to condemn him) but against the lawless and disobedient, against the ungodly and sinners, against the unholy and profane—according to the glorious gospel, of the blessed God, 1 Tim. i. 8, 9, 11.

5. They are not condemned thirdly, for inward sin, even tho' it does now remain. That the corruption of nature does still remain, even in those who are the children of God by faith, that they have in them the seeds of pride and vanity, of anger, lust and evil desire, yea, sin of every kind, is too plain to be denied, being matter of daily experience. And on this account it is, that St. Paul speaking to those, whom he had just before witnessed
witnessed to be \* in Christ Jesus †, to have been
called of God into the fellowship (or participation)
of his Son Jesus Christ, yet declares, “Brethren,
I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as
unto carnal: even as unto babes in Christ.” (1 Cor.
iii. 1.) Babes in Christ—So we see they were \* in
Christ; they were believers in a low degree. And
yet how much of sin remained in them? Of that
“carnal mind, which is not subject to the law
of God.”

6. And yet, for all this, they are not condemned.
Altho’ they feel the flesh, the evil nature in them,
altho’ they are more sensible day by day, that their
“heart is deceitful and desperately wicked”: yet
so long as they do not yield thereto, so long as they
give no place to the devil, so long as they maintain
a continual war with all sin, with pride, anger,
desire, so that the flesh hath not dominion over
them, but they still walk after the spirit: there is
“no condemnation to them which are in Christ
Jesus.” God is well-pleased with their sincere,
tho’ imperfect obedience: and they “have confi-
dence toward God, knowing they are his, by the
spirit which he hath given them,” 1 John iii. 24.

7. Nay, fourthly, altho’ they are continually
convinced of sin cleaving to all they do; altho’
they are conscious of not fulfilling the perfect law,
either in their thoughts, or words, or works; altho’
they know they do not love the Lord their God
with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and
strength; altho’ they feel more or less of pride or
self-will, stealing in and mixing with their best
duties; altho’ even in their more immediate inter-
course with God, when they assemble themselves
with the great congregation, and when they pour
out their souls in secret to him, who seeth all the
thoughts and intents of the heart, they are con-
tinually ashamed of their wandering thoughts, or
of the deadness and dulness of their affections: yet

* 1 Cor. i. 2. † Ver. 9.
there is no condemnation to them still, either from God or from their own heart. The consideration of these manifold defects only gives them a deeper sense. That they have always need of the Blood of Sprinkling, which speaks for them in the ears of God, and that Advocate with the Father "who ever liveth, to make intercession for them." So far are these from driving them away from him, in whom they have believed, that they rather drive them the closer to him, whom they feel the want of every moment. And at the same time, the deeper sense they have of this want, the more earnest desire do they feel, and the more diligent they are, as they "have received the Lord Jesus, so to walk in him."

8. They are not condemned, fifthly, for sins of infirmity, as they are usually called. (Perhaps it were advisable rather to call them infirmities, that we may not seem to give any countenance to sin, or to extenuate it in any degree, by thus coupling it with infirmity. But if we must retain so ambiguous and dangerous an expression) by sins of infirmity I would mean, such involuntary failings, as the saying a thing we believe true, tho' in fact it prove to be false; or the hurting our neighbour, without knowing or designing it; perhaps when we designed to do him good. Tho' these are deviations from the holy and acceptable and perfect will of God, yet they are not properly sins, nor do they bring any guilt on the conscience of them which are in Christ Jesus. They separate not between God and them, neither intercept the light of his countenance; as being no ways inconsistent with their general character, of "walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

9. Lastly, There is no condemnation to them for any thing whatever, which it is not in their power to help; whether it be of an inward or outward nature, and whether it be doing something, or leaving something undone. For instance: the Lord's Supper
Supper is to be administered. But you do not partake thereof. Why do you not? You are confined by sickness. Therefore you cannot help omitting it; and for the same reason, you are not condemned. There is no guilt; because there is no choice. As there “is a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that a man hath, not according to that he hath not.”

10. A believer indeed may sometimes be grieved, because he cannot do what his soul longs for. He may cry out, when he is detained from worshipping God in the great congregation, “Like as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear in the presence of God?” He may earnestly desire (only still saying in his heart, not as I will, but as thou wilt) to “go again with the multitude and bring them forth into the house of God.” But still if he cannot go, he feels no condemnation, no guilt, no sense of God’s displeasure: but can cheerfully yield up those desires, with “O my soul, put thy trust in God. For I will yet give him thanks, who is the help of my countenance and my God.”

11. It is more difficult to determine concerning those which are usually stilled, sins of surprise: as when one who commonly in patience possesses his soul, on a sudden and violent temptation, speaks or acts in a manner not consistent with the Royal Law, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Perhaps it is not easy to fix a general rule, concerning transgressions of this nature. We cannot say, either that men are or that they are not condemned, for sins of surprise in general. But it seems whenever a believer is by surprise overtaken in a fault, there is more or less condemnation, as there is more or less concurrence of his will. In proportion as a sinful desire or a word or action is more or less voluntary, so we may conceive, God is more or less
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les displeased, and there is more or less guilt upon the soul.

12. But if so, then there may be some sins of surprise, which bring much guilt and condemnation. For in some instances, our being surprised is owing to some wilful and culpable neglect; or to a sleepiness of soul which might have been prevented, or shaken off before the temptation came. A man may be previously warned either of God or man, that trials and danger are at hand: and yet may say in his heart, "A little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to rest." Now if such an one afterwards fall, tho' unawares, into the snare which he might have avoided; that he fell unawares is no excuse: he might have foreseen and have shunned the danger. The falling even by surprise, in such an instance as this, is, in effect, a wilful sin; and as such must expose the sinner to condemnation, both from God, and his own conscience.

14. On the other hand, there may be sudden assaults, either from the world, or the god of this world, and frequently from our own evil hearts, which we did not, and hardly could foresee. And by these even a believer, while weak in faith, may possibly be borne down, suppose into a degree of anger, or thinking evil of another, with scarce any concurrence of his will. Now in such a case, the jealous God would undoubtedly shew him that he had done foolishly. He would be convinced of having swerved from the perfect law, from the mind which was in Christ, and consequently grieved with a godly sorrow, and lovingly ashamed before God. Yet need he not come into condemnation. God layeth not folly to his charge, but hath compassion upon him, "even as a father pitieth his own children." And his heart condemneth him not; in the midst of that sorrow and shame, he can still say, "I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord
SERMON VIII.

Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he is also become my salvation."

III. 1. It remains only, to draw some practical Inferences from the preceding considerations.

And, first, If there be "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, and walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit," on account of their past sin: then why art thou fearful, O thou of little faith? Thou's thy sins were once more in number than the sand, what is that to thee, now thou art in Christ Jesus? "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?" All the sins—thou hast committed from thy youth up, until the hour when thou wast accepted in the beloved, are driven away as chaff, are gone, are lost, swallowed up, remembered no more. Thou art now born of the spirit: wilt thou be troubled or afraid of what is done before thou wast born? Away with thy fears! Thou art not called to fear; but to the "spirit of love and of a sound mind." Know thy calling. Rejoice in God thy Saviour, and give thanks to God thy Father through him.

2. Wilt thou say, "But I have again committed sin, since I had redemption through his blood? And therefore it is, that I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." It is meet thou shouldst abhor thyself; and it is God who hath wrought thee to this self-same thing. But dost thou now believe? Hath he again enabled thee to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth: and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God?" Then that faith again cancels all that is past, and there is no condemnation to thee. At whatsoever time thou truly believest in the name of the Son of God, all thy sins antecedent to that hour, vanish away as the morning dew. Now then, "Stand thou fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free." He hath once more made thee
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Thee free from the power of sin, as well as from the guilt and punishment of it. O "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage!" Neither the vile devilish bondage of sin; or evil desires, evil tempers, or words or works, the most grievous yoke on this side hell; nor the bondage of flavius tormenting fear, of guilt and self-condemnation.

3. But, secondly: Do all they which abide "in Christ Jesus, walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit?" Then we cannot but infer, that whosoever now committeth sin, hath no part or lot in this matter. He is even now condemned by his own heart. But if our heart condemn us, if our own conscience beareth witness that we are guilty, undoubtedly God doth: for "he is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things;" so that we cannot deceive him, if we can ourselves. And think not to say, "I was justified once; my sins were once forgiven me." I know not that; neither will I dispute whether they were or no. Perhaps, at this distance of time, it is next to impossible to know with any tolerable degree of certainty, whether that was a true, genuine work of God, or whether thou didst only deceive thy own soul. But this I know with the utmost degree of certainty "he that committeth sin is of the devil." Therefore thou art of thy father the devil. It cannot be denied: for the works of thy father thou dost. O flatter not thyself with vain hopes. Say not to thy soul, Peace, peace! For there is no peace. Cry aloud! Cry unto God out of the deep; if haply he may hear thy voice, Come unto him as at first, as wretched and poor, as sinful, miserable, blind and naked. And beware thou suffer thy soul to take no rest, till his pardoning love be again revealed, till he heal thy backslidings, and fill thee again with the faith that worketh by love.

4. Thirdly, Is there no condemnation to them which walk after the spirit, by reason of inward sin still remaining, so long as they do not give way thereto
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thereto; nor by reason of sin cleaving to all they do? Then fret not thyself because of ungodliness, tho’ it still remain in thy heart. Repine not, because thou still comest short of the glorious image of God: nor yet, because pride, self-will, or unbelief, cleave to all thy words and works. And be not afraid to know all this evil of thy heart, to know thyself as also thou art known. Yea, desire of God, that thou mayest not think of thyself more highly than thou oughtest to think. Let thy continual prayer be

“Shew me, as my soul can bear,
The depth of inbred sin:
All the unbelief declare,
The pride that lurks within!”

But when he heareth thy prayer, and unveils thy heart, when he shews thee thoroughly what spirit thou art of: then beware that thy Faith fail thee not, that thou suffer not thy shield to be torn from thee. Be abased. Be humbled in the dust. See thyself nothing, less than nothing and vanity. But still, “let not thy heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Sill hold fast, “I, even I, have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is his love higher than even my sins.”—Therefore God is merciful to thee a sinner! Such a sinner as thou art! God is Love; and Christ hath died. Therefore the Father himself loveth thee. Thou art his child. Therefore he will withhold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Is it good, that the whole body of sin, which is now crucified in thee, should be destroyed? It shall be done. Thou shalt be “cleansed from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit.” Is it good, that nothing should remain in thy heart, but the pure love of God alone? Be of good cheer! “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength.” “Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it.” It is thy part.
part, patiently to continue in the work of Faith, and in the labour of love: and in cheerful peace, in humble confidence, with calm and resigned, and yet earnest expectation, to wait till the “zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this.”

5. Fourthly, If they that are in Christ, and walk after the Spirit, are not condemned for sins of infirmity, as neither for involuntary failings, nor for any thing whatever which they are not able to help: then beware, O thou that hast faith in his blood, that Satan herein “gain no advantage over thee.” Thou art still foolish and weak, blind and ignorant. More weak than any words can express, more foolish than it can yet enter into thy heart to conceive, knowing nothing yet as thou oughtest to know. Yet let not all thy weakness and folly, or any fruit thereof, which thou art not yet able to avoid, shake thy faith, thy filial trust in God, or disturb thy peace or joy in the Lord. The rule which some give as to wilful sins, and which in that case, may perhaps be dangerous, is undoubtedly wise and safe, if it be applied only to the case of weakness and infirmities. Art thou fallen, O man of God? Yet do not lie there, fretting thyself and bemoaning thy weakness: but meekly say, Lord, I shall fall thus every moment, unless thou uphold me with thy hand. And then arise! Leap and walk. Go on thy way. “Run with patience the race set before thee.”

6. Lastly. Since a believer need not come into condemnation, even though he be surprised into what his soul abhors, (suppose his being surprised is not owing to any carelessness or wilful neglect of his own:) if thou who believest, art thus overtaken in a fault, then grieve unto the Lord; it shall be a precious balm: pour out thy heart before him, and shew him of thy trouble. And pray with all thy might to him who is “touched with the feeling of thy infirmities,” that he would establish and strengthen and settle thy soul, and suffer thee to
SERMON IX.

The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption.

Romans VIII. 15.

"Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear: but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

1. St. Paul here speaks to those who are the Children of God by Faith. Ye, faith he, who are indeed his children, have drank into his Spirit. "Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear. But because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts. Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

2. The Spirit of Bondage and Fear is widely distant from this loving Spirit of Adoption: Those who are influenced only by flavish fear, cannot be termed, The Sons of God. Yet some of them may be
Spirit of Bondage and Adoption.

be styled his servants, and are "not far from the kingdom of heaven."

3. But it is to be feared, the bulk of mankind, yea, of what is called The Christian World, have not attained even this; but are still afar off "neither is God in all their thoughts." A few names may be found of those who love God: a few more there are that fear him. But the greater part have neither the fear of God before their eyes, nor the love of God in their hearts.

4. Perhaps most of you, who by the mercy of God, now partake of a better Spirit, may remember the time when ye were as they, when ye were under the same condemnation. But at first ye knew it not, tho' ye were wallowing daily in your sins and in your blood: till in due time ye received the Spirit of fear (ye received; for this also is the gift of God:) and afterwards, Fear vanished away, and the Spirit of Love filled your hearts.

5. One who is in the first state of mind, without fear or love, is in scripture termed a natural man. One who is under the Spirit of Bondage and Fear, is sometimes said to be under the Law: (although that expression more frequently signifies one, who is under the Jewish dispensation, who thinks himself obliged to observe all the Rites and Ceremonies of the Jewish Law.) But one who has exchanged the Spirit of Fear for the Spirit of Love, is properly said, to be under Grace.

Now because it highly imports us, to know what spirit we are of, I shall endeavour to point out distinctly, First, The state of a natural man: Secondly, That of one who is under the Law: and Thirdly, of one who is under Grace.

I. 1. And, First, the state of a natural man; This the Scripture represents as a state of sleep; The voice of God to him is "Awake, thou that sleepest." For his soul is in a deep sleep. His spiritual senses are not awake: they discern neither
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Spiritual, good nor evil. The eyes of his understanding are closed; they are sealed together, and see not. Clouds and darkness continually rest upon them; he lies in the valley of the shadow of death. Hence having no inlets for the knowledge of spiritual things, all the avenues of his soul being shut up, he is in gross, stupid ignorance of whatever he is most concerned to know. He is utterly ignorant of God, knowing nothing concerning him as he ought to know. He is totally a stranger to the Law of God, as to its true, inward, spiritual meaning. He has no conception of that evangelical holiness, without which no man can see the Lord; nor of the happiness, which they only find, whose Life is hid with Christ in God.

2. And for this very reason, because he is fast asleep, he is, in some sense, at rest. Because he is blind, he is also secure: he faith, "Though there shall no harm happen unto me." The darkness which covers him on every side, keeps him in a kind of peace: (so far as peace can consist with the works of the devil, and with an earthly, devilish mind.) He sees not that he stands on the edge of the pit; therefore he fears it not. He cannot tremble at the danger he does not know. He has not understanding enough to fear. Why is it that he is in no dread of God? Because he is totally ignorant of him: if not "saying in his heart, There is no God; or, that he sitteth on the circle of the heavens, and humbleth not himself to behold the things which are done on earth:" Yet satisfying himself as well, to all Epicurean intents and purposes by saying, "God is merciful:" confounding and swallowing up at once, in that unwieldly idea of mercy, all his holiness and essential hatred of sin, all his justice, wisdom and truth. He is in no dread of the vengeance denounced against those who obey not the blessed Law of God, because he understands it not. He imagines the main point is, To do thus, to be outwardly blameless: and sees not that it extends to every temper,
temper, desire, thought, motion of the heart. Or he fancies, that the obligation hereto is ceased; that Christ came to destroy the Law and the Prophets; to save his people in, not from their sins; to bring them to heaven, without holiness. Notwithstanding his own words, “Not one jot or tittle of the Law shall pass away, till all things are fulfilled: and, Not every one that faith unto me, Lord, Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

3. He is secure, because he is utterly ignorant of himself. Hence he talks of “repenting by and by,” he does not indeed exactly know when; but some time or other before he dies: taking it for granted, That this is quite in his own power. For what should hinder his doing it, if he will? If he does but once set a resolution, no fear but he will make it good.

4. But this ignorance never so strongly glares, as in those who are termed, Men of Learning. If a natural man be one of these, he cannot talk at large of his rational faculties; of the freedom of his will, and the absolute necessity of such freedom, in order to constitute man a moral agent. He reads and argues, and proves to a demonstration, That every man may do as he will; may dispose his own heart to evil or good, as it seems best in his own eyes. Thus the god of this world spreads a double veil of blindness over his heart, left by any means the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine upon it.

5. From the same ignorance of himself and God, there may sometimes arise in the natural man, a kind of joy, in congratulating himself, upon his own wisdom and goodness. And what the world calls joy, he may often possess. He may have pleasure in various kinds; either in gratifying the desires of the flesh, or the desire of the eye, or the pride of life: particularly if he has large possessions; if he enjoy an affluent fortune. Then he may clothe himself in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously.
every day. And so long as he thus doth well unto himself, men will doubtless speak good of him. They will say, He is a happy man. For indeed this is the sum of worldly happiness: to dress, and visit, and talk, and eat, and drink, and rise up to play.

6. It is not surprising, if one in such circumstances as these, dozed with the opiates of flattery and sin, should imagine among his other waking dreams, That he walks in great liberty. How easily may he persuade himself, that he is at liberty from all vulgar errors, and from the prejudice of education, judging exactly right, and keeping clear of all extremes. “I am free (may he say) from all the Enthusiasm of weak and narrow souls: from Superstition, the disease of fools and cowards, always righteous over much; and from Bigotry, continually incident to those who have not a free and generous way of thinking.” And too sure it is, That he is altogether free, from the wisdom which cometh from above, from holiness, from the religion of the heart, from the whole mind which was in Christ.

7. For all this time, he is the servant of sin. He commits sin, more or less, day by day. Yet he is not troubled: he “is in no bondage;” (as some speak) he feels no condemnation. He contents himself, (even though he should profess to believe, that the Christian Revelation is of God?) with, “Man is frail. We are all weak. Every man has his infirmity.” Perhaps he quotes Scripture: “Why, does not Solomon say, “The righteous man falls into sin seven times a day?” And doubtless, they are all Hypocrites or Enthusiasts who pretend to be better than their neighbours.” If at any time a serious thought fixes upon him, he stifles it as soon as possible, with, “Why should I fear, since God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners?” Thus he remains a willing servant of sin, content with the bondage of corruption; inwardly and outwardly unholy, and satisfied therewith; not only not conquering sin, but
not striving to conquer, particularly that sin, which doth so easily beset him.

8. Such is the state of every natural man; whether he be a grofs, scandalous transgressor, or a more reputable and decent sinner, having the form, though not the power of godliness. But how can such a one be convinced of sin? How is he brought to repent? To be under the Law? To receive the Spirit of Bondage to Fear? This is the point which is next to be considered.

II. 1. By some awful providence, or by his word applied with the demonstration of his Spirit, God touches the heart of him that lay asleep in darkness and in the shadow of death. He is terribly shaken out of his sleep, and awakes into a consciousness of his danger. Perhaps in a moment, perhaps by degrees, the eyes of his understanding are opened, and now first (the veil being in part removed) discern the real state he is in. Horrid light breaks in upon his soul; such light, as may be conceived to gleam from the bottomless pit, from the lowest deep, from a lake of fire, burning with brimstone. He at last sees, the loving, the merciful God, is also a consuming fire; that he is a just God and a terrible, rendering to every man according to his works, entering into judgment with the ungodly for every idle word, yea, and for the imaginations of the heart. He now clearly perceives, that the great and holy God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; that he is an avenger of every one who rebelleth against him, and repayeth the wicked to his face; and that “it is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God.”

2. The inward, spiritual meaning of the Law of God now begins to glare upon him. He perceives “the commandment is exceeding broad, and there is nothing hid from the light thereof.” He is convinced, that every part of it relates not barely to outward sin or obedience, but to what passes in the secret
SECRET recesses of the soul, which no eye but God's can penetrate. If he now hears, "Thou shalt not kill," God speaks in thunder, "He that hateth his brother is a murthener." He that faith unto his brother, "Thou fool, is obnoxious to hell fire." If the law say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," the voice of the Lord sounds in his ears, "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." And thus in every point, he feels the word of God, "quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged sword." It pierces even to the dividing asunder of his soul and spirit, his joints and marrow. And so much the more, because he is conscious to himself of having neglected so great salvation; of having trodden under foot the Son of God, who would have faved him from his sins, and counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy, a common, unsanctifying thing.

3. And as he knows, "all things are naked and "open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do," so he sees himself, naked, shrouded of all the fig-leaves which he had sewed together, of all his poor pretences to religion or virtue, and his wretched excuses for sinning against God. He now sees himself like the ancient sacrifices, τέσσαρες καταστροφές, clef in sunder, as it were, from the neck downward, so that all within him stands confest. His heart is bare, and he sees it is all sin, deceitful above all things, desperately wicked; that it is altogether corrupt and abominable, more than it is possible for tongue to express: that there dwelleth therein no good thing, but unrighteousness and ungodliness only; every motion thereof, temper and thought, being only evil continually.

4. And he not only sees, but feels in himself, by an emotion of soul which he cannot describe, that for the sins of his heart, were his life without blame, (which yet it is not, and cannot be: seeing "an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit") he deserves to
to be cast into the fire that never shall be quenched. He feels, that the wages, the just reward of sin, of his sin above all, is death; even the second death, the death which dieth not, the destruction of body and soul in hell.

5. Here ends his pleasing dream, his delusive rest, his false peace, his vain security. His joy now vanishes as a cloud; pleasures, once loved, delight no more. They pall upon the taste; he loaths the nauseous sweet; he is weary to bear them. The shadows of happiness flee away, and sink into oblivion. So that he is stript of all, and wanders to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none.

6. The fumes of those opiates being now dispelled, he feels the anguish of a wounded spirit. He finds that sin let loose upon the soul (whether it be pride, anger, or evil desire, whether self-will, malice, envy, revenge, or any other) is perfect misery. He feels sorrow of heart for the blessings he has lost, and the curse which is come upon him; remorse for having thus destroyed himself, and despised his own mercies; fear, from a lively sense of the wrath of God, and of the punishment which he has justly deserved, and which he sees hanging over his head; fear of death, as being to him the gate of hell, the entrance of death eternal; fear of the devil, the executioner of the wrath and righteous vengeance of God; fear of men, who if they were able to kill his body, would thereby plunge both body and soul into hell; fear, sometimes arising to such a height, that the poor, sinful, guilty soul, is terrified with every thing, with nothing, with shades, with a leaf shaken of the wind. Yea sometimes it may even border upon distraction, making a man drunken, though not with wine, suspending the exercise of the memory, of the understanding, of all the natural faculties. Sometimes it may approach to the very brink of despair: so that he who trembles at the name of death, may yet be ready to plunge into it every moment, to choose strangling rather
7. Now he truly desires to break loose from sin, and begins to struggle with it. But tho' he strive with all his might, he cannot conquer; sin is mightier than he. He would fain escape; but he is too fast in prison, that he cannot get forth. He resolves against sin, but yet sins on: he sees the snare, and abhors, and runs into it. So much does his boasted reason avail! Only to enhance his guilt, and increase his misery. Such is the freedom of his will! Free only to evil, free to drink in iniquity like water; to wander farther and farther from the living God, and do more Despise to the Spirit of grace!

8. The more he strives, wishes, labours to be free, the more does he feel his chains, the grievous chains of sin, wherewith Satan binds and bonds him captive at his will: his servant he is, tho' he repine ever so much; tho' he rebel, he cannot prevail. He is still in bondage and fear, by reason of sin: generally, of some outward sin, to which he is peculiarly disposed, either by nature, custom, or outward circumstances; but always, of some inward sin, some evil temper or unholy affection. And the more he frets against it, the more it prevails; he may bite, but cannot break his chain. Thus he toils without end, repenting and sinning, and repenting and sinning again, till at length the poor sinful, helpless wretch is even at his wits end, and can barely groan, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

9. This whole struggle of one who is under the Law, under the Spirit of Fear and Bondage, is beautifully described by the Apostle in the foregoing chapter, speaking in the person of an awakened man. "I (faith he) was alive without the Law once," ver. 9. I had much life, wisdom, strength and virtue; so I thought: "but when the commandment
mandment came, sin revived, and I died," When the commandment, in its spiritual meaning, came to my heart, with the power of God, my inbred sin was stirred up, fretted, inflamed, and all my virtue died away. "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it flew me," ver. 10, 11. It came upon me unawares, flew all my hopes, and plainly shewed, in the midst of life I was in death.— "Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment, holy and just and good," ver. 12. I no longer lay the blame on this, but on the corruption of my own heart. I acknowledge that "the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, fold under sin," ver. 14. I now see the spiritual nature of the Law, and my own carnal, devilish heart; fold under sin, totally enslaved: (like slaves bought with money, who were absolutely at their master's disposal.) "For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that I do," ver. 15. Such is the bondage under which I groan; such the tyranny of my hard master. "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do," ver. 18, 19. "I find a law, [an inward constraining power,] that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in [or consent to] the Law of God, after the inward man," (ver. 21, 22,) In my mind: so the Apostle explains himself in the words that immediately follow; (and το εσω ανθρωπος, the inward man, is understood in all other Greek Writers.) "But I see another Law in my members, [another constraining power,] warring against the Law of my mind, or inward man, and bringing me into captivity to the Law, [or power,] of sin," ver. 23, dragging me as it were at my conqueror's chariot-wheels, into the very thing which my soul abhors. "O wretched man that I am, who shall
shall deliver me from the body of this death!" ver. 24. Who shall deliver me from this helpless, dying life, from this bondage of sin and misery! Till this is done, I myself (or rather, that I, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου, that man I am now personating) with the mind, or inward man, 
serve the Law of God; my mind, my conscience is on God's side; but with the flesh; with my body, the Law of sin, ver. 25, being hurried away by a force I cannot resist.

10. How lively a portraiture is this of one under the Law! One who feels the burden he cannot shake off; who pants after liberty, power and love, but it is in fear and bondage still! Until the time that God answers the wretched man, crying out, "Who shall deliver me?" From this bondage of sin, from this body of death? "The grace of God, through Jesus Christ thy Lord."

III. 1. Then it is that this miserable bondage ends, and he is no more under the Law but under Grace. This state we are thirdly to consider, the state of one who has found grace or favour, in the sight of God, even the Father, and who has the grace, or power of the Holy Ghost, reigning in his heart: who has received, in the language of the Apostle, the Spirit of Adoption, whereby he now cries, Abba, Father!

2. "He cried unto the Lord in his trouble, and God delivers him out of his distress." His eyes are opened in quite another manner than before, even to see a loving, gracious God. While he is calling, "I beseech thee, to shew me thy glory," he hears a voice in his inmost soul, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord: I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy to whom I will shew mercy." And it is not long before "the Lord descends in the cloud, and proclaims the name of the Lord." Then he sees (but not with eyes of flesh and blood) "The Lord, the Lord God: merciful and gracious, long-suffering,
ferring, and abundant in goodness and truth: keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquities and transgressions and sin."

3. Heavenly, healing light now breaks in upon his soul. He "looks on him whom he had pierced, and God who out of darkness commanded light to shine, shineth in his heart." He "sees the light of the glorious love of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." He hath a divine "evidence of things not seen" by sense, even of "the deep things of God;" more particularly of the love of God, of his pardoning love to him that believes in Jesus. Overpowered with the sight, his whole soul cries out, "My Lord, and my God!" For he sees all his iniquities laid on him, who "bare them in his own body on the tree:" he beholds the Lamb of God taking away his sins. How clearly now does he discern, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself! Making him a sin-offering for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteous people of God through him!" And that he himself is reconciled to God, by that blood of the Covenant!

4. Here end both the guilt and power of sin. He can now say, "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, [even in this mortal body,] I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Here end remorse and sorrow of heart, and the anguish of a wounded spirit. "God turneth his heaviness into joy." He made sore, and now his hands bind up. Here ends also that bondage unto fear; for "his heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord." He cannot fear any longer the wrath of God; for he knows it is now turned away from him, and looks upon him no more as an angry Judge, but as a loving Father. He cannot fear the Devil, knowing he has "no power, except it be given him from above." He fears not hell, being...
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an heir of the kingdom of heaven; consequently, he has no fear of death: by reason whereof he was in time past, for so many years subject to bondage. Rather, knowing that “if the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, he hath a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. He groaneth earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon, with that house which is from heaven.” He groans to shake off this house of earth, that mortality may be swallowed up of life: knowing that God “hath wrought him for the self same thing: who hath also given him the earnest of his spirit.”

5. And “where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;” liberty not only from guilt and fear, but from sin, from that heaviest of all yokes, that basest of all bondage. His labour is not now in vain. The snare is broken and he is delivered. He not only strives, but likewise prevails; he not only fights, but conquers also. “Henceforth he doth not serve sin” (chap. vi. 6. &c.) “He is dead unto sin and alive unto God, sin doth not now reign, even in his mortal body, nor doth he obey it in the desires thereof.” He does not “yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but as instruments of righteousness unto God. For being now made free from sin, he is become the servant of righteousness.”

6. Thus “having peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,” and having power over all sin, over every evil desire, and temper, and word, and work, he is a living witness of the “glorious liberty of the sons of God:” all whom being partakers of like precious faith, bear record with one voice, “We have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!”

7. It is this Spirit which continually “worketh in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” It is he that sheds the love of God abroad in their hearts, and the love of all mankind; thereby
thereby purifying their hearts from the love of the world, from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. It is by him they are delivered from anger and pride, from all vile and inordinate affections. In consequence, they are delivered from evil words and works, from all unholiness of conversation: doing no evil to any child of man, and being zealous of all good works.

8. To sum up all. The natural man neither fears nor loves God; one under the Law, fears; one under Grace, loves him. The first, has no light in the things of God, but walks in utter darkness; the second, sees the painful light of hell; the third, the joyous light of heaven. He that sleeps in death, has a false peace. He that is awakened has no peace at all. He that believes has true peace, the peace of God filling and ruling his heart. The Heathen, baptized or unbaptized, hath a fancied liberty, which is indeed licentiousness: the Jew (or one under the Jewish dispensation) is in heavy, grievous bondage: the Christian enjoys the true glorious liberty of the Sons of God. An unawakened child of the Devil, sins willingly: one that is awakened sins unwillingly: a child of God sinneth not, but keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not. To conclude; the natural man neither conquers nor fights; the man under the Law fights with sin, but cannot conquer: the man under Grace fights and conquers, yea, is “more than conqueror, through him that loveth him.”

IV. 1. From this plain account of the threefold state of man, the natural, the legal, and the evangelical, it appears, that it is not sufficient, to divide mankind, into sincere and insincere. A man may be sincere in any of these states; not only when he has the Spirit of Adoption, but while he has the Spirit of Bondage unto Fear. Yea, while he has neither this fear, nor love. For undoubtedly there may be sincere Heathens, as well as sincere Jews.
Jews or Christians. This circumstance then, does by no means prove, that a man is in a state of acceptance with God.

Examine yourselves therefore, not only whether ye are sincere, "but whether ye be in the faith." Examine narrowly; for it imports you much. What is the ruling principle in your soul? Is it the love of God? Is it the fear of God? Or is it neither one nor the other? Is it not rather, the love of the world? The love of pleasure? Or gain? Or ease? Or reputation? If so, you are not come so far as a Jew. You are but a Heathen still.

Have you heaven in your heart? Have you the Spirit of Adoption, ever crying, Abba, Father? Or do you cry unto God, as "out of the belly of hell," overwhelmed with sorrow and fear? Or are you a stranger to this whole affair, and cannot imagine what I mean? Heathen, pull off the mask. Thou hast never put on Christ: Stand barefaced. Look up to heaven. And own before him that liveth for ever and ever, thou hast no part either among the sons or servants of God.

Whosoever thou art, Dost thou commit sin, or dost thou not? If thou dost, is it willingly or unwillingly? In either case God hath told thee whole thou art. "He that committest sin is of the devil." If thou committest it willingly, thou art his faithful servant. He will not fail to reward thy labour. If unwillingly, still thou art his servant.

God deliver thee out of his hands! Art thou daily fighting against all sin? and daily more than conqueror? I acknowledge thee for a child of God. O stand fast in thy glorious liberty. Art thou fighting, but not conquering; striving for the mastery, but not able to attain? Then thou art not yet a believer in Christ; but follow on: and thou shalt know the Lord. Art thou not fighting at all, but leading an easy, indolent, fashionable life? O how hast thou dared to name the name of Christ? Only to make it a reproach among the Heathen?

Awake
Awake thou sleeper! Call upon thy God: before the deep swallow thee up.

2. Perhaps one reason why so many think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, why they do not discern what state they are in, is, because these several states of soul, are often mingled together, and in some measure meet, in one and the same person. This experience shews, that the legal state, or state of fear, is frequently mixt with the natural. For few men are so fast asleep in sin, but they are sometimes, more or less awakened. As the Spirit of God does not “wait for the call of man,” so at some times he will be heard. He puts them in fear, so that for a season, at least, the Heathen “know themselves to be but men.” They feel the burthen of sin, and earnestly desire to flee from the wrath to come. But not long. They seldom suffer the arrows of conviction to go deep into their souls; but quickly stifle the grace of God, and return to their wallowing in the mire.

In like manner, the evangelical state, or state of love, is frequently mixt with the legal. For few of those who have the spirit of bondage and fear, remain always without hope. The wise and gracious God rarely suffers this; for he remembereth that we are but dust. And he willeth not that “the flesh should fail before him, or the spirit which he hath made.” Therefore at such times as he seemeth good, he gives a dawning of light unto them that sit in darkness. He causes a part of his goodness to pass before them, and shews he is a God that heareth their prayer. They see the promise which is by faith in Christ Jesus, though it be afar off; and hereby they are encouraged to “run with patience the race which is set before them.”

3. Another reason why many deceive themselves, is, because they do not consider how far a man may go, and yet be in a natural, or at best a legal state. A man may be of a compassionate and a benevolent temper, he may be affable, courteous, generous, friendly;
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friendly; he may have some degree of meekness, patience, temperance, and of many other moral virtues. He may feel many desires of shak- ing off all vice, and of attaining higher degrees of virtue. He may abstain from much evil; perhaps from all that is grossly contrary to justice, mercy or truth. He may do much good, may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the widow and fatherless. He may attend public worship, use prayer in private, read many books of devotion: and yet for all this, he may be a mere natural man, knowing neither himself nor God; equally a stranger to the spirit of fear and to that of love; having neither repented nor believed the gospel.

But suppose there were added to all this, a deep conviction of sin, with much fear of the wrath of God; vehement desires to cast off every sin, and to fulfil all righteousness; frequent rejoicing in hope, and touches of love often glancing upon the soul: yet neither do these prove a man to be under Grace, to have true, living, christian Faith, unless the Spirit of Adoption abide in his heart, unless he can continually cry, Abba, Father!

4. Beware then, thou who art called by the name of Christ, that thou come not short of the mark of thy high calling. Beware thou rest not, either in a natural state, with too many that are accounted good Christians: or in a legal state, wherein those who are highly esteemed of men, are generally content to live and die. Nay but God hath prepared better things for thee, if thou follow on till thou attain. Thou art not called to fear and tremble, like devils, but to rejoice and love, like the Angels of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Thou shalt rejoice evermore. Thou shalt pray without ceasing. Thou shalt in every thing give thanks. Thou shalt do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven. "O prove thou what is that good and
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and acceptable and perfect will of God. Now present thyself a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. Whereunto thou hast already attained, hold fast, by reaching forth unto those things which are before; until the God of peace make thee perfect in every good work, working in thee that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever! Amen!"

SERMON X.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

DISCOURSE I.

Romans VIII. 16.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God."

How many vain men, not understanding what they spake, neither whereof they affirmed, have wrested this Scripture, to the great loss, if not the destruction, of their souls? How many have mistaken the voice of their own imagination, for this Witness of the Spirit of God? And thence idly presumed, they were the children of God, while they were doing the works of the devil? These are truly and properly Enthusiasts; and indeed in the worst sense of the word. But with what difficulty are they convinced thereof? Especially, if they have drank deep into that spirit of error. All endeavours to bring them to the knowledge of themselves, they will then account fighting against God. And that vehemence and impetuousity of spirit, which they call contending earnestly for the faith, lets them so far above all the usual methods of conviction, that we may well say, With men it is impossible.

2. Who can then be surprized, if many reasonable men, seeing the dreadful effects of this delusion, and labouring to keep at the utmost distance from it, should sometimes lean toward another extreme? If
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If they are not forward to believe any who speak of
having this Witness, concerning which others have
sorrowfully erred? If they are almost ready to set
all down for Enthusiasms, who use the expressions
which have been so terribly abused? Yea, if they
should question, whether the witness or testimony
here spoken of, be the privilege of ordinary Chris-
tians, and not rather, one of those extraordinary
gifts, which they suppose belonged only to the
apostolic age.

3. But is there any necessity laid upon us, of
running either into one extreme or the other? May
we not steer a middle course? Keep a sufficient
distance from that Spirit of error and enthusiasm,
without denying the gift of God, and giving up
the great privilege of his children? Surely we may.
In order thereto, let us consider, in the presence and
fear of God,

First, What is this Witness or Testimony of our
spirit? What is the Testimony of God's Spirit?
And how does he bear witness with our spirit that
we are the children of God?

Secondly, How is this joint testimony of God's
Spirit and our own, clearly and solidly distingui-
ished from the presumption of a natural man; and from
the delusion of the devil?

I. 1. Let us first consider, what is the Witness or
Testimony of our spirit. But here I cannot but define
all those who are for swallowing up the testimony
of the Spirit of God, in the rational testimony of
our own spirit, to observe, that in this text the
Apostle is so far from speaking of the testimony of
our spirit only, that it may be questioned, whether
he speaks of it at all? Whether he does not speak,
only of the testimony of God's Spirit? It does not
appear, but the original ext may be fairly under-
stood thus: The Apostle had just said, in the preceding
verse,
verse, "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father," and immediately subjoins, Αὖτε τὸ τινήμα. (Some copies read τὸ αὐτὸ τινήμα) οὕμας τῷ ἀνθείμῳ, ἵνα ἑορτήν τήνα Θεός. Which may be translated, The same Spirit beareth witness to our spirit, that we are the children of God. (The preposition εἰς, only denoting, that he witnesseth this at the same time that he enables us to cry Abba, Father!) But I contend not; seeing so many other texts, with the experience of all real Christians sufficiently evince, that there is in every believer, both the testimony of God's Spirit, and the testimony of his own, that he is a child of God.

2. With regard to the latter, the foundation thereof is laid in those numerous texts of scripture, which describe the marks of the children of God, and that so plain, that he which runneth may read them. These are also collected together, and placed in the strongest light, by many both ancient and modern writers. If any need farther light, he may receive it by attending on the ministry of God's word; by meditating thereon before God in secret, and by conversing with those who have the knowledge of his ways. And by the Reason or Understanding that God has given him (which religion was designed not to extinguish, but to perfect: according to that of the Apostle, "Brethren be not children in understanding; in malice [or wickedness] be ye children; but in understanding be ye men," 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Every man applying those scriptural marks to himself, may know, whether he is a child of God. Thus if he know, First, as many as are led by the spirit of God, into all holy tempers and actions, they are the sons of God; (for which he has the infallible assurance of holy writ;) Secondly, I am thus led by the Spirit of God: he will easily conclude, therefore I am a Son of God.

3. Agreeable to this are all those plain declarations of St. John in his first epistle. "Hereby we know, that we do know him, if we keep his commandments,"
ments," ch. ii. ver. 3. "Who so keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby we know that we are in him," that we are indeed the children of God, ver. 5. "If ye know, that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him," ver. 29. "We know, that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," ch. iii. 4. "Hereby we know, that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him," ver. 18. Namely, because we love one another, not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. "Hereby know we, that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his [loving] Spirit," ch. iv. 13. And, "Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the [obedient] Spirit which he hath given us," ch. iii. 24.

4. It is highly probable, there never were any children of God, from the beginning of the world unto this day, who were farther advanced in the grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, than the Apostle John at the time when he wrote these words, and the Fathers in Christ to whom he wrote. Notwithstanding which, it is evident, both the Apostle himself and all those pillars in God's temple, were very far from despising these marks, of their being the children of God; and that they applied them to their own souls for the confirmation of their faith. Yet all this is no other than rational evidence, the witness of our Spirit, our reason or understanding. It all resolves into this: those who have these marks, they are the children of God. But we have these marks: therefore we are children of God.

5. But how does it appear, that we have these marks? This is a question which still remains. How does it appear, that we do love God and our neighbour? And that we keep his commandments? Observe, that the meaning of the question is, How does it appear to ourselves? (not to others.) I would ask him then that proposes this question, How does
does it appear to you, That you are alive? And that you are now in ease, and not in pain? Are you not immediately conscious of it? By the same immediate consciousness you will know, if your soul is alive to God: if you are saved from the pain of proud wrath, and have the ease of a meek and quiet spirit. By the same means you cannot but perceive, if you love, rejoice, and delight in God. By the same, you must be directly assured, if you love your neighbour as yourself; if you are kindly affected to all mankind, and full of gentleness and long-suffering. And with regard to the outward mark of the children of God, which is (according to St. John) the keeping his commandments, you undoubtedly know in your own breast, if, by the grace of God, it belongs to you. Your conscience informs you from day to day, if you do not take the name of God within your lips, unless with seriousness and devotion, with reverence and godly fear: if you remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy: if you honour your father and mother; if you do to all as you would they should do unto you: possess your body in sanctification and honour: and if whether you eat or drink, you are temperate therein, and do all to the glory of God.

6. Now this is properly the testimony of our own spirit: even the testimony of our conscience, that God hath given us to be holy of heart, and holy in outward conversation. It is a consciousness of our having received, in and by the Spirit of adoption, the tempers mentioned in the word of God, as belonging to his adopted children: even, a loving heart toward God, and toward all mankind, hanging with child-like confidence on God our Father, desiring nothing but him, casting all our care upon him, and embracing every child of man, with earnest, tender affection; so as to be ready to lay down our life for our brother, as Christ laid down his life for us: a consciousness, that we are inwardly conform ed, by the Spirit of God, to the image of his Son,
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Son, and that we walk before him in justice, mercy, and truth, doing the things which are pleasing in his sight.

7. But what is that testimony of God's Spirit, which is super-added to and conjoined with this? How does he bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God? It is hard to find words in the language of men, to explain the deep things of God. Indeed there are none that will adequately express, what the children of God experience. But perhaps one might say (desiring any who are taught of God, to correct, to soften, or strengthen the expression) The testimony of the Spirit, is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly “witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God;” that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me: and all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

8. That this testimony of the Spirit of God must needs, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit, may appear from this single consideration. We must be holy of heart, and holy in life, before we can be conscious that we are so; before we can have the testimony of our spirit, that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God, before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us. “We love him, because he first loved us.” And we cannot know his pardoning love to us, till his spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Since therefore this testimony of his spirit must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our inward consciousness thereof, or, the testimony of our spirit concerning them.

9. Then, and not till then, when the Spirit of God beareth that witness to our spirit, “God hath loved thee, and given his own Son to be the propitiation for thy sins; the Son of God hath loved thee, and hath washed thee from thy sins in his blood:”
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"We love God, because he first loved us;" and for his sake we love our brother also. And of this we cannot but be conscious to ourselves: we know the things that are freely given to us of God." We know that we love God and keep his commandments. And "hereby also we know that we are of God." This is that testimony of our own spirit; which, so long as we continue to love God and keep his commandments, continues joined with the testimony of God's Spirit, "that we are the children of God."

10. Not that I would, by any means, be understood, by any thing which has been spoken concerning it, to exclude the operation of the Spirit of God, even from the "testimony of our own spirit." In no wise. It is he that not only worketh in us every manner of thing that is good, but also shineth upon his own work, and clearly shews what he has wrought. Accordingly this is spoken of by St. Paul, as one great end of our receiving the Spirit, "That we may know the things which are freely given to us of God:" that he may strengthen the testimony of our conscience, touching our simplicity and godly sincerity, and give us to discern in a fuller and stronger light, that we now do the things which please him.

11. Should it still be enquired, How does the Spirit of God, bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, so as to exclude all doubt, and evince the reality of our sonship? The answer is clear, from what has been observed above. And first, as to the witness of our spirit. The soul as intimately and evidently perceives, when it loves, delights, and rejoices in God, as when it loves and delights in any thing on earth: And it can no more doubt, whether it loves, delights and rejoices, or no, than whether it exists, or no. If therefore this be just reasoning.
He that now loves God, that delights and rejoices in him, with an humble joy, an holy delight, and an obedient love, is a child of God:
But I thus love, delight, and rejoice in God;
Therefore I am a child of God:
Then a Christian can in no wise doubt, of his being a child of God. Of the former proposition, he has as full an assurance, as he has that the Scriptures are of God. And of his thus loving God, he has an inward proof, which is nothing short of self-evidence. Thus the "the testimony of our own spirit," is with the most intimate conviction manifested to our hearts, in such a manner, as beyond all reasonable doubt, to evince the reality of our sonship.

12. The manner how the divine testimony is manifested to the heart, I do not take upon me to explain. "Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me: I cannot attain unto it. The wind bloweth: and I hear the sound thereof. But I cannot tell how it cometh, or whither it goeth." As no one knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him; so the manner of the things of God knoweth no one, save the Spirit of God. But the fact we know: namely, that the Spirit of God does give a believer such a testimony of his adoption, that while it is present to the soul, he can no more doubt the reality of his sonship, than he can doubt the shining of the sun, while he stands in the full blaze of his beams.

II. 1. How this joint testimony of God's Spirit and our spirit, may be clearly and solidly distinguished, from the presumption of a natural man, and from the delusion of the devil, is the next thing to be considered. And it highly imports all who desire the salvation of God, to consider it with the deepest attention, as they would not deceive their own souls. An error in this is generally observed, to have the most fatal consequences: the rather, because
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because he that errs seldom discovers his mistake, till it is too late to remedy it.

2. And first, how is this testimony to be distinguished from the presumption of a natural man? It is certain, one who was never convinced of sin, is always ready to flatter himself, and to think of himself, especially in spiritual things, more highly than he ought to think. And hence, it is in no wise strange if one who is vainly puffed up by his fleshy mind, when he hears of this privilege of true Christians, among whom he undoubtedly ranks himself, should soon work himself up into a persuasion, that he is already possessed thereof. Such instances now abound in the world, and have abounded in all ages. How then may the real testimony of the Spirit with our Spirit, be distinguished from this damning presumption?

3. I answer, the holy Scriptures abound with marks, whereby the one may be distinguished from the other. They describe in the plainest manner the circumstances which go before, which accompany, and which follow, the true, genuine testimony of the Spirit of God with the spirit of a believer. Whoever carefully weighs and attends to these, will not need to put darkness for light. He will perceive so wide a difference with respect to all these, between the real and the pretended witness of the Spirit, that there will be no danger, I might say, no possibility, of confounding the one with the other.

4. By these, one who vainly presumes on the gift of God, might surely know, if he really desired it, that he hath been hitherto given up to a strong delusion, and suffered to believe a lie. For the Scriptures lay down those clear, obvious marks, as preceding, accompanying, and following that gift, which a little reflection would convince him, beyond all doubt, were never found in his soul. For instance, the Scripture describes Repentance, or Conviction of sin, as constantly going before this-
witness of Pardon. So, "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matt. iii. 2. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," Mark i. 15. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins," Acts ii. 38. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," chap. iii. 19. In conformity where-to, our Church also continually places Repentance, before Pardon or the witness of it. "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." "Almighty God—hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them, who with hearty repentance and true faith return unto him." But he is a stranger even to this repentance. He hath never known "a broken and a contrite heart. The remembrance of his sins was never grievous unto him, nor the burthen of them intolerable." In repeating those words, he never meant what he said; he merely paid a compliment to God. And were it only from the want of this previous work of God, he hath too great reason to believe, that he hath grasped a mere shadow, and never yet known the real privilege of the sons of God.

5. Again, the Scriptures describe the being born of God, which must precede the witness that we are his children, as a vast and mighty change; a change from darkness to light, as well as from the power of Satan unto God: as a passing from death unto life, a resurrection from the dead. Thus the Apostle to the Ephesians; "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," ch. ii. 1. And again, "When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," ver. 5, 9. But what knoweth he concerning whom we now speak, of any such change as this? He is altogether unacquainted with this whole matter. This is a language which he does not understand. He tells you,
you, "He always was a Christian. He knows no-time when he had need of such a change." By this also, if he give himself leave to think, may he know, that he is not born of the Spirit: that he has never yet known God; but has mistaken the voice of Nature for the voice of God.

6. But waving the consideration of whatever he has or has not experienced in time past; by the present marks may we easily distinguish a child of God, from a presumptuous self-deceiver. The Scripture describes that joy in the Lord which accompanies the witness of his Spirit, as an humble joy, a joy that abases to the dust; that makes a pardoned sinner cry out, "I am vile! What am I, or my father's house?—Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes!" And wherever lowliness is, there is meekness, patience, gentleness, long suffering. There is a soft, yielding spirit; a mildness and sweetness; a tenderness of soul which words cannot express. But do these fruits attend that supposed testimony of the spirit, in a presumptuous man? Just the reverse. The more confident he is of the favour of God, the more is he lifted up; the more does he exalt himself; the more haughty and assuming is his whole behaviour. The stronger witness he imagines himself to have, the more overbearing is he to all around him; the more incapable of receiving any reproof, the more impatient of contradiction. Instead of being more meek, and gentle, and teachable, more swift to hear, and slow to speak, he is more slow to hear and swift to speak, more unready to learn of any one; more fiery and vehement in his temper, and eager in his conversation. Yea, perhaps, there will sometimes appear a kind of fierceness in his air, his manner of speaking, his whole deportment, as if he were just going to take the matter out of God's hands, and himself to devour the adversaries.

7. Once more. The Scriptures teach, this is the love of God (the sure mark thereof) that we keep...
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keep his commandments, 1 John v. 3. And our Lord himself faith, "he that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me," John xiv. 21. Love rejoices to obey; to do in every point, whatever is acceptable to the Beloved. A true lover of God hastens to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven. But is this the character of the presumptuous pretender to the love of God? Nay, but his love gives him a liberty to disobey, to break, not keep, the commandments of God. Perhaps when he was in fear of the wrath of God, he did labour to do his will. But now looking on himself as not under the Law, he thinks he is no longer obliged to observe it. He is therefore less zealous of good works, less careful to abstain from evil; less watchful over his own heart, less jealous over his tongue. He is less earnest to deny himself, and to take up his cross daily. In a word, the whole form of his life is changed, since he has fancied himself to be at liberty. He is no longer exercising himself unto godliness; wrestling not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, enduring hardships, agonizing to enter in at the strait gate. No; he has found an easier way to heaven; a broad, smooth, flowery path; in which he can saw to his soul. "Soul, take thy ease; eat, drink, and be merry." It follows with undeniable evidence, that he has not the true testimony of his own spirit. He cannot be conscious of having those marks which he hath not; that lowliness, meekness, and obedience. Nor yet can the Spirit of the God of truth bear witness to a lie; or testify that he is a child of God, when he is manifestly a child of the devil.

8. Discover thyself, thou poor self-deceiver! Thou who art confident of being a child of God, thou who sayest, "I have the witness in myself," and therefore defeat all thy enemies. Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting; even in the balance of the sanctuary. The word of the Lord hath tried thy soul, and proved thee to be.
be reprobate silver. Thou art not lowly of heart. Therefore thou hast not received the spirit of Jesus unto this day. Thou art not gentle and meek; therefore thy joy is nothing worth: it is not joy in the Lord. Thou dost not keep his commandments; therefore thou loveth him not, neither art thou partaker of the Holy Ghost. It is consequently, as certain and as evident, as the oracles of God can make it, his Spirit does not bear witness with thy spirit, that thou art a child of God. O cry unto him that the scales may fall off thine eyes, that thou mayest know thyself as thou art known; that thou mayest receive the sentence of death in thyself, till thou hear the voice that raises the dead, saying, "Be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath made thee whole."

9. "But how may one who has the real witness in himself distinguish it from presumption:" how, I pray, do you distinguish day from night? How do you distinguish light from darkness? Or the light of a star, or glimmering taper, from the light of the noon day sun? Is there not an inherent, obvious, essential difference between the one and the other? And do you not immediately and directly perceive that difference, provided your senses are rightly disposed? In like manner, there is an inherent, essential difference between spiritual light and spiritual darkness: and between the light whereby the Sun of Righteousness shines upon our heart, and that glimmering light, which arises only from sparks of our own kindling. And this difference also is immediately and directly perceived, if our spiritual senses are rightly disposed.

10. To require a more minute and philosophical account of the manner whereby we distinguish these, and of the Criteria, or intrinsic marks, whereby we know the voice of God, is to make a demand which can never be answered; no, not by one who has the deepest knowledge of God. Suppose, when Paul answered before Agrippa, the wise Roman had said, "Thou
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"Thou talkest of hearing the voice of the Son of God. How doth thou know, it was his voice? By what Criteria, what intrinsic marks, doth thou know the voice of God? Explain to me, the manner of distinguishing this, from a human or angelic voice." Can you believe, the Apostle himself would have once attempted to answer so idle a demand? And yet doubtless the moment he heard that voice, he knew it was the voice of God. But how he knew this, who is able to explain? Perhaps neither man nor angel.

11. To come yet closer. Suppose God were now to speak to any soul, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." He must be willing that soul should know his voice; otherwise he would speak in vain. And he is able to effect this; for whenever he wills, to do is present with him. And he does effect it. That soul is absolutely assured, "This voice is the voice of God." But yet he who hath that witness in himself, cannot explain it to one who hath not. Nor is it to be expected that he should. Were there any natural medium to prove, or natural method to explain the things of God, to unexperienced men; then the natural man might discern and know the things of the Spirit of God. But this is utterly contrary to the assertion of the Apostle, that he cannot know them; because they are spiritually discerned; even by spiritual senses, which the natural man hath not.

12. "But how shall I know, that my spiritual senses are rightly disposed?" This also is a question of vast importance. For if a man mistake in this, he may run on in endless error and delusion. And how am I assured, that this is not my case; and that I do not mistake the voice of the Spirit?" Even by the testimony of your own spirit; by the answer of a good conscience toward God. By the fruits which he hath wrought in your spirit you shall know the testimony of the Spirit of God. Hereby you shall know, that you are in no delusion, that you have not
not deceived your own soul. 'The immediate fruits of the spirit, ruling in the heart, are "love, joy, peace; bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering." And the outward fruits are, The doing good to all men; the doing no evil to any; and the walking in the light; a zealous, uniform obedience to all the commandments of God.

13. By the same fruits shall you distinguish this voice of God, from any delusion of the devil. That proud spirit cannot humble thee before God. He neither can nor would soften thy heart, and melt it first into earnest mourning after God, and then into filial love. It is not the adversary of God and man, that enables thee to love thy neighbour; or to put on meekness, gentleness, patience, temperance, and the whole armour of God. He is not divided against himself, or a destroyer of sin, his own work. No; it is none but the Son of God who cometh to destroy the works of the devil. As surely therefore as holiness is of God, and as sin is the work of the devil, surely the witness thou hast in thyself is not of Satan, but of God.

14. Well then mayest thou say, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" Thanks be unto God, who giveth me to know in whom I have believed: who "hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into my heart, crying, Abba, Father," and even now bearing witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God! And fee, that not only thy lips, but thy life shew forth his praise. He hath sealed thee for his own; glorify him then in thy body and thy spirit which are his. Beloved, if thou hast this hope in thyself, purify thyself as he is pure. While thou beholdest what manner of love the Father hath given thee, that thou shouldst be called a child of God; cleanse thyself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God: and let all thy thoughts, words, and works be a spiritual sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God thro' Christ Jesus!
SERMON XI.
The Witness of the Spirit.

DISCOURSE II.

ROMANS VIII. 16.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

1. ONE who believes the scriptures to be the word of God, can doubt the importance of such a truth as this: a truth revealed therein, not once only, not obscurely, not incidentally; but frequently, and that in express terms; but solemnly and of set purpose, as denoting one of the peculiar privileges of the children of God.

2. And it is the more necessary to explain and defend this truth, because there is a danger on the right hand and on the left. If we deny it, there is a danger lest our religion degenerate into mere formality: lest "having a form of godliness," we neglect, if not deny the power of it. If we allow it, but do not understand what we allow, we are liable to run into all the wildness of enthusiasm. It is therefore needful in the highest degree, to guard those who fear God from both these dangers, by a scriptural and rational illustration and confirmation of this momentous truth.

3. It may seem, something of this kind is the more needful, because so little has been wrote on the subject with any clearness: unless some discourses on the wrong side of the question, which explain it quite away. And it cannot be doubted but these were occasioned, at least in great measure, by the crude, unscriptural, irrational explanation of others, who "knew not what they spake nor whereof they affirmed."

4. It
The WITNESS of the SPIRIT.

4. It more nearly concerns the Methodists, so called, clearly to understand, explain and defend this doctrine, because it is one grand part of the testimony, which God has given them to bear to all mankind. It is by this peculiar blessing upon them in searching the scriptures, confirmed by the experience of his children, that this great evangelical truth has been recovered, which had been for many years well nigh lost and forgotten.

II. 1. But what is the witness of the Spirit? The original word μαρτυρία, may be rendered either, (as it is in several places,) the witness, or less ambiguously, the testimony, or the record: so it is rendered in our translation, 1 John v. 11. This is the record (the testimony, the sum of what God testifies in all the inspired writings) that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. The testimony now under consideration is given by the Spirit of God to and with our spirit. He is the person testifying. What he testifies to us, is, "that we are the children of God." The immediate result of this testimony, is the fruit of the Spirit; namely, "love, joy, peace; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness." And without these the testimony itself cannot continue. For it is inevitably destroyed, not only by the commission of any outward sin, or the omission of known duty, but by giving way to any inward sin: in a word, by whatever grieves the Holy Spirit of God.

2. I observed many years ago, "It is hard to find words in the language of men, to explain the deep things of God. Indeed there are none that will adequately express, what the Spirit of God works in his children. But perhaps one might say (desiring any who are taught of God, to correct, soften, or strengthen the expression) By the testimony of the Spirit I mean, an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God,
God, that "Jesu Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me." That all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

3. After twenty years further consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this. Neither do I conceive, how any of these expressions may be altered, so as to make them more intelligible. I can only add, that if any of the children of God will point out any other expressions, which are more clear, or more agreeable to the word of God, I will readily lay these aside.

4. Meantime let it be observed I do not mean hereby, that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice: no, nor always by an inward voice, altho' he may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose, that he always applies to the heart, (tho' he often may) one or more texts of scripture. But he so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong, tho' inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm: the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied, that God is reconciled, that all his "iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered."

5. Now what is the matter of dispute concerning this? Not, whether there be a witness or testimony of the Spirit? Not, whether the Spirit does testify with our spirit, that we are the children of God? None can deny this, without flatly contradicting the scriptures, and charging a lie upon the God of truth. Therefore that there is a testimony of the Spirit, is acknowledged by all parties.

6. Neither is it questioned, whether there is an indirect witness or testimony, that we are the children of God. This is nearly, if not exactly the same with the testimony of a good conscience towards God; and is the result of reason, or reflection on what we feel in our own souls. Strictly speaking, it is a conclusion drawn partly from the word of God, and partly from our own experience. The word
The Witness of the Spirit.

word of God says, every one who has the fruit of the Spirit is a child of God. Experience or inward consciousness tells me, that I have the fruit of the Spirit. And hence I rationally conclude, therefore I am a child of God. This is likewise allowed on all hands, and so is no matter of controversy.

7. Nor do we assert, that there can be any real testimony of the Spirit, without the fruit of the Spirit. We assert, on the contrary, that the fruit of the Spirit immediately springs from this testimony: not always indeed in the same degree, even when the testimony is first given. And much less afterwards; neither joy nor peace are always at one stay. No, nor love: as neither is the testimony itself always equally strong and clear.

8. But the point in question is, whether there be any direct testimony of the Spirit at all? Whether there be any other testimony of the Spirit than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit?

III. 1. I believe there is, because that is the plain, natural meaning of the text, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." It is manifest, here are two witnesses mentioned, who together testify the same thing, the Spirit of God, and our own spirit. The late Bishop of London in his sermon on this text, seems astonished, that any one can doubt of this, which appears upon the very face of the words. Now, "The testimony of our own spirit, says the Bishop, is one, which is the consciousness of our own sincerity;" or to express the same thing a little more clearly, the consciousness of the fruit of the Spirit. When our Spirit is conscious of this of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, it easily infers from these premises, that we are the children of God.
2. It is true, that great man supposes the other witness to be "The consciousness of our own good works." This, he affirms, is the testimony of God's Spirit. But this is included in the testimony of our own spirit: Yea, and in sincerity, even according to the common sense of the word. So the Apostle, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world:" where it is plain, sincerity refers to our words and actions, at least as much as to our inward dispositions. So that this is not another witness but the very same that he mentioned before: the consciousness of our good works being only one branch of the consciousness of our sincerity. Consequently here is only one witness still. If therefore the text speaks of two witnesses, one of these is not the consciousness of our good works, neither of our sincerity: all this being manifestly contained in the testimony of our Spirit.

3. What then is the other witness? This might easily be learned, if the text itself were not sufficiently clear, from the verse immediately preceding. "Ye have received, not the Spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." It follows, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

4. This is farther explained by the parallel text, Gal. iv. 6. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Is not this something immediate and direct, not the result of reflection or argumentation? Does not this Spirit cry "Abba, Father, in our hearts," the moment it is given? Antecedently to any reflection upon our sincerity, yea, to any reasoning whatsoever? And is not this the plain, natural sense of the words, which strikes any one, as soon as he hears them? All these texts then,
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5. That the testimony of the Spirit of God, must in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit, may appear from this single consideration. We must be holy in heart and life, before we can be conscious that we are so. But we must love God before we can be holy at all, this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, ’till we know he loves us; “we love him, because he first loved us.” And we cannot know his love to us, ’till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. ’Till then we cannot believe it: we cannot say, “the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Then, only then we feel
Our interest in his blood,
And cry with joy unspeakable,
Thou art my Lord, my God.

Since therefore the testimony of his Spirit must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our consciousness thereof.

6. And here properly comes in, to confirm this scriptural doctrine, the experience of the children of God: the experience not of two or three, not of a few, but of a great multitude which no man can number. It has been confirmed, both in this and in all ages by a cloud of living and dying witnesses. It is confirmed by your experience and mine. The Spirit itself bore witness to my spirit, that I was a child of God, gave me an evidence hereof, and I immediately cried, Abba, Father! And this I did, (and so did you) before I reflected on, or was conscious of any fruit of the Spirit. It was from this testimony received, that love, joy, peace, and the whole fruit of the Spirit flowed. First I heard,

Thy sins are forgiven! Accepted thou art!
I listened, and heaven Sprung up in my heart.

O, 2

7. But
7. But this is confirmed, not only by the experience of the children of God, thousands of whom can declare, that they never did know themselves to be in the favour of God, 'till it was directly witnessed to them by his Spirit: but by all those who are convinced of sin, who feel the wrath of God abiding on them. These cannot be satisfied with any thing less than a direct testimony from his Spirit, that he is "merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembers their sins and iniquities no more. Tell any of these, "You are to know you are a child, by reflecting on what he has wrought in you, on your love, joy, and peace:" and will he not immediately reply, By all this I know, I am a child of the devil. I have no more love to God than the devil has: my carnal mind is enmity against God. I have no joy in the Holy Ghost: my soul is sorrowful even unto death. I have no peace; my heart is a troubled sea: I am all storm and tempest. And which way can these souls possibly be comforted, but by a divine testimony, (not that they are good, or sincere, or conformable to the scripture in heart and life, but) that God justifieth the ungodly: him that 'till the moment he is justified, is all ungodly, void of all true holiness? Him that worketh not, that worketh nothing that is truly good, 'till he is conscious that he is accepted, not for any works of righteousness which he hath done, but by the mere, free mercy of God? Wholly and solely for what the Son of God hath done and suffered for him? And can it be any otherwise, if "a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law?" If so, what inward or outward goodness can he be conscious of antecedent to his justification? Nay, is not the having nothing to pay, that is, the being conscious that there dwelleth in us no good thing, neither inward nor outward goodness, essentially, indispensably necessary, before we can be "justified freely, thro' the redemption that is in Jesus Christ?" Was ever any man justified
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justified since his coming into the world, or can any man ever be justified, 'till he is brought to that point,

"I give up every plea, beside
Lord, I am damn'd—But thou hast died!"

8. Every one therefore who denies the existence of such a testimony, does in effect deny justification by faith. It follows, that either he never experienced this, either he never was justified, or that he has forgotten, (as St. Peter speaks,) τῇ καθαρωτάτῃ τῶν ἡδάν ἐμαγρίων, the purification from his former sins, the experience he then had himself, the manner wherein God wrought in his own soul, when his former sins were blotted out.

9. And the experience even of the children of the world, here confirms that of the children of God. Many of these have a desire to please God: some of them take much pains to please him. But do they not, one and all, count it the highest absurdity, for any to talk of "knowing his sins are forgiven?" Which of them even pretends to any such thing? And yet many of them are conscious of their own sincerity. Many of them undoubtedly have, in a degree, the testimony of their own spirit, a consciousness of their own uprightness. But this brings them no consciousness, that they are forgiven, no knowledge that they are the children of God. Yea, the more sincere they are, the more uneasy they generally are, for want of knowing it: plainly shewing that this cannot be known, in a satisfactory manner, by the bare testimony of our own spirit, without God's directly testifying, that we are his children.

IV. But abundance of objections have been made to this; the chief of which it may be well to consider.

1. It is objected first. "Experience is not sufficient, to prove a doctrine which is not founded on scripture."
This is undoubtedly true; and it is an important truth; but it does not affect the present question. For it has been shewn, that this doctrine is founded on scripture. Therefore experience is properly alleged to confirm it.

2. But madmen, French prophets and enthusiasts of every kind have imagined they experienced this witness." They have so. And perhaps not a few of them did, although they did not retain it long. But if they did not, this is no proof at all, that others have not experienced it: as a madman’s imagining himself a king, does not prove, that there are no real kings.

"Nay many who pleaded strongly for this, have utterly decried the Bible." Perhaps so; but this was no necessary consequence: thousands plead for it, who have the highest esteem for the Bible.

"Yea, but many have fatally deceived themselves hereby, and got above all conviction."

And yet a scriptural doctrine is no worse, tho’ men abuse it to their own destruction.

3. "But I lay it down as an undoubted truth, the fruit of the Spirit is the witness of the Spirit." Not undoubted; thousands doubt of, yea flatly deny it: but to let that pass. "If this witness be sufficient, there is no need of any other. But it is sufficient, unless in one of these cases, 1. The total absence of the fruit of the Spirit." And this is the case, when the direct witness is first given: 2. "The not perceiving it. But to contend for it in this case, is to contend for being in the favour of God, and not knowing it." True, not knowing it at that time any otherwise, than by the testimony which is given for that end. And this we do contend for: we contend that the direct witness may shine clear, even while the indirect one is under a cloud.

4. It is objected, secondly, "The design of the witness contended for, is to prove that the profession we make is genuine. But it does not prove this."
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This." I answer, the proving this, is not the design of it. It is antecedent to our making any profession at all, but that of being lost, undone, guilty, helpless sinners. It is designed to assure those to whom it is given, that they are the children of God: that they are "justified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." And this does not suppose, that their preceding thoughts, words and actions, are conformable to the rule of scripture. It supposes quite the reverse, namely, That they are sinners all over, sinners both in heart and life. Were it otherwise, God would justify the godly; and their own works would be counted to them for righteousness. And I cannot but fear that a supposition of our being justified by works, is at the root of all their objections. For who ever cordially believes, that God imputes to all that are justified, righteousness without works, will find no difficulty in allowing the witness of his Spirit, preceding the fruit of it.

5. It is objected, thirdly, "One evangelist says, "your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." The other evangelist calls the same thing good gifts; abundantly demonstrating that the Spirit's way of bearing witness, is by giving good gifts." Nay, here is nothing at all about bearing witness, either in the one text or the other. Therefore 'till this demonstration is better demonstrated, I let it stand as it is.

6. It is objected, fourthly, "The scripture says, the tree is known by its fruits. Prove all things. Try the spirits. Examine yourselves." Most true: therefore, let every man who believes he hath the witness in himself, try whether it be of God; if the fruit follow, it is, otherwise it is not. For certainly the tree is known by its fruit: Hereby we prove, if it be of God. "But the direct witness is never referred to in the book of God." Not as standing alone, not as a single witness, but as connected with the other. As giving a joint testimony, testifying.
testifying with our spirit, that we are children of God. And who is able to prove, that it is not thus referred to, in this very scripture, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith: prove your own¬selves. Know ye not yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" It is by no means clear, that they did not know this, by a direct as well as a remote witness. How is it proved, that they did not know it, first, by an inward consciousness; and then by love, joy and peace?

7. "But the testimony arising from the internal and external change, is constantly referred to in the Bible." It is so. And we constantly refer thereto, to confirm the testimony of the Spirit. "Nay, all the marks you have given, whereby to distinguish the operations of God's Spirit from delusion, refer to the change wrought in us and upon us." This likewise is undoubtedly true.

8. It is objected, fifthly, that "The direct witness of the Spirit, does not secure us from the greatest delusion. And is that a witness fit to be trusted, whose testimony cannot be depended on? That is forced to fly to something else, to prove what it assertes?" I answer. To secure us from all delusion, God gives us two witnesses that we are his children. And this they testify jointly. Therefore "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." And while they are joined, we cannot be deluded: their testimony can be depended on. They are fit to be trusted in the highest degree, and need nothing else to prove what they assert.

"Nay, the direct witness only asserts, but does not prove any thing." By two witnesses shall every word be established. And when the Spirit witnesses with our spirit, as God designs it to do, then it fully proves that we are children of God.

9. It is objected, sixthly. "You own the change wrought is a sufficient testimony, unless in the case of severe trials, such as that of our Saviour upon the
the cros. But none of us can be tried in that manner." But you or I may be tried in such a manner, and so may any other child of God, that it will be impossible for us to keep our filial confidence in God, without the direct witness of his Spirit.

10. It is objected, lastly, "The greatest contenders for it, are some of the proudest and most uncharitable of men." Perhaps some of the hottest contenders for it, are both proud and uncharitable. But many of the firmest contenders for it, are eminently meek and lowly in heart: and indeed in all other respects also,

True followers of their lamb-like Lord.

The preceding objections are the most considerable that I have heard, and I believe contain the strength of the cause. Yet I apprehend whoever calmly and impartially considers those objections and the answers together, will easily see, that they do not destroy, no, nor weaken the evidence of that great truth, that the Spirit of God does directly, as well as indirectly testify, that we are children of God.

V. 1. The sum of all is this. The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the souls of believers, whereby the Spirit of God directly testifies to their spirit, that they are children of God. And it is not questioned, whether there is a testimony of the Spirit? But whether there is any direct testimony? Whether there is any other than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit of the Spirit? We believe there is: because this is the plain natural meaning of the text, illustrated both by the preceding words, and by the parallel passage in the epistle to the Galatians: because, in the nature of the thing, the testimony must precede the fruit which springs from it, and because this plain meaning of the word of God is confirmed by the experience of innumerable chil-
dren of God: yea, and by the experience of all who are convinced of sin, who can never rest, 'till they have a direct witness: and even of the children of the world, who not having the witness in themselves, one and all declare, none can know his sins forgiven.

2. And whereas it is objected, that experience is not sufficient to prove a doctrine unsupported by scripture: that madmen and enthusiasts of every kind, have imagined such a witness: that the design of that witness is to prove our profession genuine, which design it does not answer: that the scripture says, "The tree is known by its fruit; examine yourselves; prove your own selves;" and mean time the direct witness is never referred to in all the book of God: that it does not secure us from the greatest delusions: and, lastly, that the change wrought in us is a sufficient testimony, unless in such trials as Christ alone suffered. We answer, 1. Experience is sufficient to confirm a doctrine, which is grounded on scripture: 2. Though many fancy they experience what they do not, this is no prejudice to real experience: 3. The design of that witness is, to assure us we are children of God. And this design it does answer. 4. The true witness of the Spirit is known by its fruit, love, peace, joy; not indeed preceding, but following it: 5. It cannot be proved, that the direct, as well as the indirect witness, is not referred to in that very text, "Know ye not your own selves that Jesus Christ is in you?" 6. The Spirit of God witnessing with our spirit does secure us from all delusion: and, lastly, we are all liable to trials, wherein the testimony of our own spirit is not sufficient; wherein nothing less than the direct testimony of God's Spirit can assure us that we are his children.

3. Two inferences may be drawn from the whole. The first, let none ever presume to rest, in any supposed testimony of the Spirit, which is separate
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separate from the fruit of it. If the Spirit of God does really testify that we are the children of God, the immediate consequence will be the fruit of the Spirit, even, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance." And however this fruit may be clouded for a while, during the time of strong temptation, so that it does not appear to the tempted person, while Satan is sifting him as wheat, yet the substantial part of it remains, even under the thickest cloud. It is true, joy in the Holy Ghost may be withdrawn, during the hour of trial; yea, the soul may be exceeding sorrowful, while the hour and power of darkness continue. But even this is generally restored with increase, till we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

4. The second inference is, let none rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness. There may be foretastes of joy, of peace, of love, and those not delusive, but really from God, long before we have the witness in ourselves, before the Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirits, that we have "redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins." Yea there may be a degree of long-suffering, of gentleness, of fidelity, meekness, temperance, (not a shadow thereof, but a real degree, by the preventing grace of God) before we are accepted in the Beloved, and consequently before we have a testimony of our acceptance. But it is by no means advisable to rest here; it is at the peril of our souls if we do. If we are wise we shall be continually crying to God, until his Spirit cry in our heart, Abba, Father! This is the privilege of all the children of God, and without this we can never be assured that we are his children. Without this we can not retain a steady peace, nor avoid perplexing doubts and fears. But when we have once received this Spirit of adoption, this peace which passes all understanding, and which expels all painful doubt and fear, will "keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." And when this has
has brought forth its genuine fruit, all inward and outward holiness, it is undoubtedly the will of him that calleth us, to give us alway what he has once given. So that there is no need, that we should ever more be deprived, of either the testimony of God's Spirit, or the testimony of our own, the consciousness of our walking in all righteousness and true holiness.

NEWRY, April 4, 1767.

SERMON XII:

THE WITNESS OF OUR OWN SPIRIT

2 CORINTHIANS I. 12.

"This is our Rejoicing, the Testimony of our ' Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly ' Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by ' the Grace of God, we have had our Con- ' versation in the World."

1. SUCH is the voice of every true believer in Christ, so long as he abides in faith and love. " He that followeth me, faith our Lord, walketh not in darkness:" and while he hath the light, he rejoiceth therein. "As he hath received the Lord Jesus Christ, so he walketh in him." And while he walketh in him, the Exhortation of the Apostle takes place in his soul day by day. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice"

2. But that we may not build our house upon the sand, (left when the rains descend, and the winds blow, and the floods arise and beat upon it, it fall, and great be the fall thereof) I intend, in the following Discourse, to shew, what is the nature and ground of a Christian's joy. We know,
in general, it is that happy peace, that calm satisfaction of spirit, which arises from such a testimony of his conscience, as is here described by the Apostle. But in order to understand this the more thoroughly, it will be requisite to weigh all his words: whence will easily appear, both what we are to understand by Conscience, and what, by the Testimony thereof; and also, how he that hath this Testimony rejoiceth evermore.

3. And, first, What are we to understand by Conscience? What is the meaning of this word that is in every one's mouth? One would imagine, it was an exceeding difficult thing, to discover this, when we consider how large and numerous volumes have been from time to time wrote on this subject: and how all the treasures of ancient and modern learning have been ransacked, in order to explain it. And yet it is to be feared, it has not received much light from all those elaborate enquiries. Rather, have not most of those writers puzzled the cause; "darkening counsel by words without knowledge;" perplexing a subject, plain in itself, and easy to be understood? For set aside but hard words, and every man of an honest heart will soon understand the thing.

4. God has made us thinking beings, capable of perceiving what is present, and of reflecting or looking back on what is past. In particular, we are capable of perceiving whatsoever passes in our own hearts or lives; of knowing whatsoever we feel or do; and that either while it passes, or when it is past. This we mean when we say, Man is a conscious being: he hath a consciousness or inward perception, both of things present and past, relating to himself, of his own tempers and outward behaviour. But what we usually term conscience, implies, somewhat more than this. It is not barely, the knowledge of our present, or the remembrance of our preceding life. To remember, to bear witness either of past or present things, is only
one, and the least office of Conscience. Its main business is to excuse or accuse, to approve or disapprove, to acquit or condemn.

5. Some late writers indeed have given a new name to this, and have chose to stile it, a moral sense. But the old word seems preferable to the new, were it only on this account, that it is more common and familiar among men, and therefore easier to be understood. And to christians it is undeniably preferable, on another account also; namely, because it is scriptural, because it is the word which the wisdom of God hath chose to use in the inspired Writings.

And according to the meaning wherein it is generally used there, particularly in the Epistles of St. Paul, we may understand by conscience, a faculty or power, implanted by God in every soul that comes into the world, of perceiving what is right or wrong in his own heart or life, in his tempers, thoughts, words and actions.

6. But what is the Rule whereby men are to judge of right and wrong? Whereby their conscience is to be directed? The rule of heathens (as the Apostle teaches elsewhere) is "the law written in their hearts." "These, faith he, not having the [outward] law, are a law unto themselves: who shew the work of the law [that which the outward law prescribes] written in their heart [by the finger of God;] their conscience also bearing witness, [whether they walk by this rule, or not;] and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or even excusing, [acquitting, defending them (\\\(\gamma νξι\) άνωδογράφης) Rom. ii. 14, 15. But the Christian Rule of right and wrong is the Word of God, the writings of the Old and New Testament: all which the Prophets and holy men of old wrote, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: all that Scripture which was given by inspiration of God, and which is indeed profitable for doctrine, or touching the whole will of God: for reproof of wha
This is a lantern unto a Christian’s feet, and a light in all his paths. This alone he receives as his rule of right or wrong, of whatever is really good or evil. He esteems nothing good, but what is here enjoined, either directly or by plain consequences. He accounts nothing evil but what is here forbidden, either in terms, or by undeniable inferences. Whatever the Scripture neither forbids nor enjoins, (either directly or by plain consequence) he believes to be of an indifferent nature, to be in itself neither good nor evil: this being the whole and sole outward rule, whereby his conscience is to be directed in all things.

7. And of it be directed thereby in fact, then hath he the answer of a good conscience toward God. A good conscience is what is elsewhere termed by the Apostle, a conscience void of offence. So, what he at one time expresses thus, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day,” Acts xxiii. 1. he denotes at another, by that expression, “herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man,” chap. xxiv. 16. Now in order to this, there is absolutely required, First, a right understanding of the word of God, of his holy and acceptable and perfect will concerning us, as it is revealed therein. For it is impossible we should walk by a rule, if we do not know what it means. There is, Secondly, required (which how few have attained!) a true knowledge of ourselves; a knowledge both of our hearts and lives, of our inward tempers and outward conversation: seeing if we know them not, it is not possible that we should compare them with our rule. There is required Thirdly, an agreement of our hearts and lives, of our tempers and conversation, of our thoughts, and words, and works with that rule, with the written word of God. For without this, if we have
have any conscience at all, it can be only an evil conscience. There is, Fourthly, required, an inward perception, of this agreement with our rule. And this habitual perception, this inward consciousness itself, is properly a good conscience; or (in the other phrase of the Apostle) "A conscience void of offence, toward God and toward man."

8. But whoever desires to have a conscience thus void of offence, let him see that he lay the right foundation. Let him remember, Other foundation of this can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ. And let him also be mindful, that no man buildeth on him but by a living faith; that no man is a partaker of Christ, until he can clearly testify, "The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God;" in him who is now revealed in my heart; who loved me, and gave himself for me. Faith alone is that evidence, that conviction, that demonstration of things invisible, whereby the eyes of our understanding being opened, and divine light poured in upon them, we see the wondrous things of God's law, the excellency and purity of it; the height and depth, and length and breadth thereof, and of every commandment contained therein. It is by faith, that beholding the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, we perceive as in a glass, all that is in ourselves, yea, the inmost motions of our souls. And by this alone can that blessed love of God be shed abroad in our hearts, which enables us so to love one another as Christ loved us. By this, is that gracious promise fulfilled, unto all the Israel of God, I will put my laws into their minds, and write (or engrave) them in their hearts, Heb. viii. 10. Hereby producing in their souls, an entire agreement with his holy and perfect law, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

And as an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. As the heart therefore of a believer, so likewise his life is thoroughly
thoroughly conformed to the rule of God's commandments. In a consciousness whereof, he can give glory to God, and say, with the Apostle, This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. 2 Cor. i. 12.

9. We have had our conversation. The Apostle in the Original, expresses this by one single word (ανεράφηµι). But the meaning thereof is exceeding broad, taking in our whole deportment, yea, every inward as well as outward circumstance, whether relating to our soul or body. It includes every motion of our heart, of our tongue, of our hands and bodily members. It extends to all our actions and words; to the employment of all our powers and faculties; to the manner of using every talent we have received, with respect either to God or man.

10. We have had our conversation in the world; even in the world of the ungodly: not only among the children of God (that were, comparatively, a little thing:) but among the children of the devil, among those that lie in wickedness, in τῷ ὑπέρτη, in the Wicked One. What a world is this! how thoroughly impregnated with the spirit it continually breathes as our God is good and doth good, so the god of this world, and all his children, are evil, and do evil, (so far as they are suffered) to all the children of God. Like their father, they are always lying in wait, or walking about, seeking whom they may devour: using fraud or force, secret wiles or open violence, to destroy those who are not of the world: continually warring against our souls, and by old or new weapons and devices of every kind, labouring to bring them back into the snare of the devil, into the broad road that leadeth to destruction.

11. We have had our whole conversation in such a world, in simplicity and godly sincerity. First, in simplicity. This is what our Lord recommends,
under the name of a single eye. "The light of the body, faith he, is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." The meaning whereof is this. What the eye is to the body, that the intention is, to all the words and actions. If therefore this eye of thy soul be single, all thy actions and conversation shall be full of light, of the light of heaven; of love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

We are then simple of heart, when the eye of our mind is singly fixt on God: when in all things we aim at God alone, as our God, our Portion, our Strength, our Happiness, our exceeding great Reward, our All, in time and eternity. This is simplicity; when a steady view, a single intention of promoting his glory, of doing and suffering his blessed will, runs through our whole soul, fills all our heart, and is the constant spring of all our thoughts, desires and purposes.

12. We have had our conversation in the world. Secondly, in godly sincerity. The difference between simplicity and sincerity, seems to be chiefly this: simplicity regards the intention itself, sincerity, the execution of it. And this sincerity relates not barely to our words, but to our whole conversation, as described above. It is not here to be understood in that narrow sense, wherein St. Paul himself sometimes uses it, for speaking the truth, or abstaining from guile, from craft and dissimulation. But in a more extensive meaning, as actually hitting the mark which we aim at by simplicity. Accordingly it implies in this place, that we do in fact speak and do all to the glory of God: that all our words are not only pointed at this, but actually conducive thereto; that all our actions flow on in an even stream, uniformly subservient to this great end: and that in our whole lives, we are moving straight toward God, and that continually; walking steadily on in the highway of Holiness, in the paths of Justice, Mercy and Truth.

13. This
The Witness of our Own Spirit.

13. This sincerity is termed by the Apostle, godly Sincerity, or the Sincerity of God, (συνεφαβία Θεος) to prevent our mistaking or confounding it with the sincerity of the heathens: (for they had also a kind of sincerity among them, for which they professed no small veneration) likewise to denote the object and end of this, as of every christian virtue; seeing whatever does not ultimately tend to God, sinks among the beggarly elements of the world. By styling it, the Sincerity of God, he also points out the Author of it, the “Father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth;” which is still more clearly declared in the following words, Not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God.

14. Not with fleshly wisdom. As if he had said, We cannot thus converse in the world, by any natural strength or understanding, neither by any naturally-acquired knowledge or wisdom. We cannot gain this simplicity, or practise this sincerity, by the force either of good sense, good nature, or good breeding. It overtops all our native courage and resolution, as well as all our precepts of philosophy. The power of custom is not able to train us up to this, nor the most exquisite rules of human education. Neither could I Paul ever attain hereto, notwithstanding all the advantages I enjoyed, so long as I was in the flesh, in my natural state, and pursued it only by fleshly, natural wisdom.

And yet surely, if any man could, Paul himself might have attained thereto by that wisdom. For we can hardly conceive any, who was more highly favoured with all the gifts both of nature and education. Besides his natural abilities, probably not inferior to those of any person then upon the earth, he had all the benefits of learning, studying at the University of Tarsus, afterwards brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a person of the greatest account both for knowledge and integrity, that was then in the whole Jewish nation. And he had all the possible
possible advantages of religious education, being a pharisee, the son of a pharisee, trained up in the very straitest sect or profession, distinguished from all others by a more eminent strictness. And herein he had profited above many others, who were his equals in years, being more abundantly zealous of whatever he thought would please God, and as touching the righteousness of the law blameless. But it could not be, that he should hereby attain this simplicity and godly sincerity. It was all but lost labour; in a deep, piercing sense of which he was at length constrained to cry out, “The things which were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,” Phil. iii. 7, 8.

15. It could not be that ever he should attain to this, but by the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord: or by the grace of God; another expression of nearly the same import. By the grace of God is sometimes to be understood, that free love, that unmerited mercy, by which I a sinner, through the merits of Christ, am now reconciled to God. But in this place it rather means, that power of God, the Holy Ghost, which worketh in us both to will and to do; of his good pleasure. As soon as ever the grace of God, in the former sense, his pardoning love, is manifested to our soul; the grace of God, in the latter sense, the power of his Spirit, takes place therein. And now we can perform, through God, what to man was impossible. Now we can order our conversation aright. We can do all things in the light and power of that love, through Christ which strengtheneth us. We now have the testimony of our conscience, which we could never have by fleshly wisdom, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have our conversation in the world.

16. This is properly the ground of a Christian's joy. We may now therefore readily conceive, how he
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I rejoice in him, who of his own unmerited love, of his own free and tender mercy, hath called me into this state of salvation, wherein through his power I now stand. I rejoice because his Spirit beareth witness to my spirit, that I am bought with the blood of the Lamb, and that believing in him; "I am a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." I rejoice because the sense of God's love to me, hath by the same Spirit wrought in me to love him, and to love for his sake every child of man, every soul that he hath made. I rejoice, because he gives me to feel in myself the mind that was in Christ: simplicity, a single eye to him, in every motion of my heart; power always to fix the loving eye of my soul on him who "loved me and gave himself for me," to aim at him alone, at his glorious will, in all I think or speak or do: purity, desiring nothing more but God, "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, setting my affections on things above, not on things of the earth:" holiness, a recovery of the image of God, a renewal of soul after his likeness: and godly sincerity, directing all my words and works, so as to conduct to his glory. In this I likewise rejoice, yea and will rejoice, because my conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, by the light he continually pours in upon it, that I "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called: that I abstain from all appearance of evil, fleeing from sin as from the face of a serpent;" that as I have opportunity, I do all possible good, in every kind, to all men; that I follow my Lord in all my steps, and do what is acceptable in his sight. I rejoice because I both see and feel, through the inspiration of God's holy Spirit, that all my works are wrought in him, yea and that it is he who worketh all my works in me. I rejoice in seeing, through
through the light of God which shines in my heart, that I have power to walk in his ways, and that through his grace, I turn not therefrom, to the right hand or to the left.

17. Such is the ground and the nature of that joy, whereby a Christian rejoiceth evermore. And from all this we may easily infer, First, That this is not a natural joy. It does not arise from any natural cause: not from any sudden flow of spirits. This may give a transient start of joy. But the Christian rejoiceth always. It cannot be owing to bodily health or ease; to strength and soundness of constitution. For it is equally strong in sickness and pain; yea perhaps far stronger than before. Many Christians have never experienced any joy, to be compared with that which then filled their soul, when the body was well nigh worn out with pain, or consumed away with pining sickness. Least of all can it be ascribed to outward prosperity, to the favour of men, or plenty of worldly goods. For then chiefly, when their faith has been tried as with fire, by all manner of outward afflictions, have the children of God rejoiced in him, whom unseen they loved, even with joy unspeakable. And never surely did men rejoice like those, who were used as the filth and off-scouring of the world; who wandered to and fro, being in want of all things; in hunger, in cold, in nakedness: who had trials, not only of cruel mockings, but moreover of bonds and imprisonments: yea, who at last counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so they might finish their course with joy.

18. From the preceding Considerations, we may, Secondly, infer, That the joy of a Christian does not arise from any blindness of conscience, from his not being able to discern good from evil. So far from it, that he was an utter stranger to this joy, till the eyes of his understanding were opened! That he knew it not, until he had spiritual senses, fitted to discern spiritual good and evil. And now the
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The eye of his soul waxeth not dim. He was never so sharp-sighted before. He has so quick a perception of the smallest things, as is quite amazing to the natural man. As a mote is visible in the sunbeam, so to him who is walking in the light, in the beams of the uncreated Sun, every mote of sin is visible. Nor does he close the eyes of his conscience any more. That sleep is departed from him. His soul is always broad awake: no more slumber or folding of the hands to rest! He is always standing on the tower, and hearkening what his Lord will say concerning him: and always rejoicing in this very thing, in seeing him that is invisible.

19. Neither does the joy of a Christian arise, Thirdly, from any dullness or callousness of conscience. A kind of joy, it is true, may arise from this, in those whose foolish hearts are darkened: whose heart is callous, unfeeling, dull of sense; and consequently without spiritual understanding. Because of their senseless, unfeeling hearts, they may rejoice even in committing sin: And this they may probably call Liberty! Which is indeed mere drunkenness of soul: a fatal numbness of spirit, the stupid insensibility of a seared conscience. On the contrary, a Christian has the most exquisite sensibility; such as he could not have conceived before. He never had such a tenderness of conscience as he has had, since the love of God has reigned in his heart. And this also is his glory and joy; that God hath heard his daily prayer.

"O that my tender soul might fly
The first abhorr'd approach of ill:
Quick, as the apple of an eye,
The lightest touch of sin to feel."

20. To conclude. Christian joy, is joy in obedience: joy in loving God and keeping his commandments. And yet not in keeping them, as if we were thereby to fulfil the terms of the covenant of works; as if by any works or righteousness of ours,
ours, we were to procure pardon and acceptance with God. Not so: we are already pardoned and accepted, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Not as if we were by our own obedience to procure life, life from the dead of sin. This also we have already through the grace of God. Us hath he quickened, who were dead in sin. And now we are alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. But we rejoice in walking, according to the covenant of grace, in holy love and happy obedience. We rejoice in knowing, that being justified through his grace, we have not received that grace of God in vain; that God having freely (not for the sake of our willing or running, but through the blood of the Lamb) reconciled us to himself, we run in the strength which he hath given us, the way of his commandments. He hath girded us with strength unto the war, and we gladly fight the good fight of faith. We rejoice, through him who liveth in our hearts by faith, to lay hold of eternal life. This is our rejoicing: that as our Father worketh hitherto, so (not by our own might or wisdom, but through the power of his Spirit freely given in Christ Jesus) we also work the works of God. And may he work in us, whatsoever is well pleasing in his sight! To whom be the praise for ever and ever!

It may easily be observed, that the preceding Discourse, describes the Experience of those that are strong in Faith. But hereby those that are weak in Faith may be discouraged: To prevent which the following Discourse may be of use.

SERMON
SERMON XIII.
ON SIN IN BELIEVERS.

2 CORINTHIANS V. 17.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

1. IS there then sin in him that is in Christ? Does sin remain in one that believes in him? Is there any sin in them that are born of God, or are they wholly delivered from it? Let no one imagine this to be a question of mere curiosity: or that it is of little importance whether it be determined one way or the other. Rather it is a point of the utmost moment, to every serious Christian: the resolving of which nearly concerns both his present and eternal happiness.

2. And yet I do not know, that ever it was controverted in the primitive church. Indeed there was no room for disputing concerning it, as all Christians were agreed. And so far as I have ever observed, the whole body of antient Christians who have left us any thing in writing, declare with one voice, that even believers in Christ, till they are "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might," have need to "wrestle with flesh and blood," with an evil nature, as well as "with principalities and powers."

3. And herein our own church, (as indeed in most points) exactly copies after the primitive; declaring (in her ninth article) "Original sin is the corruption of the nature of every man, whereby man is in his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek φθόνος αὐγής, is not subject to the law of God."
God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe, yet this lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

4. The same testimony is given by all other churches: not only by the Greek and Romish church, but by every reformed church in Europe, of whatever denomination. Indeed some of these seem to carry the thing too far: so describing the corruption of the heart in a believer, as scarce to allow that he has dominion over it, but rather is in bondage thereto. And by this means they leave hardly any distinction, between a believer and an unbeliever.

5. To avoid this extreme, many well meaning men, particularly those under the direction of the late Count Zinzendorf, ran into another; affirming, that "all true believers are not only saved from the dominion of sin, but from the being of inward as well as outward sin, so that it no longer remains in them." And from them, about twenty years ago, many of our own countrymen imbibed the same opinion, that even the corruption of nature is no more, in those who believe in Christ.

6. It is true, that when the Germans were pressed upon this head, they soon allowed, (many of them at least) that "sin did still remain in the flesh, but not in the heart of a believer." And after a time, when the absurdity of this was shewn, they fairly gave up the point: allowing that sin did still remain, though not reign in him that is born of God.

7. But the English who had received it from them (some directly, some at second or third hand) were not so easily prevailed upon, to part with a favourite opinion. And even when the generality of them were convinced it was utterly indefensible, a few could not be persuaded to give it up, but maintain it to this day.

II. 1. For the sake of those who really fear God and desire to know the truth as it is in Jesus, it may not be amiss, to consider the point with calm-
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In doing this I use differently the words regenerate, justified, or believers; since though they have not precisely the same meaning, (the first implying an inward, actual change, the second a relative one, and the third, the means whereby both the one and the other are wrought:) yet they come to one and the same thing; as every one that believes is both justified and born of God.

2. By sin I here understand inward sin: any sinful temper, passion or affection: such as pride, self-will, love of the world, in any kind or degree: such as lust, anger, peevishness; any disposition, contrary to the mind which was in Christ.

3. The question is not, concerning outward sin: whether a child of God commits sin or no? We all agree and earnestly maintain, “He that committeth sin is of the devil.” We agree, “Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin.” Neither do we now enquire whether inward sin will always remain in the children of God? Whether sin will continue in the soul, as long as it continues in the body? Nor yet do we enquire, whether a justified person may relapse either into inward or outward sin? But simply this, is a justified or regenerate man freed from all sin, as soon as he is justified? Is there then no sin in his heart? Nor ever after, unless he fall from grace?

4. We allow that the state of a justified person is inexpressibly great and glorious. He is “born again not of blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” He is a child of God, a member of Christ, an heir of the kingdom of heaven. “The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keepeth his heart and mind in Christ Jesus.” His very body is a “temple of the Holy Ghost, and a habitation of God through the Spirit.” He is “created anew in Christ Jesus:” he is washed, he is sanctified. His heart is purified by faith: he is cleansed “from the corruption that is in the world.” “The love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the
Holy Ghost which is given unto him." And so long as he "walketh in love" (which he may always do) he worships God in spirit and in truth. He keepeth the commandments of God, and doth those things, that are pleasing in his sight: so exercising himself as to have a conscience void of offence, toward God and toward man." And he has power both over outward and inward sin, even from the moment he is justified.

III. 1. But was he not then freed from all sin, so that there is no sin in his heart? I cannot say this: I cannot believe it: because St. Paul says the contrary. He is speaking to believers, and describing the state of believers in general, when he says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: these are contrary the one to the other." Gal. v. 17. Nothing can be more express. The apostle here directly affirms, that the flesh, evil nature, opposes the Spirit, even in believers; that even in the regenerate, there are two principles, contrary the one to the other.

2. Again. When he writes to the believers at Corinth, to those who were "sanctified in Christ Jesus," 1 Cor. i. 2, he says, "I brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ—Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal? ch. iii. ver. 13. Now here the apostle speaks unto those who were unquestionably believers, whom in the same breath he styles his brethren in Christ, as being still in a measure carnal. He affirms, there was envying (an evil temper) occasioning strife among them, and yet does not give the least invitation, that they had lost their faith. Nay, he manifestly declares, they had not; for then they would not have been babes in Christ. And (what is most remarkable of all) he speaks of being carnal and babes in Christ, as one and the same thing) plainly shewing that every believer is (in a degree; carnal, while he is only a babe in Christ.

3. Indeed
3. Indeed this grand point, that there are two contrary principles in believers, nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit, runs through all the Epistles of St. Paul, yea, through all the Holy Scriptures: almost all the directions and exhortations therein, are founded on this supposition: pointing at wrong tempers or practices in those, who are notwithstanding acknowledged by the inspired writers to be believers. And they are continually exhorted to fight with and conquer these, by the power of the faith which was in them.

4. And who can doubt, but there was faith in the angel of the church of Ephesus, when our Lord said to him, "I know thy works, and thy patience: thou hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and has not fainted," Rev. ii. 2, 3, 4. But was there meantime no sin in his heart? Yea, or Christ would not have added, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." This was a real sin which God saw in his heart (of which accordingly he is exhorted to repent.) And yet we have no authority to say, that even then he had no faith.

5. Nay, the angel of the church at Pergamos also, is exhorted to repent, which implies sin, though our Lord expressly says, "Thou hast not denied my faith," ver. 13, 16. And to the angel of the church in Sardis, he says, "Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die." The good which remained was ready to die; but was not actually dead, chap. iii. 2. So there was still a spark of faith even in him; which he is accordingly commanded to hold fast, ver. 3.

6. Once more. When the apostle exhorts believers to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, (2 Cor. vii. 1.) he plainly teaches, that those believers were not yet cleansed therefrom. Will you answer, "He that abjures from all appearance of evil, does ipso facto cleanse himself from all filthiness." Not in any wise. For in.

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stance:
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Franchise: a man reviles me; I feel resentment, which is filthiness of spirit. Yet I say not a word. Here I abstain from all appearance of evil. But this does not cleanse me from that filthiness of spirit, as I experience to my sorrow.

7. And as this position, there is no sin in a believer, no carnal mind, no bent to backsliding, is thus contrary to the word of God, so it is to the experience of his children. These continually feel a heart bent to backsliding, a natural tendency to evil; a proneness to depart from God, and cleave to the things of earth. They are daily sensible of sin remaining in their heart, pride, self-will, unbelief; and of sin cleaving to all they speak and do, even their best actions and holiest duties. Yet at the same time they know they are of God; they cannot doubt of it for a moment. They feel his Spirit clearly witnessing with their spirit, that they are the children of God. They rejoice in God through Christ Jesus, by whom they have now received the atonement. So that they are equally assured, that sin is in them, and that Christ is in them the hope of glory.

8. "But can Christ be in the same heart where sin is?" Undoubtedly he can. Otherwise it never could be saved therefrom. Where the sickness is, there is the physician,

Carrying on his work within,
Striving till he cast out sin.

Christ indeed cannot reign, where sin reigns; neither will he dwell where any sin is allowed. But he is and dwells in the heart of every believer, who is fighting against all sin; although it be not yet purified, according to the purification of the sanctuary.

9. It has been observed before, that the opposite doctrine, "That there is no sin in believers," is quite new in the church of Christ: that it was never heard of for seventeen hundred years, never till it was discovered by Count Zinzendorf. I do not
not remember to have seen the least intimation of it, either in any antient or modern writers: unless perhaps in some of the wild, ranting Antinomians. And these likewise say and unsay, acknowledging there is sin in their flesh, although no sin in their heart. But whatever doctrine is new must be wrong; for the old religion is the only true one. And no doctrine can be right, unless it is the very same which was from the beginning.

10. One argument more against this new, unscriptural doctrine, may be drawn from the dreadful consequences of it. One says, "I felt anger today." Must I reply, "Then you have no faith?" Another says, "I know what you advise is good, but my will is quite averse to it." Must I tell him, "Then you are an unbeliever, under the wrath, and curse of God?" What will be the natural consequence of this? Why, if he believes what I say, his soul will not only be grieved and wounded but perhaps utterly destroyed: inasmuch as he will cast away that confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. And having cast away his shield, how shall he quench the fiery darts of the wicked one? How shall he overcome the world? Seeing "this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. He stands disarmed in the midst of his enemies, open to all their assaults. What wonder then if he be utterly overthrown; if they take him captive at their will? Yea, if he fall from one wickedness to another, and never see good any more?—I cannot therefore by any means receive this assertion, that there is no sin in a believer from the moment he is justified; first, Because it is contrary to the whole tenor of scripture; secondly, because it is contrary to the experience of the children of God. Thirdly, Because it is absolutely new, never heard of in the world till yesterday; and lastly, because it is naturally attended with the most fatal consequences; not only...
grieving those whom God hath not grieved; but perhaps dragging them into everlasting perdition.

IV. 1. However, let us give a fair hearing to the chief arguments, of those who endeavour to support it. And it is, first, from scripture they attempt to prove, that there is no sin in a believer. (They argue thus.) "The scripture, says, Every believer is born of God, is clean, is holy, is sanctified; is pure in heart, has a new heart, is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Now, as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, is altogether evil, so that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit, is altogether good. Again; a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy. He cannot be pure and impure, or have a new and an old heart together. Neither can his soul be unholy, while it is a temple of the Holy Ghost."

I have put this objection as strong as possible, that its full weight may appear. Let us now examine it, part by part. And 1. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit, is altogether good." I allow the text, but not the comment. For the text affirms this, and no more, That every man who is born of the Spirit, is a spiritual man. He is so. But so he may be, and yet not be altogether spiritual. The Christians at Corinth were spiritual men. Else they had been no Christians at all. And yet they were not altogether spiritual. They were full (in part) carnal. "But they were fallen from grace." St. Paul says no. They were even babes in Christ. 2. "But a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy." Indeed he may. So the Corinthians were. Ye are washed, says the apostle, ye are sanctified; namely, cleansed from fornication, idolatry, drunkenness, and all other outward sin, (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.) And yet at the same time, in another sense of the word, they were unsanctified; they
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they were not *washed*, not inwardly *cleansed* from envy, evil-surmilling, partiality. "But sure they had not a new heart and an old heart together." It is most sure, they had. For at that very time, their hearts were *truly*, yet not *entirely* renewed. Their carnal mind was nailed to the cross. Yet it was not wholly destroyed. "But could they be *unholy*, while they were *temples of the Holy Ghost*?" Yes, That they were *temples of the Holy Ghost*, is certain. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) And it is equally certain, they were, in some degree, *carnal*, that is, *unholy*.

2. "However, there is one scripture more which will put the matter out of question. "If any man be [a believer] in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are past away: behold all things are become new," 1 Cor. v. 17. Now certainly a man cannot be a *new creature* and an *old creature* at once." Yes, he may. He may be *partly renewed*, which was the very case of those at Corinth. They were doubtless *renewed in the spirit of their mind*, or they could not have been so much as *babes in Christ*. Yet they had not the whole mind which was *in Christ*, for they *envied* one another. "But it is said expressly, Old things are past away: all things are become new." But we must not so interpret the apostle's words, as to make him *contradict* himself. And if we will make him consistent with himself, the plain meaning of the words is this. His *old judgments* concerning *justification*, holiness, *happiness*, (indeed concerning the things of God in general) is now *past away*. So are his *old desires, designs, and affections, tempers, and conversation*. All these are undeniably become *new*, greatly changed from what they were. And yet, though they are *new*, they are not *wholly new*. Still he tells to his sorrow and shame, remains of the *old man*, too manifest taints of his former tempers and affections, though they cannot *gain any advantage*
advantage over him, as long as he watches unto prayer.

3. This whole argument, "If he is clean, he is clean," "if he is holy, he is holy;" (and twenty more expressions of the same kind may easily be heaped together) is really no better than playing upon words: it is the fallacy of arguing from a particular to a general; of inferring a general conclusion, from particular premises. Propose the sentence entire, and it runs thus: "If he is holy at all, he is holy altogether." That does not follow: every babe in Christ is holy, and yet not altogether so. He is saved from sin; yet not entirely: it remains, though it does not reign. If you think it does not remain (in babes at least, whatever be the case with young men, or fathers) you certainly have not considered the height and depth and length and breadth of the law of God; (even the law of love, laid down by St. Paul in the thirteenth of Corinthians) and that every impiety disconformity to, or deviation from this law, is sin. Now, is there no disconformity to this in the heart or life of a believer? What may be in an adult Christian is another question. But what a stranger must he be to human nature, who can possibly imagine, that this is the case with every babe in Christ?

4. "But believers walk after the Spirit. * Rom. viii. 1. and the Spirit of God dwells in them. Consequently they are delivered from the guilt, the power, or in one word, the being of sin."

These are coupled together, as if they were the same thing. But they are not the same thing. The guilt is one thing, the power another, and the being yet another. That believers are delivered from the guilt and power of sin we allow; that they are delivered from the being of it we deny. Nor does it

* What follows for some pages is an answer to a paper, published in the Christian Magazine, p. 577—582. I am surprized Mr. Dodd, should give such a paper place in his Magazine, which is contrary to our ninth article.
in any wise follow from these texts. A man may have the Spirit of God dwelling in him, and may walk after the Spirit, though he still feels the flesh lusting against the Spirit.

5. "But the church is the body of Christ, Col. i. 24. This implies, that its members are washed from all filthiness. Otherwise it will follow, that Christ and Belial, are incorporated with each other."

Nay, it will not follow from hence, "those who are the mystical body of Christ, still feel the flesh lusting against the Spirit," that Christ has any fellowship with the devil, or with that sin which he enables them to resist and overcome.

6. "But are not Christians come to the heavenly Jerusalem, where nothing defiled can enter?" Heb. xii. 22. Yes! "and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect:" that is,

Earth and heaven all agree;  
All is one great family.

And they are likewise holy and undefiled, while they walk after the Spirit: although sensible, there is another principle in them, and that "these are contrary to each other."

7. "But Christians are reconciled to God. Now this could not be, if any of the carnal mind remained: for this is enmity against God. Consequently no reconciliation can be effected, but by its total destruction."

We "are reconciled to God through the blood of the cross." And in the moment, the ὀρθώμα σαρκός, the corruption of nature, which is enmity with God, is put under our feet, the flesh has no more dominion over us. But it still exists: and it is still in its nature enmity with God, lusting against his Spirit.

8. "But they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24. They have so: yet it remains in them still, and often struggles to break from the cross. "Nay, but
but they have put off the old man with his deeds."

Col. iii. 9. They have: and in the sense above described, "all things are passed away; all things are become new." A hundred texts may be cited to the same effect. And they will all admit of the same answer. "But to say all in one word, Christ gave himself for the church, that it might be holy, and without blemish," Eph. v. 25, 27. And so will it be in the end: but it never was yet, from the beginning to this day.

9. "But let experience speak. All who are justified do at that time find an absolute freedom from all sin." That I doubt: but if they do, do they find it ever after? Else you gain nothing. "If they do not, it is their own fault." That remains to be proved.

10. "But in the very nature of things, can a man have pride in him, and not be proud? Anger, and yet not be angry?"

A man may have pride in him, may think himself in some particulars above what he ought to think, (and so be proud in that particular) and yet not be a proud man in his general character. He may have anger in him, yea and a strong propensity to furious anger, without giving way to it. "But can anger and pride, be in that heart, where only meekness and humility are felt!" No: but some pride and anger may be in that heart, where there is much humility and meekness.

"It avails not to say, These tempers are there, but they do not reign. For sin cannot, in any kind or degree exist where it does not reign. For guilt and power are essential properties of sin. Therefore where one of them is, all must be."

Strange indeed! "Sin cannot in any kind or degree exist where it does not reign." Absolutely contrary this to all experience, all scripture, all common sense. Resentment of an affront is sin. It is aposia, disconformity to the law of love. This has existed in me a thousand times. Yet it did not,
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not, and does not reign. "But guilt and power are essential properties of sin: therefore where one is, all must be." No. In the instance before us, if the resentment I feel is not yielded to, even for a moment, there is no guilt at all, no condemnation from God upon that account. And in this case, it has no power: though it lusteth against the Spirit, it cannot prevail. Here therefore, as in ten thousand instances, there is sin without either guilt or power.

11. "But the supposing sin in a believer is pregnant with every thing frightful and discouraging. It implies the contending with a power, that has the possession of our strength, maintains his usurpation of our hearts, and there prosecutes the war in defiance of our Redeemer." Not so. The supposing sin is in us, does not imply, that it has the possession of our strength. No more than a man crucified has the possession of those that crucify him. As little does it imply, That "sin maintains its usurpation of our hearts." The usurper is dethroned. He remains indeed where he once reigned; but remains in chains. So that he does in some sense "prosecute the war," yet he grows weaker and weaker: while the believer goes on from strength to strength, conquering and to conquer.

12. "I am not satisfied yet. He that has sin in him, is a slave to sin. Therefore you suppose a man to be justified, while he is a slave to sin. Now if you allow, men may be justified while they have pride, anger, or unbelief in them; nay if you aver, These are (at least, for a time) in all that are justified: what wonder that we have so many proud, angry, unbelieving believers?"

I do not suppose any man who is justified, is a slave to sin. Yet I do suppose, sin remains (at least for a time) in all that are justified. "But if sin remains in a believer, he is a sinful man: if pride, for instance, then he is proud: if self will, then he is self-willed; if unbelief, then he is an unbeliever;
unbeliever; consequently, no believer at all. How then does he differ from unbelievers, from unregenerate men?"

This is still mere playing upon words. It means no more, than, if there is sin, pride, self-will in him, then—there is sin, pride, self-will. And this no body can deny. In that sense then he is proud, or self-willed. But he is not proud or self-willed in the same sense that unbelievers are, that is, governed by pride or self-will. Herein he differs from unregenerate men. They obey sin, he does not. Flesh is in them both. But they walk after the flesh: he walks after the Spirit.

"But how can unbelief be in a believer?" That word has two meanings. It means either no faith, or little faith; either the absence of faith, or the weakness of it. In the former sense, unbelief is not in a believer: in the latter, it is in all babes. Their faith is commonly mixt with doubt or fear, that is (in the latter sense) with unbelief. "Why are ye fearful, says our Lord, O ye of little faith." Again, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" You see here was unbelief in believers: little faith and much unbelief.

13. "But this doctrine, That sin remains in a believer: That a man may be in the favour of God, while he has sin in his heart, certainly tends to encourage men in sin." Understand the proposition right, and no such consequence follows. A man may be in God’s favour though he feel sin; but not if he yields to it. Having sin does not forfeit the favour of God; giving way to sin does. Though the flesh in you lust against the Spirit, you may still be a child of God. But if you walk after the flesh, you are a child of the devil. Now this doctrine does not encourage to obey sin, but to resist it with all your might.

V. 1. The sum of all is this. There are in every person, even after he is justified, two contrary principles, nature and grace, termed by St. Paul, the flesh and the Spirit. Hence although even babes
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in Christ are sanctified, yet it is only in part. In a degree, according to the measure of their faith, they are spiritual: yet in a degree they are carnal. Accordingly, believers are continually exhorted to watch against the flesh, as well as the world and the devil. And to this agrees the constant experience of the children of God. While they feel this witness in themselves, they feel a will not wholly resigned to the will of God. They know they are in him, and yet find a heart ready to depart from him, a proneness to evil in many instances, and a backwardness to that which is good. The contrary doctrine is wholly new: never heard of in the church of Christ, from the time of his coming into the world, till the time of Count Zinzendorf. And it is attended with the most fatal consequences. It cuts off all watching against our evil nature, against the Delilah, which we are told is gone, though she is still lying in our bosom. It tears away the shield of weak believers, deprives them of their faith, and so leaves them exposed to all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

2. Let us therefore hold fast the sound doctrine "once delivered to the saints," and delivered down by them with the written word to all succeeding generations: that although we are renewed, cleansed, purified, sanctified, the moment we truly believe in Christ, yet we are not then renewed, cleansed, purified altogether: but the flesh, the evil nature still remains (though subdued) and wars against the Spirit. So much the more, let us use all diligence in "fighting the good fight of faith." So much the more earnestly let us watch and pray, against the enemy within. The more carefully let us take to ourselves, and "put on the whole armour of God:" that although "we wrestle" both "with flesh and blood, and with principalities and powers, and wicked spirits in high places," we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."
SERMON XIV.

THE REPENTANCE of BELIEVERS.

MARK I. 15.

"Repent, and believe the Gospel."

1. It is generally supposed, That Repentance and Faith are only the Gate of Religion; that they are necessary only at the beginning of our Christian Course, when we are setting out in the way to the kingdom. And this may seem to be confirmed by the great Apostle, where exhorting the Hebrew Christians to go on to perfection, he teaches them to leave these first principles of the doctrine of Christ; "not laying again the foundation of repentance from death works, and faith toward God:" which must at least mean, that they should comparatively leave these, that at first took up all their thoughts, in order to "press forward toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

2. And this is undoubtedly true, that there is a Repentance and a Faith, which are more especially necessary at the beginning. A Repentance which is a conviction of our utter sinfulness, and guiltiness, and helplessness: and which precedes our receiving that kingdom of God, which our Lord observes is within us; and a Faith, whereby we receive that kingdom, even righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

3. But notwithstanding this, there is also a Repentance and a Faith, (taking the words in another sense, a sense not quite the same, nor yet entirely different,)
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197 different,) which are requisite after we have believed the gospel: yea, and every subsequent stage of our Christian course, or we cannot run the race which is set before us. And this Repentance and Faith are full as necessary in order to our continuance and growth in grace, as the former Faith and Repentance were in order to our entering into the Kingdom of God.

But in what sense are we to repent and believe, after we are justified? This is an important question, and worthy of being considered with the utmost attention.

I. And first, in what sense are we to repent?

1. Repentance frequently means, an inward change, a change of mind from sin to holiness. But we now speak of it in quite a different sense, as it is one kind of Self-knowledge, the knowing ourselves sinners, even though we know we are children of God.

2. Indeed when we first know this, when we first find redemption thro' the blood of Jesus, when the Love of God is first shed abroad in our hearts, and his kingdom set up therein, it is natural to suppose that we are no longer sinners, that all our sins are not only covered but destroyed. As we do not then feel any evil in our hearts, we readily imagine, none is there. Nay some well-meaning men have imagined this, not only at that time, but ever after: having persuaded themselves, that when they were justified, they were entirely sanctified. Yea, they have laid it down, as a general rule, in spite of Scripture, Reason and Experience: These sincerely believe and earnestly maintain, that all sin is destroyed when we are justified, and that there is no sin in the heart of a believer, but that it is altogether clear from that moment. But though we readily acknowledge, " he that believeth is born of God, and he that is born of God doth not commit sin:" yet we cannot allow that he does not
not feel it within: it does not reign, but it does remain. And a conviction of the sin which remains in our heart, is one great branch of the Repentance we are now speaking of.

3. For it is seldom long, before he who imagined all sin was gone, feels there is still Pride in his heart. He is convinced both that in many respects he has thought of himself more highly than he ought to think, and that he has taken to himself the praise of something he had received, and glorified in it as though he had not received it. And yet he knows, he is in the favour of God. He cannot and ought not to cast away his confidence. The Spirit still witnesses with his Spirit, that he is a child of God.

4. Nor is it long before he feels Self-will in his heart, even a Will contrary to the Will of God. A Will every man must inevitably have, as long as he has an Understanding. This is an essential part of human Nature, indeed of the nature of every intelligent Being. Our blessed Lord himself had a Will as a man: otherwise he had not been a man. But his human Will was invariably subject to the Will of his Father. At all times, and on all occasions, even in the deepest affliction, he could say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." But this is not the case at all times, even with a true believer in Christ. He frequently finds his will more or less exalting itself against the Will of God. He wills something because it is pleasing to nature, which is not pleasing to God. And he wills (is averse from) something, because it is painful to nature, which is the will of God concerning him. (Indeed) suppose he continues in the faith) he fights against it with all his might. But this very things implies, that it really exists, and that he is conscious of it.

5. Now Self-will, as well as Pride, is a species of Idolatry; and both are directly contrary to the love of God. The same observation may be made, concerning
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concerning the Love of the world. But this likewise even true believers are liable to feel in themselves: and every one of them does feel it, more or less, sooner or later, in one branch or another. It is true, when he first passes from death unto life, he desires nothing more but God. He can truly say, “All my desire is unto thee, and unto the remembrance of thy name. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!” But it is not so always. In process of time he will feel again, (though perhaps only for a few moments) either “the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life.” Nay, if he does not continually watch and pray, he may find Lust reviving; yea, and thrusting sore at him that he may fall, till he has scarce any strength left in him. He may feel the assaults of inordinate Affection, yea a strong propensity to “love the creature more than the Creator:” whether it be a child, a parent, a husband or wife, or “the Friend that is as his own soul.” He may feel in a thousand various ways, a desire of earthly things or pleasures. In the same proportion he will forget God, not seeking his happiness in him, and consequently being a “lover of pleasure more than a lover of God.”

6. If he does not keep himself every moment, he will again feel the Desire of the Eye, the desire of gratifying his imagination, with something great, or beautiful, or uncommon. In how many ways does this desire assault the soul? Perhaps with regard to the poorest trifles, such as dress, or furniture: things never designed to satisfy the appetite of an immortal Spirit. Yet how natural is it for us, even after we have “tasted of the powers of the world to come,” to sink again into these foolish, low desires, of things that perish in the using? How hard is it, even for those who know in whom they have believed, to conquer but one branch of the desire of the eye, Curiosity? Constantly to trample
trample it under their feet? To desire nothing, merely because it is new?

7. And how hard is it even for the children of God wholly to conquer the pride of life? St. John seems to mean by this, nearly the same with what the world terms the sense of honour. This is no other than a desire of and the delight in "the honour that cometh of men." A desire and love of praise, and (which is always joined with it) a proportionable fear of dispraise. Nearly allied to this is evil shame: the being ashamed of that wherein we ought to glory. And this is seldom divided from the fear of man, which brings a thousand snares upon the soul. Now where is he even among those that seem strong in faith, who does not find in himself a degree of all these evil tempers? So that even these are but in part crucified to the world: for the evil root still remains in their heart.

8. And do we not feel other tempers, which are as contrary to the love of our neighbour, as these are to the love of God? The love of our neighbour, thinketh no evil: Do not we find any thing of the kind? Do we never find any jealousies, any evil surmisings, any groundless or unreasonable suspicions? He that is clear in these respects let him cast the first stone at his neighbour. Who does not sometimes feel other tempers or inward motions, which he knows are contrary to brotherly love? If nothing of malice, hatred, or bitterness, is there no touch of envy? Particularly toward those who enjoy some (real or supposed) good, which we desire but cannot attain? Do we never find any degree of resentment, when we are injured or affronted? Especially by those whom we peculiarly loved, and whom we had most laboured to help or oblige. Does injustice or ingratitude never excite us to any desire of revenge? Any desire of returning evil for evil, instead of overcoming evil with good?
This also shews, how much is still in our heart, which is contrary to the love of our neighbour.

9. Covetousness in every kind and degree is certainly as contrary to this as to the love of God. Whether φλοτεφης, the love of money, which is too frequently the root of all evils, or πεπεφη, literally, A desire of having more, or increasing in substance. And how few even of the real children of God, are entirely free from both? Indeed one great man, Martin Luther used to say, He "never had any covetousness in him, (not only in his converted state, but) ever since he was born." But if so, I would not scruple to say, He was the only man born of a woman, (except him that was God as well as man) who had not, who was born without. Nay, I believe, never was any born of God, that lived any considerable time after, who did not feel more or less of it many times, especially in the latter sense. We may therefore set it down as an undoubted truth, that covetousness, together with pride, and self-will, and anger, remain in the hearts even of them that are justified.

10. It is their experiencing this which has inclined so many serious persons, to understand the latter part of the seventh chapter to the Romans, not of them that are under the law, that are convinced of sin, which is undoubtedly the meaning of the Apostle, but of them that are under grace, that are "justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ." And it is most certain, they are thus far right: there does still remain even in them that are justified, a mind which is in some measure carnal; (so the Apostle tells even the believers at Corinth, Ye are carnal:) an heart bent to backsliding, still ever ready to depart from the living God; a propensity to pride, self-will, anger, revenge, love of the world, yea and all evil; a root of bitterness, which if the restraint were taken off for a moment, would instantly spring up: Yea, such a depth of corruption, as without clear light from
from God we cannot possibly conceive. And a conviction of all this sin remaining in their hearts, is the repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

11. But we should likewise be convinced, that as sin remains in our hearts, so it cleaves to all our words and actions. Indeed it is to be feared, that many of our words are more than mixt with sin; that they are all sinfull altogether; for such undoubtedly is all uncharitable conversation; all which does not spring from brotherly love: all which does not agree with that golden rule, "What ye would that others should do to you, even so do unto them." Of this kind is all back-biting, all tale-bearing, all whispering, all evil-speaking; that is, repeating the faults of absent persons: For none would have others repeat his faults when he is absent. Now how few are there, even among believers, who are in no degree guilty of this? Who steadily observe the good old rule, "Of the dead and the absent speak nothing but good." And suppose they do, do they likewise abstain from unprofitable conversation? Yet all this is unquestionably sinful, and grieves the holy Spirit of God: yea, and "for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment."

12. But let it be supposed, that they continually watch and pray, and so do not enter into this temptation; that they constantly set a watch before their mouth, and keep the door of their lips: suppose they exercise themselves herein, that all their conversation may be in grace, seasoned with salt, and meet to minister grace to the hearers;" yet do they not daily slide into useless discourse, notwithstanding all their caution? And even when they endeavour to speak for God, are their words pure, free from unholy mixtures? Do they find nothing wrong in their very Intention? Do they speak merely to please God, and not partly to please them-
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Is it wholly to do the will of God, and not their own will also? Or, if they begin with a single eye, do they go on looking unto Jesus, and talking with him all the time they are with their neighbour?" When they are reproving sin, do they feel no anger or unkind temper to the sinner? When they are instructing the ignorant, do they not find any pride, any self-preference? When they are comforting the afflicted, or provoking one another to love and to good works, do they never perceive any inward self-commendation, "Now you have spoke well?" Or any vanity, a desire that others should think so, and esteem them on the account? In some or all these respects, how much sin cleaves to the best conversation even of believers? The conviction of which is another branch of repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

13. And how much sin, if their conscience is thoroughly awake, may they find cleaving to their actions also? Nay, are there not many of these, which though they were such as the world would not condemn, yet cannot be commended, no nor excused, if we judge by the word of God? Are there not many of their actions, which they themselves know, are not to the glory of God? Many, wherein they did no even aim at this, which were not undertaken with an eye to God? And of those that were, are there not many, wherein their eye is not singly fix'd on God? Wherein they are doing their own will, at least as much as his, and seeking to please themselves as much, if not more, than to please God? And while they are endeavouring to do good to their neighbour, do they not feel wrong tempers of various kinds? Hence their good actions, so called, are far from being strictly such, being polluted with such a mixture of evil! Such are their works of mercy! And is there not the same mixture in their works of piety? While they are hearing the word which is able to save their
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their souls, do they not frequently find such thoughts, as make them afraid, lest it should turn to their condemnation, rather than their salvation? Is it not often the same case, while they are endeavouring to offer up their prayers to God, whether in public or private? Nay, while they are engaged in the most solemn service: even while they are at the table of the Lord, what manner of thoughts arise in them? Are not their hearts sometimes wandering to the ends of the earth, sometimes filled with such imaginations, as make them fear, lest all their sacrifice should be an abomination to the Lord. So that they are more ashamed of their best duties, than they were once of their worst sins.

14. Again. How many sins of omission are they chargeable with? We know the words of the apostle, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin." But do they not know a thousand instances, wherein they might have done good, to enemies, to strangers, to their brethren, either with regard to their bodies or their souls, and they did it not? How many omissions have they been guilty of, in their duty towards God? How many opportunities of communicating, of hearing his word, of public or private prayer, have they neglected? So great reason had even that holy man bishop Usher, after all his labours for God, to cry out, almost with his dying breath, "Lord, forgive me my sins of omission."

15. But besides these outward omissions, may they not find in themselves inward defects without number? Defects of every kind: They have not the love, the fear, the confidence, they ought to have toward God. They have not the love which is due to their neighbour, to every child of man: No, nor even that which is due to their brethren, to every child of God; whether those that are at a distance from them, or those with whom they are immediately connected. They have no holy temper in the degree they ought; they are defective in every
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every thing: In a deep consciousness of which they are ready to cry out with Mr. De Renty, "I am a ground all over-run with thorns:" or with Job, "I am vile; I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes."

16. A conviction of their guiltiness, is another branch of that repentance which belongs to the children of God. But this is cautiously to be understood, and in a peculiar sense. For it is certain, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;" that believe in him, and in the power of that faith, "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Yet can they no more bear the strict justice of God now, than before they believed. This pronounces them to be still worthy of death, on all the preceding accounts. And it would absolutely condemn them thereto, were it not for the atoning blood. Therefore they are thoroughly convinced, that they still deserve punishment, although it is hereby turned aside from them. But here there are extremes on one hand and on the other, and few fleer clear of them. Most men strike on one or the other, either thinking themselves condemned, when they are not, or thinking they deserve to be acquitted. Nay, the truth lies between: they still deserve, strictly speaking, only the damnation of hell. But what they deserve does not come upon them, because they "have an advocate with the Father." His life, and death, and intercession, still interpose between them and condemnation.

17. A conviction of their utter helplessness, is yet another branch of this repentance. I mean hereby two things: 1. That they are no more able now of themselves to think one good thought, to form one good desire, to speak one good word, or do one good work, than before they were justified: that they still have no kind or degree of strength of their own; no power either to do good or resist evil; no ability to conquer or even withstand.
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the world, the devil, or their own evil nature. They can, it is certain, do all these things; but it is not by their own strength. They have power to overcome all these enemies; for sin hath no more dominion over them. But it is not from nature, either in whole or in part: it is the mere gift of God; nor is it given all at once, as if they had a flock laid up for many years; but from moment to moment.

18. By this helplessness I mean, Secondly, An absolute inability to deliver ourselves, from that guiltiness or desert of punishment whereof we are still conscious: Yea, and an inability to remove, by all the grace we have, (to say nothing of our natural powers) either the pride, self-will, love of the world, anger, and general proneness to depart from God, which we experimentally know to remain in the heart, even of them that are regenerate; or the evil which in spite of all our endeavours, cleaves to all our words and actions. Add to this, an utter inability wholly to avoid uncharitable, and much more, unprofitable conversation: and an inability to avoid Sins of Omission, or to supply the numberless defects we are convinced of, especially the want of Love and other right tempers, both to God and man.

19. If any man is not satisfied of this, if any believes that whoever is justified, is able to remove these sins out of his heart and life, let him make the experiment. Let him try, whether by the grace he has already received, he can expel Pride, Self-will, or inbred Sin in general. Let him try, whether he can cleanse his words and actions from all mixtures of evil: Whether he can avoid all uncharitable and unprofitable conversation, with all the sins of omission: and lastly, whether he can supply the numberless defects which he still finds in himself. Let him not be discouraged by one or two experiments, but repeat the trial again and again. And the longer he tries, the more deeply will
will he be convinced of his utter helplessness in all these respects.

20. Indeed this is so evident a truth, that well nigh all the children of God scattered abroad, however they differ in other points, yet generally agree in this, that although we may, by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, resist and conquer both outward and inward sin, although we may weaken our enemies day by day, yet we cannot drive them out. By all the grace which is given at justification, we cannot extirpate them. Though we watch and pray ever so much, we cannot wholly cleanse either our hearts or hands. Most sure we cannot, till it shall please our Lord, to speak to our hearts again, to "speak the second time, Be clean." And then only the leprosy is cleansed. Then only the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed, and inbred sin subsists no more. But if there be no such second Change, if there be no instantaneous Deliverance after justification, if there be none but a gradual work of God (that there is a gradual work none denies,) then we must be content as well as we can, to remain full of sin till death. And if so, we must remain guilty till death, continually deserving punishment. For it is impossible, the guilt or desert of punishment should be removed from us, as long as all this sin remains in our hearts, and cleaves to our words and actions. Nay, in rigorous Justice, all we think, and speak, and act, continually increases it.

II. 1. In this sense we are to repent, after we are justified. And till we do so, we can go no farther. For till we are sensible of our disease it admits of no cure. But supposing we do thus repent, then are we called to believe the gospel.

2. And this also is to be understood in a peculiar sense, different from that, wherein we believe in order to Justification. Believe the glad tidings of that great Salvation, which God hath prepared for all people. Believe that he who is "the brightness of his Father's
glory, the express image of his person, is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him." He is able to save you from all the sin that still remains in your heart. He is able to save you from all the sin that cleaves to all your words and actions. He is able to save you from sins of Omission, and to supply whatever is wanting in you. It is true this is impossible with man; but with God Man all things are possible. For what can be too hard for Him, who hath all power in heaven and in earth? Indeed his bare power, to do this, is not a sufficient foundation for our faith, that he will do it, that he will thus exert his power, unless he hath promised it. But this he has done: he has promised it over and over, in the strongest terms. He has given us these exceeding great and precious promises, both in the Old and the New Testament. So we read in the Law, in the most ancient part of the Oracles of God, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul," Deut. xxx. 6. So in the Psalms, "He shall redeem Israel (the Israel of God) from all his sins." So in the Prophet: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you—And I will put my Spirit within you, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses," Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c. So likewise in the New Testament; "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people. And hath raised up an horn of Salvation for us—to perform the oath which he swore to our father Abraham. That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fear. In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life," Luke i. 68. &c.

3. You have therefore good reason to believe, he is not only able, but willing to do this, to "cleanse you from
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from all your filthiness of flesh and spirit; to save you from all your uncleannesses." This is the thing which you now long for; this is the faith which you particularly need, namely, that the great physician, the lover of my soul, is willing to make me clean. But is he willing to do this to-morrow or to-day? Let him answer for himself, "To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts:" If you put it off till to-morrow, you harden your hearts; you refuse to hear his voice. Believe, therefore, that he is willing to save you to-day. He is willing to save you now. "Behold, now is the accepted time." He now faith, Be thou clean! Only believe; and you also will immediately find, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

4. Continue to believe in him "that loved thee, and gave himself for thee, that bore all thy sins in his own body on the tree," and he faveth thee from all condemnation, by his blood continually applied. Thus it is that we continue in a justified state. And when we go on from faith to faith, when we have faith to be cleansed from indwelling sin, to be saved from all our uncleannesses, we are likewise saved from all that guilt, that desert of punishment, which we felt before. So that then we may say not only,

Every moment, Lord, I want
The merit of thy Death:

but likewise, in the full assurance of faith,

Every moment, Lord, I have
The merit of thy Death!

For by that faith in his Life, Death, and Intercession for us, renewed from moment to moment, we are every whit clean; and there is not only now no condemnation for us, but no such desert of punishment as was before, the Lord cleansing both our hearts and lives.

5. By the same Faith, we feel the power of Christ every moment resting upon us, whereby alone we are
are what we are; whereby we are enabled to continue in spiritual life, and without which, notwithstanding all our present holiness, we should be devils the next moment. But as long as we retain our Faith in him, we "draw water out of the wells of Salvation." Leaning on our Beloved, even Christ in us the hope of glory, who dwelleth in our hearts by faith, who likewise is ever interceding for us at the right-hand of God, we receive help from him, to think, and speak, and act, what is acceptable in his sight. Thus does he "prevent them that believe in all their doings, and further them with his continual help, so that all their designs, conversations and actions are begun, continued, and ended in him." Thus doth he "cleanse the thoughts of their hearts, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that they may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."

6. Thus it is, that in the children of God, Repentance and Faith exactly answer each other. By Repentance we feel the sin remaining in our hearts and cleaving to our words and actions. By faith we receive the power of God in Christ, purifying our hearts and cleansing our hands. By Repentance we are still sensible that we deserve punishment for all our tempers and words and actions. By faith we are conscious, that our Advocate with the Father is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually turning aside all condemnation and punishment from us. By Repentance we have an abiding conviction, that there is no help in us. By faith we receive not only mercy, but grace to help in every time of need. Repentance disclaims the very possibility of any other help. Faith accepts all the help we stand in need of, from Him that hath all power in heaven and earth. Repentance says, Without him I can do nothing: Faith says, "I can do all things thro' Christ strengthening me." Through him I can not only overcome, but expel all the enemies of my soul. Through him I can "love the
the Lord my God, with all my heart, mind, soul and strength: yea, and walk in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of my life."

III. 1. From what has been said, we may easily learn the mischievousness of that opinion, that we are wholly sanctified when we are justified: that our hearts are then cleansed from all sin. It is true, we are then delivered (as was observed before) from the dominion of outward sin: and at the same time the power of inward sin is so broken, that we need no longer follow or be led by it. But it is by no means true, that inward sin is then totally destroyed, that the root of pride, self-will, anger, love of the world, is then taken out of the heart, or that the carnal mind and the heart bent to backsliding are entirely extirpated. And to suppose the contrary, is not, as some may think, an innocent, harmless mistake. No: It does immense harm: it entirely blocks up the way to any farther change. For it is manifest, "They that are whole do not need a physician, but they that are sick. If therefore we think we are quite made whole already, there is no room to seek any farther healing. On this supposition, it is absurd to expect a farther deliverance from sin, whether gradual or instantaneous.

2. On the contrary, a deep conviction that we are not yet whole, that our hearts are not fully purified, that there is yet in us a carnal mind, which is still in its nature enmity against God; that a whole body of sin remains in our heart, weakened indeed, but not destroyed, shews beyond all possibility of doubt, the absolute necessity of a farther change. We allow, that at the very moment of justification, we are born again: in that instant we experience that inward change, from darkness into marvellous light; from the image of the brute and the devil, into the image of God; from the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, to the mind which was in Christ Jesus. But are we then entirely changed? Are we wholly
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**wholly** transformed into the image of him that created us? Far from it: We still retain a depth of sin: And it is the consciousness of this, which constrains us to groan for a full deliverance, to him that is mighty to save. Hence it is, that those believers who are not convinced of the deep corruptions of their hearts, or but slightly, and as it were notionally convinced, have little concern about *entire Sanctification*. They may possibly hold the opinion, that such a thing is to be, either at death, or some time, they know not when, before it. But they have no great uneasiness for the want of it, and no great hunger or thirst after it. They cannot, until they know themselves better, until they repent in the sense above described, until God unveils the inbred monster's face, and shews them the real state of their souls. Then only, when they feel the burden, will they groan for deliverance from it. Then and not till then, will they cry out, in the agony of their soul,

> Break off the yoke of inbred sin
> And fully set my spirit free!
> I cannot rest, till pure within,
> Till I am wholly lost in thee!

3. We may learn from hence, secondly, that a deep conviction of our *Demerit* after we are accepted, (which in one sense may be termed *guilt*) is absolutely necessary, in order to our seeing the true value of the atoning Blood; in order to our feeling that we need this as much, after we are justified, as ever we did before. Without this conviction, we cannot but account the blood of the Covenant as a *common thing*, something of which we have not now any great need, seeing all our past sins are blotted out. Yea, but if both our hearts and lives are thus unclean, there is a kind of guilt which we are contracting every moment, and which of consequence, would every moment expose us to fresh condemnation, but that
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He ever lives above,
For us to intercede,
His all-atoning blood
His precious death to plead.

4. We may observe, thirdly, a deep conviction of our utter helplessness, of our total inability to retain any thing we have received, much more to deliver ourselves from the world of iniquity remaining both in our hearts and lives, teaches us truly to live upon Christ by faith, not only as our Priest, but as our King. Hereby we are brought to "magnify him," indeed to "give him all the glory of his grace," to "make him a whole Christ, an entire Saviour," and truly to "set the crown upon his head." These excellent words, as they have been frequently used, have little or no meaning. But they are fulfilled in a strong and deep sense, when we thus go out of ourselves, in order to be swallowed up in him; when we sink into nothing, that he may be all in all. Then his almighty grace, having abolished every high thing which exalted itself against him, every temper, and thought, and word, and work, is brought to the obedience of Christ.

LONDONDERRY,

April 24, 1767.
At the Assizes held before the Honourable Sir Edward Clive, Knight, one of the Judges of his Majesty's Court of Common-Pleas: in St. Paul's Church, Bedford: on Friday March 10, 1758.

ROMANS XIV. 10.

"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

1. How many circumstances concur, to raise the awfulness of the present solemnity? The general concourse of the people of every age, sex, rank, and condition of life, willingly or unwillingly gathered together, not only from the neighbouring, but from distant parts: criminals, speedily to be brought forth, and having no way to escape: officers waiting in their various posts, to execute the orders which shall be given: and the Representative of our gracious Sovereign, whom we so highly reverence and honour. The occasion likewise of this assembly, adds not a little to the solemnity of it; to hear and determine causes of every kind, some of which are of the most important nature: on which depends no less than life or death; death that uncovers the face of eternity! It was doubtless in order to increase the serious sense of these things, and not in the minds of the vulgar only, that the wisdom of our forefathers did not disdain to appoint even several minute circumstances of this solemnity. For these also, by means of the eye or ear, may more deeply affect
feet the heart. And when viewed in this light, trumpets, staves, apparel, are no longer trifling or insignificant, but subservient in their kind and degree to the most valuable ends of society.

2. But as awful as this solemnity is, one far more awful is at hand. For yet, a little while, and "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." "For as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." And in that day, "every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

3. Had all men a deep sense of this, how effectually would it secure the interests of society? For what more forcible motive can be conceived, to the practice of genuine morality? To a steady pursuit of solid virtue? An uniform walking in justice, mercy, and truth? What could strengthen our hands in all that is good, and deter us from all evil, like a strong conviction of this, the Judge standeth at the door: and we are shortly to stand before him?

4. It may not therefore be improper, or unsuitable to the design of the present assembly, to consider,

I. The chief circumstances which will precede our standing before the judgment seat of Christ.

II. The judgment itself, and,

III. A few of the circumstances which will follow it.

1. Let us, in the first place, consider the chief circumstances which will precede our standing before the judgment seat of Christ.

And 1st, "*God will shew signs in the earth beneath:" particularly he will "arise to shake terribly the earth. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage." † "There shall be earthquakes," κατὰ τοὺς (not in divers only, but) "in all places:"

one only, or a few, but in every part of the habitable world: even "such as were not, since men were upon the earth, so mighty earthquakes and so great." In one of these * "every island shall flee away, and the mountains will not be found." Meanwhile all the waters of the terraqueous globe will feel the violence of those concussions: † "the sea and waves roaring," with such an agitation as had never been known before, since the hour that "the fountains of the great deep were broken up," to destroy the earth, which then flooded out of the water and in the water. The air will be all storm and tempest, full of dark vapours and pillars of smoke; resounding with thunder from pole to pole, and torn with ten thousand lightnings. But the commotion will not stop in the region of the air: § "the powers of heaven also shall be shaken. There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars;" those fixed, as well as those that move round them. ** "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. † † "The stars shall withdraw their shining," yea and "fall from heaven," being thrown out of their orbits.

And then shall be heard the universal shout, from all the companies of heaven, followed by the voice of the arch-angel, proclaiming the approach of the Son of God and man, and the trumpet of God, sounding an alarm to all that sleep in the dust of the earth. In consequence of this all the graves shall open, and the bodies of men arise. ¶ "The sea also shall give up the dead which are therein," and every one shall rise with his own body: his own in substance, although so changed in its properties, as we cannot now conceive. ¶ ¶ "For this corruptible will [then] put on incorruption,
and this mortal put on immortality." Yea, death and hades, the invisible world, shall "deliver up the dead that are in them." So that all who ever lived and died since God created man, shall be raised incorruptible and immortal.

2. At the same time "the son of man shall send forth his angels" over all the earth, * "And they shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." And the Lord himself shall "come with clouds, in his own glory, and the glory of his Father, with ten thousand of his saints, even myriads of angels, and + shall sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, and shall set the sheep (the good) on his right hand, and the goats (the wicked) upon the left." Concerning this general assembly it is, that the beloved disciple speaks thus: ¶ "I saw the dead, (all that had been dead) small and great, stand before God. And the books were opened (a figurative expression, plainly referring to the manner of proceeding among men) and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

II. These are the chief circumstances which are recorded in the oracles of God, as preceding the general judgment. We are, secondly, to consider the judgment itself, so far as it hath pleased God to reveal it.

1. The person by whom God will judge the world is his only begotten Son, whose "goings forth are from everlasting, who is God over all, blessed for ever." Unto him, being ¶ "the out-beaming of his Father's glory, the express image of his person," the Father ¶ "hath committed all judgment, because he is the son of man:" because, though he was ¶ "in the form of God, and

* Matt. xxiv. 31. † Matt. xxv. 31, &c. ¶ Rev. xx. 11.
§ Heb. i. 2. ¶ John v. 22, 27. ¶ Phil. ii. 6, 7.

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thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." Yea, because "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, (yet farther) becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him," even in his human nature, and "ordained him," as man, to try the children of men, to be the "judge both of the quick and dead;" both of those who shall be found alive at his coming, and of those who were before gathered to their fathers.

2. The time, termed by the Prophet, "the great and the terrible day," is usually in Scripture filed The day of the Lord. The space from the creation of men upon the earth to the end of all things, is the day of the sons of men: the time that is now passing over us, is properly our day. When this is ended, the day of the Lord will begin. But who can say, how long it will continue? * "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And from this very expression some of the ancient Fathers drew that inference, that, what is commonly called, the Day of Judgment, would be indeed a thousand years. And it seems they did not go beyond the truth: may probably they did not come up to it. For if we consider the number of persons who are to be judged, and of actions which are to be enquired into, it does not appear, that a thousand years will suffice for the transactions of that day. So that it may not improbably comprize several thousand years. But God shall reveal this also in its season.

3. With regard to the place where mankind will be judged, we have no explicit account in Scripture. An eminent writer (but not he alone; many have been of the same opinion) supposes it will be on earth, where the works were done, according to

† 1 Pet. iii. 8.
which they shall be judged, and that God will in order thereto employ the Angels of his strength

"To smooth and lengthen out the boundless space,
"And spread an area for all human race."

But perhaps it is more agreeable to our Lord's own account, of his coming in the clouds, to suppose it will be above the earth, if not "twice a planetary height." And this supposition is not a little favoured, by what St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians. * "The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who remain alive, shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." So that it seems most probable, the great white Throne, will be high exalted above the earth.

4. The persons to be judged, who can count, any more than the drops of rain, or the sands of the sea? "I beheld, (faith St. John,) a great multitude, which no man can number, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." How immense then must be the total multitude, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues? Of all that have sprung from the loins of Adam, since the world began, till time shall be no more? If we admit the common supposition, which seems no ways absurd, that the earth bears at any one time, no less than eight hundred millions, of living souls, men, women and children: what a congregation must all those generations make, who have succeeded each other for seven thousand years?

"Great Xerxes world in arms, proud Cænus's host,
"They all are here: and here they all are lost.
"Their numbers swell to be discern'd in vain;
"Lost as a drop in the unbounded main."

Every man, every woman, every infant of days that ever breathed the vital air, will then hear the voice of the Son of God, and start into life, and pear before him. And this seems to be the natu-
eral import of that expression, the dead, small and great: all universally, all without exception, all of every age, sex, or degree; all that ever lived and died, or underwent such a change as will be equivalent with death. For long before that day, the phantom of human greatness disappears, and sinks into nothing! Even in the moment of death, that vanishes away. Who is rich or great in the grave?

5. And every man shall there give an account of his own works; yea, a full and true account, of all that he ever did while in the body, whether it was good or evil. O what a scene will then be disclosed, in the sight of angels and men! While not the fabled Rhadamanthus, but the Lord God Almighty, who knoweth all things in heaven and earth,

"Cafligatque audique dolos: subigitque fateri
"Quæ quis apud superos, fur o laetatus inani,
"Diflulit in ferment commissa piacula mortem."

Nor will all the actions alone of every child of man, be then brought to open view, but all their words: seeing *" every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." So that "by thy words," as well as works, "thou shalt be justified; or by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Will not God then bring to light every circumstance also, that accompanied every word or action, and if not altered the nature, yet lessened or increased the goodness or badness of them? And how easy is this to him, who is "about our bed, and about our path, and spieth out all our ways?" We know, "the darkness is no darkens to Him, but the night shineth as the day."

6. Yea, he will bring to light not the hidden works of darkness only, but the very thoughts and intents of the heart. And what marvel? For he "searcheth the reins and understandeth all our thoughts. All things are naked and open to the eyes

* Matt. xii. 36, 37.
of Him with whom we have to do. Hell and de-
struction are before him without a covering: How
much more the hearts of the children of men?"

7. And in that day shall be discovered every in-
ward working of every human soul: every appe-
tite, passion, inclination, affection, with the various
combinations of them, with every temper and dis-
position that constitute the whole complex character
of each individual. So shall it be clearly and in-
fallibly seen, who was righteous, and who unrigh-
teous; and in what degree every action, or person,
or character, was either good or evil.

8. "Then the king will say to them upon his
right-hand, come ye blessed of my father. For I
was hungry and ye gave me meat, thirsty and ye
gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in,
naked and ye clothed me. In like manner, all the
good they did upon earth, will be recited before
men and angels: whatsoever they had done either
in word or deed, in the name, or for the sake, of
the Lord Jesus. All their good desires, intentions,
thoughts, all their holy dispositions, will also be
then remembered; and it well appear, that though
they were unknown or forgotten among men, yet
God noted them in his book. All their sufferings
likewise for the name of Jesus, and for the testimony
of a good conscience, will be displayed, unto their
praise from the righteous judge, their honour before
saints and angels, and the increase of that far more
exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

9. But will their evil deeds too, (since if we take
in his whole life, there is not a man on earth that
liveth and sinneth not,) will these be remembered
in that day, and mentioned in the great congrega-
tion? Many believe they will not, and ask, "Would
not this imply, that their sufferings were not at an
end, even when life ended? Seeing they would still
have sorrow, and shame, and confusion of face to
endure?" They ask farther, How can this be
reconciled with God's declaration by the prophet,
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* “If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right; all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be once mentioned unto him.” How is it consistent with the promise which God has made, to all who accept of the gospel-covenant, † “I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sin no more?” Or as the Apostle expresses it, § “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more?”

10. It may be answered, it is apparently and absolutely necessary, for the full display of the glory of God, for the clear and perfect manifestation of his wisdom, justice, power, and mercy, toward the heirs of salvation, that all the circumstances of their life should be placed in open view, together with all their tempers, and all the desires, thoughts, and intents of their hearts. Otherwise how would it appear out of what a depth of sin and misery the grace of God had delivered them? And, indeed, if the whole lives of all the children of men were not manifestly discovered, the whole amazing contexture of divine providence could not be manifested: nor should we yet be able in a thousand instancess, “To justify the ways of God to man.”

Unless our Lord’s words were fulfilled in their utmost sense, without any restriction or limitation, ¶ “There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, or hid that shall not be known,” abundance of God’s dispensations under the sun would still appear without their reasons. And then only when God hath brought to light all the hidden things of darkness, whosoever were the actors therein, will it be seen that wise and good were all his ways: that he saw through the thick cloud, and governed all things by the wise counsel of his own will; that nothing was left to the chance or the caprice of

* Ezek, xviii. 21, 22. † Jer. xxxi. 34.
men, but God disposed all strongly and sweetly, and wrought all into one connected chain of justice, mercy and truth.

11. And in the discovery of the divine perfections, the righteous will rejoice with joy unspeakable; far from feeling any painful sorrow or shame, for any of those past transgressions, which were long since blotted out as a cloud, washed away by the blood of the Lamb. It will be abundantly sufficient for them, that "all the transgressions which they had committed, shall not be once mentioned unto them, (to their disadvantage; that) their sins and transgressions and iniquities shall be remembered no more," to their condemnation. This is the plain meaning of the promise: and this all the children of God shall find true, to their everlasting comfort.

12. After the righteous are judged, the king will turn to them upon his left hand, and they shall also be judged, every man according to his works. But not only their outward works will be brought into the account, but all the evil words which they have ever spoken; yea, all the evil desires, affections, tempers, which have had a place in their souls; and all the evil thoughts or designs which were ever cherished in their hearts. The joyful sentence of acquittal will then be pronounced upon those upon the right hand: the dreadful sentence of condemnation upon those on the left: both of which must remain fixt and unmoveable, as the throne of God.

III. 1. We may, in the third place, consider a few of the circumstances which will follow the general judgment. And the first is the execution of the sentence pronounced on the evil and on the good. "These shall go away into eternal punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." It should be observed, it is the very same word which is used, both in the former and the latter clause: it follows, that either the punishment lasts for ever, or the reward too will come to an end. No, never, unless
unles God could come to an end, or his mercy and
truth could fail. " Then shall the righteous shine
forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father,
and shall drink of those rivers of pleasure which
are at God's right hand for evermore. But here
all description falls short; all human language fails!
Only one who is caught up into the third heaven,
can have a just conception of it. But even such an
one cannot express what he hath seen: these things
it is not possible for man to utter.

The wicked, meantime, shall be turned into hell,
even all the people that forgot God. They will be
"punished with everlasting destruction, from the
presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his
power." They will be "cast into the lake of fire
burning with brimstone," originally "prepared for
the devil and his angels;" where they will gnaw
their tongues for anguish and pain, they will curse
God and look upward: there the dogs of hell, pride,
malice, revenge, rage, horror, despair, continually
devour them. "There they have no rest, day
or night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth
for ever and ever. For their worm dieth not, and
their fire is not quenched."

2. Then the heavens will be shriveled up as a
parchment scroll, and pass away with a great noise:
they will *"flee from the face of him that sitteth
on the throne, and there will be found no place for
them." The very manner of their passing away is
disclosed to us by the Apostle Peter: † "In the
day of God, the heavens being on fire, shall be
dissolved." The whole beautiful fabric will be over-
thrown by that raging element, the connection of
all its parts destroyed, and every atom torn asunder
from the others. § "The earth also, and the works
that are therein, shall be burnt up." The enormous
works of nature, the everlasting hills, mountains
that have defied the rage of time, and flood un-
moved so many thousand years, will sink down in

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fiery ruin. How much less will the works of art, though of the most durable kind, the utmost efforts of human industry, tombs, pillars, triumphal arches, castles, pyramids, be able to withstand the flaming conqueror. All, all will perish, vanish away, like a dream when one awaketh!

3. It has indeed been imagined by some great and good men, that as it requires the same Almighty power, to annihilate things as to create, to speak into nothing or out of nothing: so no part of, no atom in the universe, will be totally or finally destroyed. Rather, they suppose, that as the last operation of fire, which we have yet been able to observe, is to reduce into glass, what by a smaller force it had reduced to ashes: so in the day God hath ordained, the whole earth, if not the material heavens also, will undergo this change, after which the fire can have no farther power over them. And they believe this is intimated by that expression in the Revelation made to St. John, *"Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto chryftal". We cannot now either affirm or deny this: but we shall know hereafter.

4. If it be enquired by the scoffers, the minute philosophers, How can these things be? Whence should come such an immense quantity of fire as would consume the heavens and the whole terraqueous globe? We would beg leave, first, to remind them, that this difficulty is not peculiar to the Christian system. The same opinion almost universally obtained among the unbigotted heathens. So one of those celebrated free-thinkers speaks according to generally received sentiment;

"Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur, affore tempus,
"Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia celi
"Ardeat, & mundi moles operafo labores."

But, secondly, it is easy to answer, even from our slight and superficial acquaintance with natural things, that there are abundant magazines of fire ready prepared, and treasured up against the day of the

* Rev. iv. 6.
the Lord. How soon may a comet, commissioned by him, travel down from the most distant parts of the universe? And were it to fix upon the earth, in its return from the sun, when it is some thousand times hotter than a red-hot cannon-ball, who does not see what must be the immediate consequence? But, not to ascend so high as the ethereal heavens, might not the same lightnings which give shine to the world, if commanded by the Lord of nature, give ruin and utter destruction? Or, to go no farther than the globe itself: who knows what huge reservoirs of liquid fire are from age to age contained in the bowels of the earth? Ætna, Hecla, Vesuvius, and all the other Volcanoes that belch out flames and coals of fire, what are they, but so many proofs and mouths of those fiery furnaces? And at the same time so many evidences, that God hath in readiness wherewith to fulfil his word. Yea, were we to observe no more than the surface of the earth, and the things that surround us on every side, it is most certain, (as a thousand experiments prove, beyond all possibility of denial,) that we ourselves, our whole bodies are full of fire, as well as every thing round about us. Is it not easy, to make this ethereal fire visible to the naked eye? And to produce thereby the very same effects on combustible matter, which are produced by culinary fire? Needs there then any more, than for God to unloose that secret chain, whereby this irresistible agent is now bound down, and lies quiescent in every particle of matter? And how soon would it tear the univerfal frame in pieces, and involve all in one common ruin?

5. There is one circumstance more which will follow the judgment, that deserves our serious consideration. * "We look, (says the Apostle,) according to his promise, for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The promise stands in the prophecy of Isaiah, † "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. And

* 2 Pet. iii. 13. † Isaiah lv. 17.
the former shall not be remembered:" so great shall the glory of the latter be. These St. John did behold in the visions of God. * "I saw (faith he) a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." And only righteousness dwelt therein: Accordingly he adds, † "And I heard a great voice from [the third] heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God!" Of necessity therefore they will all be happy: § "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain. || There shall be no more curse; but they shall see his face;" shall have the nearest access to, and thence the highest resemblance of him. This is the strongest expression in the language of Scripture, to denote the most perfect happiness. "And his name shall be on their foreheads;" they shall be openly acknowledged as God's own property; and his glorious nature shall most visibly shine forth in them. "And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."

IV. It remains only, to apply the preceding considerations to all who are here before God. And are we not directly led so to do, by the present solemnity, which so naturally points us to that day, when the Lord will judge the world in righteousness? This therefore, by reminding us of that more awful season, may furnish many lessons of instruction. A few of these I may be permitted just to touch on. May God write them on all our hearts!

* Rev. xx. 1. † Ibid. ver. 3. § Rev. xx. 4. || Ibid. xxii. 3, 4.
And, first, how beautiful are the feet of those who are sent by the wise and gracious providence of God, to execute justice on earth, to defend the injured, and punish the wrong-doer! Are they not the Ministers of God to us for good, the grand supporters of the public tranquility, the patrons of innocence and virtue, the great security of all our temporal blessings? And does not every one of these represent not only an earthly prince, but the Judge of the earth? Him whose "Name is written upon his thigh, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!" O that all these sons of the right hand of the Most High, may be holy as he is holy! Wise with the wisdom that sitteth by his throne, like him who is the eternal Wisdom of the Father! No respecters of persons, as he is none; but rendering to every man according to his works: like him inflexibly, inexorably just, though pitiful and of tender mercy! So shall they be terrible indeed to them that do evil, as not bearing the sword in vain. So shall the laws of our land have their full use and due honour, and the throne of our King be still established in righteousness.

2. Ye truly honourable men, whom God and the king have commissioned, in a lower degree to administer justice: may not ye be compared to those ministering spirits who will attend the judge coming in the clouds? May you, like them, burn with love to God and man! May you love righteousness and hate iniquity! May ye all minister in your several spheres (such honour hath God given you also!) to them that shall be heirs of salvation, and to the glory of your great Sovereign! May ye remain the establishers of peace, the blessing and ornaments of your country, the protectors of a guilty land, the Guardian Angels of all that are round about you!

3. You, whose office it is to execute what is given you in charge by him before whom you stand; how nearly are you concerned to resemble those,
those, that stand before the face of the son of man? Those servants of his that do his pleasure, and hearken to the voice of his words. Does it not highly import you, to be as uncorrupt as them? To approve yourselves the servants of God? To do justly and love mercy; to do to all as ye would they should do to you? So shall that great Judge, under whose eye you continually stand, say to you also, "Well done, good and faithful servants: enter ye into the joy of your Lord!"

4. Suffer me to add a few words to all of you who are this day present before the Lord. Should not you bear it in your minds all the day long, that a more awful day is coming? A large assembly this! But what is it to that which every eye will then behold, the general assembly of all the children of men that ever lived on the face of the whole earth? A few will stand at the judgment seat this day, to be judged touching what shall be laid to their charge. And they are now reserved in prison, perhaps in chains, till they are brought forth to be tried and sentenced. But we shall all, I that speak, and you that hear, "Stand at the judgment seat of Christ!" And we are now reserved on this earth, which is not our home, in this prison of flesh and blood, perhaps many of us, in chains of darkness too, till we are ordered to be brought forth. Here a man is questioned concerning one or two facts, which he is supposed to have committed. There we are to give an account of all our works, from the cradle to the grave; of all our words, of all our desires and tempers; all the thoughts and intents of our hearts; of all the use we have made in our various talents, whether of mind, body or fortune, till God said, "Give an account of thy stewardship: for thou mayest be no longer steward." In this court, it is possible some who are guilty, may escape for want of evidence. But there is no want of evidence in that court. All men with whom you had the most secret intercourse, who were privy...
to all your designs and actions, are ready before your face. So are all the spirits of darkness, who inspired evil designs, and assisted in the execution of them. So are all the angels of God, those eyes of the Lord, that run to and fro over all the earth, who watched over your souls, and laboured for your good, so far as you would permit. So is your own conscience, a thousand witnesses in one, now no more capable of being either blinded or silenced, but constrained to know and to speak the naked truth, touching all your thoughts, and words, and actions. And is conscience as a thousand witnesses? yea, but God is as a thousand consciences! O who can stand before the face of the great God, even our Saviour, Jesus Christ!

See, see! He cometh! He maketh the clouds his chariots! He rideth upon the wings of the wind! A devouring fire goeth before him, and after him, a flame burneth! See, he sitteth upon his throne, cloathed with light as with a garment, arrayed with majesty and honour! Behold his eyes are as a flame of fire, his voice as the sound of many waters!

How will ye escape? Will ye call to the mountains to fall on you, the rocks to cover you? Alas, the mountains themselves, the rocks, the earth, the heavens, are just ready to flee away! Can ye prevent the sentence? Wherewith? With all the substance of thy house, with thousands of gold and silver? Blind wretch! Thou camest naked from thy mother's womb, and more naked into eternity. Hear the Lord, the Judge! "Come ye blessed of my Father! inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Joyful sound! How widely different from that voice, which echoes through the expanse of heaven; "Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" And who is he, that can prevent or retard the full execution of either sentence? Vain hope! Lo, Hell is moved from beneath, to receive those who are ripe for destruction! And the ever-
The Great Antize.

lasting doors lift up their heads, that the heirs of glory may come in.

5. "What manner of persons then ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?" We know it cannot be long, before the Lord will descend with the voice of the Archangel, and the trumpet of God; when every one of us shall appear before him, and give account of his own works. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for these things, [seeing ye know, He will come and will not tarry,] be diligent that ye may be found of him, in peace, without spot and blameless." Why should ye not? Why should one of you be found, on the left hand, at his appearing? He will not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; by repentance, to faith, in a bleeding Lord; by faith, to spotless love, to the full image of God, renewed in the heart, and producing all holiness of conversation. Can you doubt of this, when you remember, the Judge of all, is likewise the Saviour of all? Hath he not bought you with his own blood, that ye might not perish, but have everlasting life? O make proof of his mercy, rather than his justice! Of his love, rather than the thunder of his power! He is not far from every one of us: and he is now come, not to condemn, but to save the world. He standeth in the midst! Sinner, doth he not now, even now, knock at the door of thy heart? O that thou mayest know, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! O that ye may now give yourselves to him who gave himself for you, in humble faith, in holy, active, patient love! So shall ye rejoice with exceeding joy in his day, when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.
SERMON XVI.

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

MALACHI III. 7,

"Ye are gone away from mine Ordinances and have not kept them."

1. BUT are there any ordinances now, since life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel? Are there under the Christian dispensation, any means ordained of God, as the usual channels of his grace? This question could never have been proposed, in the Apostolical Church, unless by one who openly avowed himself to be an Heathen; the whole body of Christians being agreed, that Christ hath ordained certain outward means, for conveying his grace into the souls of men. Their constant practice set this beyond all dispute; for so long as "all that believe were together, and had all things common," (Acts ii. 44.) "they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the Apostles, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers," ver. 42.

2. But in process of time, when the love of many waxed cold, some began to mistake the means for the end, and to place Religion, rather in doing those outward works, than in a heart renewed after the image of God. They forgot, that "the end of every commandment is love, out of a pure heart, with faith unfeigned:" the loving the Lord their God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves; and the being purified from pride, anger, and evil desire, by a faith of the operation of God. Others seemed to imagine, that though Religion did
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did not principally consist in these outward means, yet there was something in them wherewith God was well pleased, something that would still make them acceptable in his sight, though they were not exact in the weightier matters of the law, in Justice, Mercy, and the Love of God.

3. It is evident, in those who abused them thus, they did not conduce to the end for which they were ordained. Rather, the things which should have been for their health, were to them an occasion of falling. They were so far from receiving any blessing therein, that they only drew down a curse upon their head: so far from growing more heavenly in heart and life, that they were twofold more the children of hell than before. Others clearly perceiving, that these means did not convey the grace of God to those children of the devil, began from this particular case to draw a general conclusion, "That they were not means of conveying the grace of God."

4. Yet the number of those who abused the ordinances of God, was far greater than of those who despised them, till certain men arose, not only of great understanding, (sometimes joined with considerable learning) but who likewise appeared to be men of love, experimentally acquainted with true, inward Religion. Some of these were burning and shining lights, persons famous in their generations, and such as had well deserved of the Church of Christ, for standing in the gap against the overflowings of ungodliness.

It cannot be supposed, that these holy and venerable men, intended any more at first, than to shew that outward Religion is nothing worth, without the Religion of the heart: that God "is a Spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." That therefore external worship is lost labour, without a heart devoted to God: that the outward ordinances of God then profit much, when they advance inward holiness.
but when they advance it not, are unprofitable and void, are lighter than vanity: yea, that when they are used, as it were, in the place of this, they are an utter abomination to the Lord.

5. Yet it is not strange, if some of these, being strongly convinced, of that horrid profanation of the ordinances of God, which had spread itself over the whole Church, and well nigh driven true Religion out of the world; in their fervent zeal for the glory of God, and the recovery of souls; from that fatal delusion, spake as if outward Religion were absolutely nothing, as if it had no place in the Religion of Christ. It is not surprising at all, if they should not always have expressed themselves with sufficient caution. So that unwary hearers might believe, they condemned all outward means, as altogether unprofitable; and as not designed of God to be the ordinary channels of conveying his grace into the souls of men.

Nay, it is not impossible, some of these holy men did at length themselves fall into this opinion: in particular, those who, not by choice, but by the Providence of God, were cut off from all these ordinances: perhaps wandering up and down, having no certain abiding-place, or dwelling in dens and caves of the earth. These experiencing the grace of God in themselves, though they were deprived of all outward means, might infer, that the same grace would be given to them, who of set purpose abstained from them.

6. And Experience shews, how easily this notion spreads, and infinuates itself into the minds of men: especially of those who are thoroughly awakened out of the sleep of death, and begin to feel the weight of their sins, a burthen too heavy to be borne. These are usually impatient of their present state, and trying every way to escape from it. They are always ready to catch at any new proposal of ease or happiness. They have probably tried most outward means, and found no ease
in them: it may be, more and more of remorse and fear, and sorrow and condemnation. It is easy therefore to persuade these, that it is better for them to abstain from all those means. They are already weary of striving (as it seems) in vain, of labouring in the fire: and are therefore glad of any pretence to cast aside that wherein their soul has no pleasure; to give over the painful strife, and sink down into an indolent inactivity.

II. 1. In the following Discourse, I propose to examine at large, Whether there are any means of grace?

By means of grace I understand, outward signs, words or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace.

I use this expression, "Means of grace," because I know none better, and because it has been generally used in the Christian Church for many ages: in particular, by our own Church, which directs us to bless God, both for the "Means of grace and hope of glory; and teaches us that a Sacrament is "An outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same."

The chief of these means are prayer, whether in secret or with the great congregation; searching the scriptures (which implies reading, hearing and meditating thereon) and receiving the Lord's Supper, eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of Him: and these we believe to be ordained of God, as the ordinary channels of conveying his grace to the souls of men.

2. But we allow, That the whole value of the means, depends on their actual subservience to the end of Religion; that consequently all these means when separate from the end, are less than nothing and vanity; that if they do not actually conduce to the knowledge and love of God, they are not acceptable
ceptable in his sight: yea, rather, they are an abomina-
nation before him; a stink in his nostrils; he is
weary to bear them. Above all, if they are used
as a kind of Commutation for the Religion they were
designed to subserve, it is not easy to find words
for the enormous folly and wickedness, of thus
turning God's arms against himself; of keeping
Christianity out of the heart by those very means,
which were ordained for the bringing it in.

3. We allow likewise, that all outward means
whatever, if separate from the Spirit of God, can-
not profit at all, cannot conduce in any degree
either to the knowledge or love of God. With-
out controversy, the help that is done upon earth,
He doth it himself. It is He alone who by his own
almighty power, worketh in us what is pleasing in
his sight. And all outward things, unless he work
in them and by them, are mere weak and beggarly
elements. Whosoever therefore imagines, there is
any intrinsic power, in any means whatsoever, does
greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither
the power of God. We know that there is no in-
herent power, in the words that are spoken in pray-
er; in the letter of Scripture read, the found there-
of heard, or the bread and wine received in the
Lord's Supper: but that it is God alone who is the
Giver of every good gift, the Author of all grace;
that the whole power is of him, whereby thro' any
of these, there is any blessing conveyed to our souls.
We know likewise, that he is able to give the
same grace though there were no means on the face
of the earth. In this sense we may affirm, that
"with regard to God, there is no such thing as
means: seeing he is equally able to work whatso-
ever pleaseth him, by any, or by none at all.

4. We allow farther, That the use of all means
whatever, will not atone for one sin; that it is the
blood of Christ, alone, whereby any sinner can be
reconciled to God; there being no other propitia-
tion for our sins, no other fountain for sin and un-
cleanness.
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eaness. Every believer in Christ is deeply convinced, that there is no merit, but in Him: that there is no merit in any of his own works; not in uttering the prayer, or searching the Scripture, or hearing the Word of God, or eating of that bread and drinking of that cup. So that if no more be intended by the expression some have used, “Christ is the only means of grace,” than this, That he is the only meritorious cause of it, it cannot be gain-said by any who know the grace of God.

5. Yet once more. We allow (though it is a melancholy truth) that a large proportion of those who are called Christians, do to this day abuse the means of grace, to the destruction of their souls. This is doubtless the case with all those who rest content, in the form of godliness without the power. Either they fondly presume, they are Christians already, because they do thus and thus; although Christ was never yet revealed in their hearts, nor the love of God shed abroad therein: or else they suppose, They shall infallibly be so, barely because they use these means: idly dreaming (though perhaps hardly conscious thereof) either that there is some kind of power therein, whereby sooner or later (they know not when) they shall certainly be made holy: or that there is a sort of merit in using them, which will surely move God to give them holiness, or accept them without it.

6. So little do they understand that great foundation of the whole Christian building. *By grace ye are saved.* Ye are saved from your sins, from the guilt and power thereof, ye are restored to the favour and image of God, not for any works, merits, or deservings of yours, but by the free grace, the mere mercy of God, through the merits of his well-beloved Son. Ye are thus saved, not by any power, wisdom, or strength, which is in you, or in any other creature: but merely through the grace
or power of the Holy Ghost, which worketh all in all.

7. But the main question remains. We know this salvation is the gift and the work of God. But how (may one say, who is convinced he hath it not) may I attain thereto? If you say, "Believe and thou shalt be saved:" he answers, True; but how shall I believe? You reply, Wait upon God.—Well. But how am I to wait? In the means of grace, or out of them? Am I to wait for the grace of God which bringeth salvation, by using these means, or by laying them aside?

8. It cannot possibly be conceived, that the Word of God should give no direction in so important a point: or that the Son of God, who came down from heaven for us men and for our salvation, should have left us undetermined with regard to a question, wherein our salvation is so nearly concerned.

And in fact, he hath not left us undetermined; he hath shewn us the way wherein we should go. We have only to consult the Oracles of God, to enquire what is written there? And if we simply abide by their decision, there can no possible doubt remain.

III. 1. According to this, according to the decision of holy writ, all who desire the grace of God, are to wait for it, in the means which he hath ordained; in using, not laying them aside.

And first: all who desire the grace of God, are to wait for it in the way of prayer. This is the express direction of our Lord himself. In his sermon on the mount, after explaining at large wherein Religion consists, and describing the main branches of it, he adds, Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened," Matt. vii. 7, 8.

Here
Here we are in the plainest manner directed to ask, in order to, or as a means of receiving; to seek in order to find, the grace of God, the pearl of great price; and to knock, to continue asking and seeking, if we would enter into his kingdom.

2. That no doubt might remain, our Lord labours this point in a more peculiar manner. He appeals to every man's own heart. "What man is there of you, who if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven," the Father of angels and men, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, "give good things to them that ask him?" ver. 9, 10. 11. Or, as he expresses himself on another occasion, including all good things in one, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke xi. 13. It should be particularly observed here, that the persons directed to ask, had not then received the holy Spirit. Nevertheless our Lord directs them to use this means, and promises that it should be effectual; that upon asking they should receive the holy Spirit, from him whose mercy is over all his works.

3. The absolute necessity of using this means, if we would receive any gift from God, yet farther appears from that remarkable passage which immediately precedes these words: "And he said unto them [whom he had just been teaching how to pray] which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and shall say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves:—and he from within shall answer, Trouble me not;—I cannot rise and give thee: I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you," Luke xi. 5, 7, 8, 9. "Though
"Though he will not give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." How could our blessed Lord more plainly declare, That we may receive of God, by this means, by importunately asking, what otherwise we shall not receive at all.

4. "He spoke also another parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" till through this means they should receive of God, whatsoever petition they asked of him. "There was in a city a Judge which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for awhile; but afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, left by her continual coming she weary me," Luke xviii. 1—5. The application of this our Lord himself hath made. "Hear what the unjust Judge saith!" Because she continues to ask, because she will take no denial, therefore I will avenge her. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them speedily,"—if they pray and faint not.

5. A direction equally full and express, to wait for the blessings of God in private prayer, together with a positive promise, that by this means we shall obtain the request of our lips, he hath given us in those well-known words: "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly," Matt. vi. 6.

6. If it be possible for any direction to be more clear, it is that which God hath given us by the Apostle, with regard to prayer of every kind, public or private, and the blessing annexed thereto. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally,"—if they ask; otherwise
wife ye have not, because ye ask not, Jam. iv. 2.) and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him,” chap. i. 5.

If it be objected, "But this is no direction to unbelievers; to them who know not the pardoning grace of God: for the Apostle adds, "But let him ask in faith: otherwise, let him not think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." I answer, The meaning of the word faith in this place, is fixed by the Apostle himself, (as if it were on purpose to obviate this objection) in the words immediately following: Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, nothing doubting, μὴ διακρίνομαι. Not doubting but God heareth his prayer, and will fulfil the desire of his heart.

The gross, blasphemous absurdity of supposing faith in this place to be taken in the full Christian meaning, appears hence: it is supposing the Holy Ghost to direct a man who knows he has not this faith (which is here termed wisdom) to ask it of God, with a positive promise that it shall be given him; and then immediately to subjoin, That it shall not be given him, unless he have it before he asks for it! But who can bear such a supposition? From this Scripture, therefore, as well as those cited above, we must infer, that all who desire the grace of God, are to wait for it in the way of prayer.

7. Secondly, All who desire the grace of God, are to wait for it in searching the Scriptures.

Our Lord's direction with regard to the use of this means, is likewise plain and clear. Search the Scriptures, faith he to the unbelieving Jews,—for they testify of me, John v. 39. And for this very end did he direct them to search the Scriptures, that they might believe in him.

The objection, “That this is not a command, but only an assertion, that they did search the Scriptures,” is shamelessly false. I desire those who urge it, to let us know, how a command can be

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more clearly expressed, than in those terms, ἐπιγραφάς. It is as peremptory as so many words can make it.

And what a blessing from God attends the use of this means, appears from what is recorded concerning the Bereans; who after hearing St. Paul, "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so? Therefore many of them believed;" found the grace of God, in the way which he had ordained, Acts xvii. 12, 13.

It is probable, indeed, that in some of those who had received the word with all readiness of mind, faith came (as the same Apostle speaks) by hearing, and was only confirmed by reading the Scriptures. But it was observed above, that under the general term of searching the Scriptures, both hearing, reading, and meditating are contained.

8. And that this is a means whereby God not only gives, but also confirms and increases true wisdom, we learn from the words of St. Paul to Timothy: "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 15. The same truth (namely, that this is the great means God has ordained for conveying his manifold grace to man) is delivered, in the fullest manner that can be conceived, in the words which immediately follow: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God; [consequently, all Scripture is infallibly true;] and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; to the end that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," ver. 16, 17.

9. It should be observed, that this is spoken primarily and directly, of the Scriptures which Timothy had known from a child; which must have been those of the Old Testament, for the New was not then wrote. How far then was St. Paul (though he was not a whit behind the very chief of the
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The Apostles, nor therefore, I presume, behind any man now upon earth) from making light of the Old Testament! Behold this, left ye one day wonder and perish, ye who make so small account of one half of the Oracles of God! Yea, and that half, of which the Holy Ghost expressly declares, that it is profitable, as a means ordained of God, for this very thing, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: to the end the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

10. Nor is this profitable only for the men of God, for those who walk already in the light of his countenance; but also for those who are yet in darkness, seeking him whom they know not. Thus St. Peter, we have also a more sure word of prophecy: literally, and we have the prophetic word more sure: Kai ἡγομον βεβαιοτέρω τὸν φορημένον λόγον, confirmed by our being eye-witnesses of his Majesty, and hearing the voice which came from the excellent Glory) unto which (prophetic word; so he stiles the holy Scriptures) ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your hearts. 2 Pet. i. 19. Let all, therefore, who desire that day to dawn upon their hearts, wait for it in searching the Scriptures.

11. Thirdly, All who desire an increase of the grace of God, are to wait for it in partaking of the Lord's Supper. For this also is a direction himself hath given. "The same night in which he was betrayed, he took bread, and brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, [that is, the sacred sign of my body] this do in remembrance of me. Likewise, he took the cup, saying, This cup is the New Testament, [or covenant, in my blood, [the sacred sign of that covenant] this do ye—in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come," 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c. Ye openly exhibit...
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the fame, by these visible signs, before God, and angels, and men. Ye manifest your solemn remembrance of his death, till he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Only let a man first examine himself, whether he understands the nature and design of this holy institution, and whether he really desire to be himself made conformable to the death of Christ: and so, nothing doubting, "let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, ver. 28.

Here then the direction first given by our Lord, is expressly repeated by the Apostle. Let him eat; let him drink: (ἐπιτόπου ἐλθὼν, both in the imperative mood.) Words not implying a bare permission only, but a clear, explicit command: a command to all those, either who already are filled with peace and joy in believing, or who can truly say, "The remembrance of our sins is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable."

12. And that this is also an ordinary, stated means of receiving the grace of God, is evident from those words of the Apostle, which occur in the preceding chapter. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion, [or communication,] of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.) Is not the eating of that bread, and the drinking of that cup, the outward, visible means, whereby God conveys into our souls all that spiritual grace, that righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which were purchased by the body of Christ once broken, and the blood of Christ once shed for us? Let all, therefore, who truly desire the grace of God, eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

IV. 1. But as plainly as God hath pointed out the way, wherein he will be enquired after, innumerable are the objections which men, wise
in their own eyes, have from time to time raised against it. It may be needful to consider a few of these; not because they are of weight in themselves, but because they have so often been used, especially of late years, to turn the lame out of the way; yea, to trouble and subvert those who did run well, while Satan appeared as an angel of light.

The first and chief of these is, "You cannot use these means (as you call them) without trusting in them." I pray, where is this written? I expect you should shew me plain Scripture for your assertion. Otherwise I dare not receive it, because I am not convinced, that you are wiser than God.

If it really had been as you assert, it is certain Christ must have known it. And if he had known it, he would surely have warned us, he would have revealed it long ago. Therefore because he has not, because there is no tittle of this in the whole revelation of Jesus Christ, I am as fully assured your assertion is false, as that this revelation is of God.

"However, leave them off for a short time, to see whether you trusted in them or no." So I am to disobey God, in order to know, whether I trust in obeying him! And do you avow this advice? Do you deliberately teach, to do evil, that good may come? O tremble at the sentence of God against such Teachers! Their damnation is just.

"Nay, if you are troubled, when you leave them off, it is plain, you trusted in them." By no means. If I am troubled when I wilfully disobey God, it is plain his Spirit is still striving with me. But if I am not troubled at wilful sin, it is plain, I am given up to a reprobate mind.

But what do you mean by "Trusting in them?" Looking for the blessing of God therein? Believing, that if I wait in this way I shall attain, what otherwise I should not? So I do. And so I will,
God being my helper, even to my life's end. By
the grace of God I will thus trust in them, till the
day of my death; that is, I will believe, that
whatever God hath promised, he is faithful also to
perform. And seeing he hath promised to bless
me in this way, I trust it shall be according to his
word.

2. It has been, secondly, objected, "This is
seeking salvation by works." Do you know the
meaning of the expression you use? What is,
"seeking salvation by works?" In the writings of
St. Paul, it means; either seeking to be saved by
observing the ritual works of the Mosaic law, or
expecting salvation for the sake of our own works,
by the merit of our own righteousness. But how
is either of these implied, in my waiting in the
way God has ordained, and expecting that he will
meet me there, because he has promised so to do?
I do expect, that he will fulfil his word, that he
will meet and bless me in this way. Yet not for
the sake of any works which I have done, nor for
the merit of my righteousness: but merely through
the merits, and sufferings, and love of his Son, in
whom he is always well-pleased.

3. It has been vehemently objected, thirdly,
"That Christ is the only means of grace." I an-
swer, this is mere playing upon words. Explain your
term, and the objection vanishes away. When
we say, "Prayer is a means of grace." We un-
derstand, a channel through which the grace of
God is conveyed. When you say, "Christ is the
means of grace," you understand, the sole price
and purchaser of it. Or, that no man cometh unto
the Father but through him. And who denies it?
But this is utterly wide of the question.

4. But does not the Scripture (it has been ob-
jected, fourthly) direct us to wait for salvation?
Does not David say, "My soul waiteth upon God:
for of him cometh my salvation?" And does not
Isaiah teach us the same thing, saying, "O Lord,
we have waited for thee?" All this cannot be denied. Seeing it is the gift of God, we are undoubtedly to wait on him for salvation. But how shall we wait? If God himself has appointed a way, can you find a better way of waiting for him? But, that he hath appointed a way, hath been shewn at large, and also what that way is. The very words of the Prophet which you cite, put this out of all question. For the whole sentence runs thus: "In the way of thy judgments [or ordinances.] O Lord have we waited for thee." (Isaiah xxvi. 8.) And in the very same way did David wait, as his own words abundantly testify: "I have waited for thy saving health, O Lord, and have kept thy law. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.

5. "Yea, say some, but God has appointed another way, Stand still and see the salvation of God."

Let us examine the Scriptures to which you refer. The first of them, with the context, runs thus:

"And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lift up their eyes—and they were sore afraid. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea," Exod. xiv. 10, &c.

This was the salvation of God, which they stood still to see, by marching forward with all their might.

The other passage wherein this expression occurs, stands thus. "There came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee, from beyond the sea. And Jehoshaphat feared, and let himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah
clath gathered themselvses together to ask help of the Lord, even out of all the cities they came to seek the Lord. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation, in the house of the Lord—Then upon Jahaziel came the Spirit of the Lord—and he said—Be not dismayed by reason of this great multitude—To-morrow go ye down against them, ye shall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourselves: stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord—And they rose early in the morning and went forth. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir—and every one helped to destroy another; 2 Chron. xx. 2, &c.

Such was the salvation which the children of Judah saw. But how does all this prove, that we ought not to wait for the grace of God, in the means which he hath ordained?

6. I shall mention but one objection more, which indeed does not properly belong to this head. Nevertheless, because it has been so frequently urged, I may not wholly pass it by.

"Does not St. Paul say, "If ye be dead with Chrift, why are ye subject to ordinances?" Col. ii. 20. Therefore a Christian, one that is dead with Chrift, need not use the ordinances any more."

So you say, "If I am a Christian, I am not subject to the ordinances of Chrift!" Surely, by the absurdity of this, you must see at the first glance, that the ordinances here mentioned cannot be the ordinances of Chrift! That they must needs be the Jewish ordinances, to which it is certain, a Christian is no longer subject.

And the same undeniably appears from the words immediately following, Touch not, take not, handle not—all evidently referring to the ancient ordinances of the Jewish law.

So that this objection is the weakest of all. And in spite of all, that great truth must stand unshaken, That all who desire the grace of God, are to wait for it, in the means which he hath ordained.

V. 1. But
V. 1. But this being allowed, that all who desire the grace of God, are to wait for it in the means he hath ordained; it may still be enquired, how those means should be used, both as to the order, and the manner of using them?

With regard to the former, we may observe, there is a kind of order, wherein God himself is generally pleased, to use those means, in bringing a sinner to salvation. A stupid, senseless wretch is going on in his own way, not having God in all his thoughts, when God comes upon him unawares, perhaps by an awakening sermon or conversation, perhaps by some awful providence; or it may be by an immediate stroke of his convincing Spirit, without any outward means at all. Having now a desire to flee from the wrath to come, he purposely goes to hear, how it may be done. If he finds a Preacher who speaks to the heart, he is amazed, and begins searching the scriptures, whether these things are so? The more he hears and reads, the more convinced he is; and the more he meditates thereon day and night. Perhaps he finds some other book, which explains and enforces what he has heard and read in Scripture. And by all these means, the arrows of conviction sink deeper into his soul. He begins also to talk of the things of God, which are ever uppermost in his thoughts: yea, and to talk with God, to pray to him, although through fear and shame, he scarce knows what to say. But whether he can speak or no, he cannot but pray, were it only in groans which cannot be uttered. Yet being in doubt, whether the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity will regard such a sinner as him, he wants to pray with those who know God, with the faithful, in the great congregation. But here he observes others go up to the table of the Lord. He considers, Christ has said, "Do this!" How is it, that I do not! I am too great a sinner. I am not fit. I am not worthy. After struggling with these scruples awhile, he breaks
breaks through. And thus he continues in God's way, in hearing, reading, meditating, praying and partaking of the Lord's Supper, till God, in the manner that pleaseth him, speaks to his heart, "Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace."

2. By observing this order of God, we may learn what means to recommend to any particular soul. If any of these will reach a stupid careless sinner, it is probably hearing or conversation. To such therefore we might recommend these, if he has ever any thought about salvation. To one who begins to feel the weight of his sins, not only hearing the Word of God, but reading it too, and perhaps other serious books, may be a means of deeper conviction. May you not advise him also, to meditate on what he reads, that it may have its full force upon his heart? Yea, and to speak thereof, and not be ashamed, particularly among those who walk in the same path. When trouble and heaviness take hold upon him, should you not then earnestly exhort him, to pour out his soul before God! Always to pray and not to faint? And when he feels the worthlessness of his own prayers, are you not to work together with God, and remind him of going up into the house of the Lord, and praying with all them that fear him? But if he does this, the dying word of his Lord, will soon be brought to his remembrance; a plain intimation, that this is the time, when we should second the motions of the blest Spirit. And thus may we lead him step by step, through all the means which God has ordained; not according to our own will, but just as the Providence and the Spirit of God go before and open the way.

3. Yet as we find no command in Holy Writ, for any particular order to be observed herein, so neither do the Providence and the Spirit of God, adhere to any without variation: but the means into which different men are led, and in which they find the blessing of God, are varied, transposed and combined
combined together, a thousand different ways. Yet still our wisdom is, to follow the leadings of his Providence and his Spirit: to be guided herein (more especially as to the means wherein we ourselves seek the grace of God) partly by his outward Providence, giving us the opportunity of using sometimes one means, sometimes another: partly by our experience, which it is whereby his free Spirit is pleased most to work in our heart. And in the mean time, the sure and general rule for all who groan for the salvation of God, is this: Whenever opportunity serves, use all the means which God has ordained. For who knows, in which God will meet thee, with the grace that bringeth salvation?

4. As to the manner of using them, whereon indeed it wholly depends, whether they should convey any grace at all, to the user, it behoves us, First, Always to retain a lively sense, that God is above all means. Have a care therefore of limiting the Almighty. He doth whatsoever and whencesoever it pleaseth him. He can convey his grace, either in or out of any of the means which he hath appointed. Perhaps he will. Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his Counselor? Look then every moment for his appearing? Be it at the hour you are employed in his ordinances; or before, or after that hour. Or when you are hindered therefrom. He is not hindered. He is always ready; always able, always willing to save.

It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good!

Secondly, Before you use any means, let it be deeply impress on your soul, "There is no power in this." It is in itself a poor, dead, empty thing: separate from God; it is a dry leaf, a shadow. Neither is there any merit in my using this; nothing intrinsically pleasing to God, nothing whereby I deserve any favour at his hands, no, not a drop of water to cool my tongue. But because God bids, therefore I do; because he directs me to wait in his way
way; therefore here I wait for his free mercy, whereof cometh my salvation.

Settle this in your heart, that the *Opus operatum*, the mere work done profiteth nothing: that there is no *power* to save, but in the Spirit of God; no *merit*, but in the Blood of Christ: that consequently, even what God ordains, conveys no grace to the soul, if you trust not in him alone. On the other hand, he that does truly trust in him, cannot fall short of the grace of God, even though he were cut off from every outward ordinance, though he were shut up in the center of the earth.

Thirdly, In using all means, seek God alone. In and through every outward thing, look singly to the *power* of his Spirit, and the *merits* of his Son. Beware you do not stick in the *work* itself, if you do, it is all lost labour. Nothing short of God can satisfy your soul. Therefore eye him, in all, through all, and above all.

Remember also, to use all means, as *means*: as ordained not for their own sake, but in order to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness. If therefore they actually tend to this, we'll. But if not, they are dung and dross. Lastly, After you have used any of these, take care how you value yourself thereon: how you congratulate yourself as having done some great thing. This is turning all into poison. Think, "If God is not there, what does this avail? Have I not been adding sin to sin? How long! O Lord! save or I perish! O lay not this sin to my charge!" If God was there, if his love flowed into your heart, you have forgot, as it were, the outward work. You see, you know, you feel, God is all in all. Be abased. Sink down before him. Give him all the praise, "Let God in all things be glorified through Christ Jesus. Let all your bones cry out, My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord: with my mouth will I ever be telling of thy truth, from one generation to another!"

**End of the First Volume.**